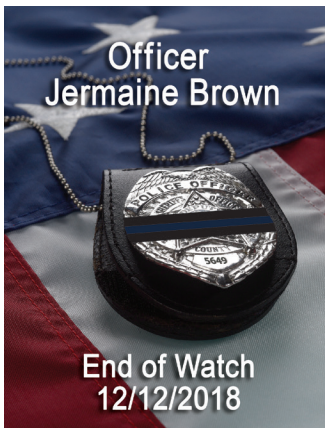




Miami-Dade Police Department Mourns Loss of Officer Jermaine Brown, a Father and Husband Remembered for his Devotion to the Community

By Brian Ballou



Reaching out to the community was a part of the job that Jermaine Brown embraced as a Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) officer assigned to the South District's Neighborhood Resource Unit (NRU). In an outstanding manner, he continued his outreach on his own time.

Once a year, Officer Brown would gather as many neighborhood children who

could fit safely into his fishing boat, and take them on a fishing trip. Hours at sea put into perspective, and the kids saw in Officer Brown someone they could emulate. On land, Officer Brown coached youth football, taught the kids proper tackling techniques, and how to be responsible for their actions off the field. Officer Brown's personal and endearing approach, sprinkled with a jovial attitude, is what stands out now, even as the tragedy of his death grips his family and friends.

Officer Brown was 46 years old, a husband, a father of three children, and a 15-year veteran of the Department.

"He was deeply embedded in the community, he told residents to call him on his cell phone if they had any concerns, and when they did call him, he made it a priority to help them," said MDPD Sergeant Juan Tellez, who served in the South District's NRU alongside Officer Brown. "The residents, they felt like they had a personal connection with him," Sergeant Tellez said.

On December 12, 2018, Officer Brown responded to information gleaned from a community meeting about illegal activity. He was on his way to assist in a case

when the ATV he was driving hit a tree. He was rushed to Jackson Memorial Hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries.

His fellow officers remembered him as an upbeat man, quick to crack a joke or two, and always willing to accept extra work. He got his first glimpse of police work as a police explorer in the South District, and was hired on April 10, 2003, as a patrol officer in that district. He received numerous letters of commendation throughout his career, including one for apprehending an extremely violent felon in 2004. In June 2005, he was transferred to the Special Patrol Bureau, and was assigned to the Marine Patrol Unit and then the Canine Unit.

In 2007, he was awarded a letter of commendation for professionalism, teamwork, and "unswerving devotion to our cause," and for serving and protecting the community. He was involved in hundreds of felony apprehensions throughout his six years in the Special Patrol Bureau. In September 2011, he returned to the South District and worked as a member of the NRU.

Officer Brown worked on numerous community projects, assisted homeless families, and provided resources to citizens within the South District. He attended community meetings and built personal relationships with citizens, business owners, and community stakeholders. He also worked with the County's Regulatory and Economic Resources Department, which focused on improving the quality of life for citizens. "He was dedicated to the profession and always willing to assist fellow officers," said Major Samuel Bronson of the South District. "He was full of energy, very dependable on the job, and my go-to guy if I had issues that needed to be dealt with," Major Bronson said.

MDPD Officer Ran to FIU Bridge Collapse

By Brian Ballou

After testifying in court for almost three hours on March 15, 2018, MDPD Officer Devon Dolam headed for The Green Chicken Restaurant in Sweetwater. It was busy inside with a late lunch crowd comprised of students from nearby Florida International University and professionals from area businesses.

At 1:47 p.m., a loud noise shook everyone. It sounded like the clap of a construction truck's tailgate, but a hundred times louder, Officer Dolam would recall. He was familiar with the area and knew there was construction activity nearby. A 320-foot bridge was being constructed at the intersection of Tamiami Trail and SW 109 Avenue.

Officer Dolam, wearing slacks, a dress shirt, and dress shoes, ran outside and toward the intersection. Witnesses would later describe the scene as chaotic, with screaming voices and dust in the air, and horns blaring. But for Officer Dolam, there was a calmness. "Everything kinda slowed down for me, I saw nothing except what I needed to see, people who needed to be helped," he said. "It had to be the training." It took him just seconds to arrive. He scanned the collapsed bridge and saw a woman sitting in the driver's seat of her car, the back half of the red vehicle flattened under the rubble. Much of the cement seemed pulverized, almost like powder. The woman, a young student, was in a state of panic as Officer Dolam pulled her out through the passenger's window and carried her to the center median, a few feet away.

Officer Dolam then saw three men laying on top of the rubble, each wearing fluorescent vests. The men had visible, severe injuries. One worker's leg was twisted and he was pale and wasn't breathing. Officer Dolam performed CPR on that victim, for approximately five minutes, until the man started breathing on his own. Officer Dolam also applied pressure to the facial wound of another construction worker. Emergency crews arrived and Officer Dolam helped put the victims on stretchers and lowered



Left to Right: Director Juan J. Perez, Officer Devon Dolam, and Deputy Director Alfredo Ramirez III. (Photo by Gaston De Cardenas)

them to the ground so they could be taken to waiting ambulances.

"After that, I remained at the scene and assisted wherever I could," Officer Dolam said. He stayed for hours, throughout the evening, as MDPD Director Juan J. Perez oversaw the rescue effort and responded to the news media.

Director Perez recently awarded Officer Dolam with the Department's Bronze Medal of Valor and the Lifesaving Award for his efforts during the collapse. Officer Dolam also received the Outstanding Law

Enforcement Officer Award from the Office of Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody.

Officer Dolam, a 15-year veteran of the Department, is married and has a young son. He was born in Jamaica. His father passed away when he was eight, and ten years later, he arrived in south Florida. He started working in the car rental business alongside relatives, and studied at Miami-Dade College. At 27, he joined MDPD and has since earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He currently works in the Narcotics Bureau.

"I never expected to get a reward out of this, it's just one of those things you react to, I'm so happy the Department equipped me to be prepared to respond to something like this," Officer Dolam said. "I did what I was trained to do."



Officer Devon Dolam. (Photo by Gaston De Cardenas)

Recent Youth Forum Between Police and Teens Fosters Better Understanding

By Brian Ballou



Members of the MDPD talked with teens during the 3rd. Annual Youth Forum at the Northside District. Pictured from left to right in uniform are Officer Joel Pena, Officer Raziel Fuentes, Chief Mirtha V. Ramos, Captain Elise Dillard (standing), Officer Zurich Chambers, and Assistant Director Stephanie V. Daniels. (Photo by Brian Ballou)

Just what goes on in the mind of a police officer when making a traffic stop, and what are the obligations of the person behind the wheel? That scenario and others involving police and the public were topics of discussion at the 3rd. Annual Youth Forum hosted by the MDPD, the Miami-Dade Juvenile Services Department, and the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission. The Forum was held at the MDPD's Northside District on January 18, 2019.

Inside the District's community room, approximately 25 high school students and representatives from the three County departments sat side-by-side in a large circle. Most of the MDPD's Command Staff were there, including Assistant Director Stephanie V. Daniels, and Chiefs Mirtha V. Ramos and Ariel Artime. The moderator was former Miami Dolphins football player Twan Russell.

The purpose of the forum was to foster a better understanding between law enforcement and youth. The words "respect," "communication," and "trust" were often repeated. "We have a heart as well," said Major Bronson of the South District, recounting a recent traffic stop he made and his reaction based on the polite manner of the driver.

Some of the teens in attendance said they were wary of being stopped by police given the number of videotaped incidents across the country in which interactions between the police and individuals had escalated. "To pause your life and be humble for a moment and do what the officer

tells you to do." Russell said, standing in the middle of the circle, "Complying is the way you respect that officer in that moment."

The MDPD is committed to continuing its outreach efforts to the youth. There are several ways the Department accomplishes that goal, including through the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program, the Youth Outreach Unit, the Police Athletic League, and the Police Explorers Academy.

"Don't let this conversation die, communicate with friends, that's how you change the perception," Russell concluded.



Coffee with a Cop, Informal Meet-and-Greets with Sweet Treats

By Brian Ballou

Between sips of coffee and bites of pastries or doughnuts, conversations flowed between MDPD officers and residents who attended the “Coffee with a Cop” event at the family-operated Tammy’s Bakery in the Kendall District. There were introductions and friendly discussions about sports or hobbies. These once-a-month caffeinated gatherings are a way for residents to connect with the officers who patrol their communities, in a casual setting. It is also a convenient way for residents to have conversations with police about issues in their communities.

These informal meet-and-greets are important in establishing familiarity between police and residents and are one of several ways that MDPD and other law enforcement agencies connect with the public. There are also neighborhood gatherings such as National Night Out, block parties, and community meetings.

Major Carmen Castro said that meetings with the public is one of the best ways to get to know the communities. “Usually, they’ll bring up a traffic concern, a crime concern, or they just have questions and want to interact with police officers,” Major Castro said. “Every month, when we do these events, we also have members of our Citizens’ Advisory Committee join us and they’re very supportive of everything that we do. The general public gets to see that we are people too. This is an easier way for them to approach an officer.” The committee is made up of people who live, work, or have a business in the District. Attendees may have been nominated by a member in good standing or by a district commander. The prospective member must have attended at least three monthly meetings and be accepted by a majority vote of the committee. In many ways, the members serve as ambassadors for the Department.

“This is a great time to meet police officers in a relaxed atmosphere, get to know that they’re not just out there writing tickets,” said committee member Jeff Kaslofsky. “We have the best in Major Castro. If you can make it to one of these events, it will be to your benefit.”



Coffee
WITH A COP

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Kendall District Major Carmen M. Castro cordially
invites you to enjoy coffee and pleasant conversation
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Saturday, January 19, 2019
9:00 a.m.

Tammy's Bakery
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Kendall District



Kendall District Major Carmen Castro and other MDPD officers recently met with Kendall residents at Tammy's Bakery. They chatted about quality-of-life issues as they sipped coffee and enjoyed pastries. (Photo by Brian Ballou)

MDPD Helps Gather Hundreds of Police Patches for a Child with Cancer

By Brian Ballou

When MDPD Dispatcher Annabel Lee asked for police patches late last year to send to a 12-year-old boy in Indiana who is suffering from a rare form of cancer, she received them from every department in Miami-Dade County within days.

More patches flowed in from throughout the region and Dispatcher Lee and other MDPD employees wrapped a total of 260 patches in clear plastic, with black and blue ribbons, and packed them in a box. They also included a hand-knitted sweater and matching beanie. The Miami-Dade County Police Benevolent Association provided the funds for shipping the special gifts that arrived in Kokomo, Indiana, for Jeremiah Derks.

“When he opened the box, his face lit up with joy. To see him smile like that was everything to us, and we appreciate all the effort by the MDPD,” said Shannon Derks, Jeremiah’s father. He recorded his son’s reaction and posted the video on Jeremiah’s Facebook page, which is titled “Jeremiah’s Journey.”

“When I saw the video, it made me cry, and it made many of my coworkers cry,” said Dispatcher Lee, who has worked at MDPD for 32 years. It was through Facebook that she first learned of Jeremiah’s story, as a friend had “tagged” her to Jeremiah’s page.

Dispatchers and other employees within MDPD’s Communications Bureau have a history of reaching out. In recent years, they’ve knitted over a thousand beanies for the National Center on Shaken Babies Syndrome and the American Heart Association. When Bureau personnel learned that Jeremiah wanted to be a police officer, and that a local police captain had given him two patches, Dispatcher Lee and her coworkers made many calls and sent out e-mails to police departments throughout Miami-Dade County asking for patches for Jeremiah. The MDPD’s Special Response Team also sent Jeremiah a video wishing him well.



Cancer Patient Jeremiah Derks wraps himself in a blanket, a gift from the MDPD Communications Bureau. (Photo Courtesy Jeremiah’s Journey Facebook website.)

Other law enforcement agencies, from every U.S. state, and from other countries such as Switzerland and Germany, have also sent Jeremiah patches. So far, he has more than 5,000 patches. There are plans to make them into a quilt or perhaps drapes. “I want to keep them as a memory of all the support I got,” Jeremiah said. “I’m not so sure about making a quilt, it might be too stiff.”

The Communications Bureau also set up a Christmas registry at Walmart to buy gifts for the family. Jeremiah has three brothers, ages 7, 11, and 13. With the medical bills at approximately a half-million dollars, the family couldn’t afford Christmas gifts. However, all 68 items on the registry list, ranging from video games to desks to clothes, were purchased. “I’m just fortunate to be surrounded by a lot of people who have giving hearts,” Dispatcher Lee said. “In our work, we see these types of

stories all the time and we are always willing to do what we can to help out.”

Dispatcher Lee continues to keep in touch with Jeremiah, calling him almost every day. They discuss lots of things, but never his cancer. “We talk about fun stuff, police stuff like canines, and different types of tasks performed by police officers. He mentioned once that he may want to do what I do, which made me feel so proud,” said Dispatcher Lee.

Jeremiah was diagnosed with Chondroblastic Osteosarcoma on July 7, 2018, after he fell off his bike and had unusual swelling on his leg. His parents took him to the emergency room and a doctor, who had a background in that particular type of cancer, noticed the symptom and immediately ordered a biopsy. Jeremiah had surgery in October 2018, and 15 centimeters of his fibula was removed, as well as a nerve that has left him unable to move his foot. He is going through Chemotherapy.

Continued on page 6

Hundreds of Police Patches for Child with Cancer

Continued from page 5

Jeremiah has kept an optimistic attitude throughout his treatment. “He is always upbeat, doesn’t let anything bring him down, not even this,” Mr. Derks said. “My wife and I have cried a lot. I wish I could shake every police officer’s hand and tell him or her what their support means to my family.”

Fun Day at Work for Children of MDPD Employees

By Brian Ballou



MDPD Officers Marie Abbott and Enrique Cuevas interacted with youth during a recent Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day. (Photo by Allison Bishop-Cooner)

The sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews gathered near the helicopter and the armored vehicle, waiting for their turn to climb into the cockpit or peak their head out of the roof of the big green truck. The National Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day is a popular, annual event at the MDPD. A peek into cubicles, offices, and hallways offers children some insight on their parents’, grandparents’, aunts’, or uncles’ jobs. However, the big draw was all the cool stuff parked in front of MDPD’s Headquarters, a veritable playground of specialized armament and vehicles.

Approximately 200 children of sworn and non-sworn MDPD employees attended on Friday, February 2, 2019. Some weighed barely more than the heavy protective gear they tried on. Some were in their late teens and had attended enough times over the years, that this day has become a ritual. School Crossing Guard Jackie Blackshire

has attended with her 14-year-old granddaughter Jamaya, for three consecutive years. “Great experience, it gives the kids an idea of safety and what the officers have to go through to keep us safe from day-to-day,” School Crossing Guard Blackshire said.

Every child who attended received an MDPD certificate recognizing their “interest and participation in the activities and events at the MDPD.”

Dozens of MDPD officers were present to answer questions from the kids. In addition to the helicopter and Special Response Team’s armored vehicle, there was a remote-controlled robot used by the Bomb Disposal Unit, All-Terrain Vehicles used by the Agricultural Patrol Section, motorcycles used by the Motorcycle Unit, and canines from the Canine Unit.

“We will come back next year, it’s a great event,” Blackshire said.



MDPD Officer Anthony Valiente, of the Special Patrol Bureau’s Bomb Disposal Unit, helped outfit a girl in protective gear. (Photo by Brian Ballou)

Thank You Blood Donors!



The Miami-Dade Police Department and OneBlood recently held successful blood collection drives at MDPD Headquarters. Special thanks are extended to the donors listed below for helping save lives!

Captain Alejandro Acosta
 Sergeant Heather Baab
 Sergeant Michael Chang
 Sergeant Donna Colon
 Sergeant Julio Martos
 Sergeant Safiuddin Mohammed
 Sergeant Olenka Ryan-Guerra
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 Police Officer Mauricio Loaiza
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 Police Officer Giovanny Marrero Portela
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 Police Officer Manuel Rodriguez
 Police Officer Mercy Rodriguez
 Police Officer Steve Sklavounos
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 Police Officer Brian Zamorski
 Criminalist 2 Yamil Garcia
 Administrative Officer 2 Sebastien Gay
 Paralegal Assistant Catalina Hernandez
 Crime Lab Manager Jeffrey Johnson
 Police Records Specialist 1 Alice Ledesma

Police Records Technician 1 Rashondra McCall
 Personnel Technician Oneida Ortega
 School Crossing Guard Jennie Rivera
 Secretary Alexandra Rubiano-Sassone
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 Mr. Mario Perez Jr.
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 Ms. Lillian Rodriguez
 Mr. Rolando Rodriguez
 Mr. Michael Weissberg



MDPD recently said farewell to 36 employees (23 sworn officers and 13 civilians) who retired after periods of service ranging from 13 to 36 years. Director Juan J. Perez, the Department’s Command Staff, and the entire MDPD family wish our colleagues many, many years of happy retirement.

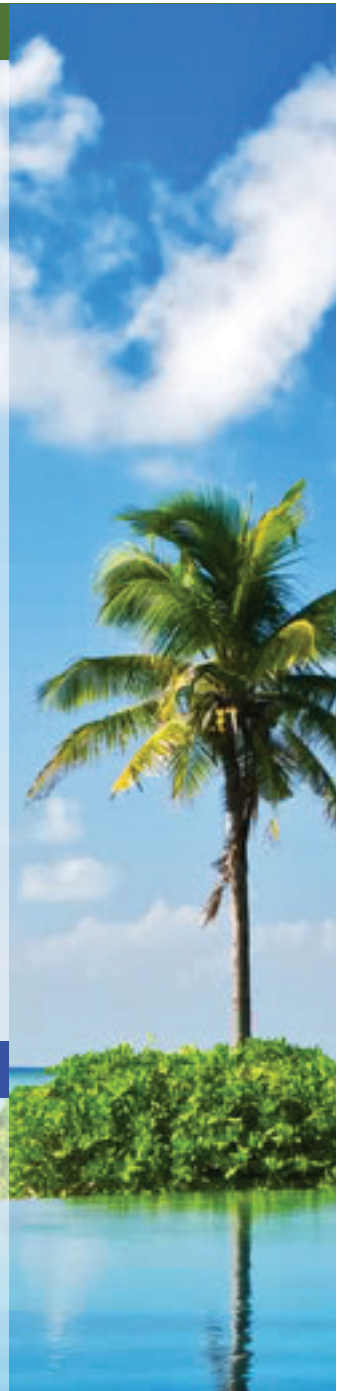
Sworn

Major Calvin James	30
Captain Michael Cundle	36
Captain Kathi Miller	26
Captain Deborah Whisby-Ferguson.....	32
Lieutenant Carl Graham.....	32
Sergeant Helly Caraballo	30
Sergeant Jimmy Rond.....	25
Sergeant Christine Salmon-Roll	30
Officer Marc Allen.....	25
Officer Gloria Averhoff.....	23
Officer Christopher Burgin	30
Officer Orbe Collazo.....	29
Officer Michelle Duran.....	29
Officer Eduardo Garcia.....	30
Officer Robert Garland	31
Officer Ronald Gooden.....	17
Officer Rebecca Hidalgo-Gato.....	26
Officer Ronnie Jones.....	26
Officer Lynette Keegan.....	26
Officer Jose Lluís	13
Officer Lisa Morales	31
Officer Christopher Rutledge.....	22
Officer Mickey Valenzuela	30

Civilians

Administrative Officer 3 Hancerani Persaud	35
Administrative Secretary Martha Otero	35
Court Support Specialist 1 William Garcia.....	35
Criminalist 2 Christopher Hanlon.....	31

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Civilians

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Data Entry Specialist 1 Teresa Nunez..... 13
 Executive Senior Bureau Commander Joy Stewart..... 31
 Police Complaint Officer Catherine Shkolnik 34
 Police Complaint Officer Helen Martin..... 34
 Police Complaint Supervisor 1 Ernesto Cruz 31
 Police Records Technician 1 Vendaray Frazier..... 18
 School Crossing Guard Adeline Harris..... 22
 School Crossing Guard Eloise Wallace 15



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