



Alert

Newsletter

"Committed to Excellence"



@MiamiDadePD

Vol. 39, No. 3

July - September 2022

Connect with us



Join Us!

MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER WALK

Saturday, October 22, 2022

9:00 a.m.

loanDepot park

501 Marlins Way (NW 16 Avenue)

Miami, FL 33125



Be in the Team Photo - arrive at 8:15 a.m. sharp!

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

ALFREDO "FREDDY" RAMIREZ III



Detective Cesar "Echy" Echaverry gave his life protecting the community, and the Miami-Dade Police Department will never forget his bravery and ultimate sacrifice, just like we have never forgotten the 43 other officers of this Department who gave their lives in the line-of-duty. Echy was what every parent wants their child to be, and he had what every law enforcement agency wants in its officers. We mourn his death, it has been a painful time for us, and a sobering reminder of the dangers that we face every day in our service to our community. As a Department, we are thankful for the outpouring of support that the community has shown Echy's family, from dropping off flowers and condolence cards at our districts and headquarters, to sending in donations for his family. Those heartfelt gestures strengthen our resolve. To all of our officers, thank you for your commitment.

I am grateful to serve as an ambassador once again for the American Cancer Society's Real Men Wear Pink of Miami campaign, which raises funds and draws attention to the breast cancer fight. We all know someone who has been affected by cancer, and this Department has been tremendous in helping the families of our employees affected by cancer. You have also represented us well in the American Cancer Society's annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Miami walk, at loanDepot Park. Your outpouring of support for this cause reflects your commitment to the community and to society.

The holiday season is here again. Above all, it is a time for families and friends to gather, reunite, and share traditions. Families are the foundation of society, and through our grandparents, parents, husbands, wives, brothers and sisters, relatives, and friends who are like family to us, we help create healthy communities that respect the core values of society. This Department is a family. Some of you have known each other for decades, have gathered together over holiday dinners, and have helped each other through tough times. The best gifts that we can give each other is our time and our support. Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III



**REAL MEN
WEAR PINK**

Miami

2022 AMBASSADOR



Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III
Director, Miami-Dade Police Department

<http://main.acsevents.org/goto/2022RMWPDDirectorAlfredoRamirez>

Fallen Detective Cesar “Echy” Echaverry Honored Inside loanDepot Park, Remembered as a Brave Hero

By Brian Ballou



The hearse carrying the flag-draped casket of Miami-Dade Police Department Detective Cesar “Echy” Echaverry traveled slowly through the streets of Miami, from Vior Funeral Home to the loanDepot park in Little Havana, a 2.5 mile journey east. The vehicle entered the baseball park through a wide tunnel under the center field bleachers, took a left turn, and followed the dirt “warning track” that outlines the field where Echy had spent so many hours watching the Miami Marlins play.

The hearse stopped near first base, and then officers pulled the casket out of the vehicle, placed it on a casket trolley, and wheeled it to second base, to a spot just in front of where his parents, sister, and fiancée sat. They all wore baseball jerseys, with his nickname and the number “9” on the back, which was his jersey number when he played Varsity baseball at John A. Ferguson High School.

As the procession for the Rendering of Honors Ceremony unfolded on Wednesday, August 24, 2022, a melancholic hum from bagpipes, and a soft, rolling drumbeat filled the air, and then there was a long moment of silence. Officers held their right arms steady in salute for several minutes.

Detective Echaverry was born on December 8, 1992, in Hialeah. His parents emigrated from Nicaragua. He joined the Department in April 2017. An act of cowardice took his life, but his legacy of service, his heroism, and his ultimate sacrifice will live on. His photograph will be affixed to the Hall of Honor inside the Fred Taylor Headquarters Building, the 44th Miami-Dade Police officer to die in the line of duty. He was a member of the Robbery Bureau’s Robbery Intervention Detail, a highly trained team, consisting of approximately three dozen officers, that often encounters dangerous felons and situations. The Unit has been in

existence for nearly 27 years.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava gave a solemn speech during the two-hour ceremony. Also in attendance were Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and other elected officials and dignitaries, as well as thousands of law enforcement officers from the region and beyond.

Detective Echaverry’s passion for baseball and his dedication to his job shone through. Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz, said, “Detective Echaverry and his unit had the watch 24/7, and now he will take the watch to a new level, he will watch from up above.”

Lieutenant Ernesto S. Rodriguez, a member of the Robbery Intervention Detail, said “There’s no script, no training that could prepare us for something like this.” He used four words to describe his fallen

brother; courageous, resilient, inspiring, and honorable. Lieutenant Rodriguez gave two details about Monday, August 15, 2022, saying it was a day off for Echy, but he volunteered to help on a special initiative and came into work anyway; and prior to engaging the suspect, he made sure that the public was out of harm’s way.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department Firefighter Leonardo Meneses, Detective Echaverry’s best friend, said he was devoted to his family and his job. “I knew him as Big Dog,” he said. They bonded over their affinity for riding dirt bikes, and over daily breakfast together. They always ordered the same food, “huevos revueltos con tostada y una colada.” Firefighter Meneses said, “I am a better man today because I knew him.”

Officer Lindsey Kayla N. Serrano and Detective Echaverry graduated together from Basic Law Enforcement (BLE) Class 117, and they remained close friends over the five years since. During the ceremony, she recalled their time at the academy, of how he once passed out during training, and how all the other trainees used that moment to poke fun at him. She also talked about how he helped lift the spirits of other trainees, inspiring them to do their best. He invited fellow trainees to his parents’ house during holidays, so that they would not be alone. “Echy, you helped so many people throughout your career,” Officer Serrano said.

Detective Echaverry’s fiancée, Ms. Stephanie Vargas, said she first met him in 7th grade. After their first date, they were smitten with each other, and soon after resolved to spend their lives together.

A video of Detective Echaverry was shown on the large screen affixed over centerfield. It had images of him in

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“Echy” Echaverry, Remembered as a Brave Hero

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the academy, doing push-ups, of his BLE graduation, of him sitting with his family in the bleachers of the very stadium where he was eulogized, of dinners with loved ones, of memorable childhood events like the prom and his high school graduation, and of his Unit, proudly standing shoulder to shoulder.

Director Alfredo “Freddy” Ramirez III extended condolences to his family, and reminded the public of the threats that officers face virtually every day, referring to an attack on two of his officers the previous night. “He was what every parent wants their child to be, humble, good hearted, compassionate, and hard working,” Director Ramirez said. “Not anyone can be a member of this Unit...”

Director Ramirez added, “To Echy’s family, know that we are eternally grateful for his service, and although his life was short, it was impactful for a thousand lifetimes.”

There was a “21-Gun Salute” from shallow center field, followed by an officer’s rendering of “Taps.” An “End-of-Watch Call” ended the ceremony, with the dispatcher saying, “Echy will be truly missed and will forever remain in our hearts.”

From loanDepot park, Detective Echaverry was transported to Miami Executive Airport, where his casket was lifted into a jet and flown to his parents’ homeland for burial.

Miami-Dade Police Department’s Kendall District Car Garage Named in Honor of Police Officer Andrew Gomez, Who Passed Away March 16, 2022, at Age 35

By Brian Ballou



Ashton Gomez, Officer Andrew Gomez’ son, holds a placard that bears the name of his late father, during the naming ceremony on Friday, July 29, 2022, of the car maintenance garage behind the Kendall District station. (Photo by Angelica Kellner)

The car garage in the rear of the Miami-Dade Police Department’s Kendall Station has two lift stations, ceiling-mounted air compressor hoses, power tools, stacks of tires, and greased auto parts sitting atop cabinets. It is a space where a gearhead like Officer Andrew Gomez would feel at home. He cherished conversations with

the mechanics. Away from work, he doted on his silver 2010 Chevy Corvette, fixed up broken motorcycles, and collected model cars.

It was an apt tribute on Friday, July 29, 2022, four months after he died at the age of 35, from chronic health issues, that the District’s garage would be named after him, and that his small son Ashton, himself a budding gearhead, would count down the unveiling of the “Officer Andrew Gomez Shop” signage affixed to the shop.

Officer Gomez came to the Miami-Dade Police Department on Monday, July 2, 2018, after working for two years as a police officer for the Opa-locka Police Department. In only four years, he left an indelible impression at the Kendall District. His smile and optimism boosted morale, and stories of his compassion were told and retold among the staff there, inspiring his coworkers to emulate such acts.

Residents who interacted with Officer Gomez would often call the Kendall District to commend his acts of kindness. His supervisor, Captain Rita Rodriguez, took many of those calls. “So many people he helped; the homeless, an elderly person, he did not just change their tire, but he helped them get a new tire,” she said.

Before the ceremony started, Officer Gomez’ mother, Ms. Angelica Gomez, grabbed a Sharpie marker and wrote on a tribute wall to her son, “I love you forever, my hero.”

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Car Garage Named in Honor of Officer Andrew Gomez . . .

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The keynote speaker, Director Alfredo “Freddy” Ramirez III, called Officer Gomez, “A shining light of our Department.” The Director spoke of his first interaction with him, in March 2021, inside the Director’s third-floor conference room. Officer Gomez was there to give the Director two miniature police cruisers that were replicas of the Department’s newest patrol vehicles, Dodge Chargers featuring a throwback green and white color block scheme. The Director had just distributed 13 of those new vehicles to the most senior patrol officers, to recognize them for their commitment to the job and longevity. Director Ramirez was so touched by Officer Gomez, that he left briefly to fetch another set of keys, which he gave to Officer Gomez.

The Director said that Officer Gomez’ jovial attitude was just what he needed at the time. “His smile, his energy, it was something that I had not seen in a long time,” Director Ramirez said during the naming ceremony. “The way he talked to me, the way he touched my heart, the way he raised my spirit, I did not hear half the stuff he said to me, I just knew I had to return that favor to him.”

Officer Gomez gave his new police cruiser the same tender loving care that he gave his Corvette. His work cruiser, number 7577A, was parked next to where his

family sat during the naming ceremony. Director Ramirez told the late officer’s family, and approximately 50 people gathered under a shade tent, “when I heard that we were going to lose him, I was devastated. He will always be with us, and when we see those green-and-whites, always think of Andrew, he is what Miami-Dade Police is, and he was what every officer who comes into the Department should strive to be, including myself.”



American Cancer Society's

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

MIAMI

Presented By



Saturday,

October 22, 2022

loan Depot park

7:00am - Registration

8:00am - Program Starts

9:00am - Walk Begins



Parking is free to all participants
in the Home Plate and Third Base Garages

After Horrific Crash in April, Motorcycle Officer Matt Larsh Released from Hospital in August

By Brian Ballou



After spending four months recovering from a near-fatal collision, Motorcycle Officer Matt Larsh walked out of the Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Miami, to the cheers of his fellow officers and supervisors. (Photo by Brian Ballou)

Motorcycle Patrol Officer Matt Larsh has no memory of Thursday, April 21, 2022. He woke up two and a half days later, and subsequently watched a traffic surveillance video from that day, of the moment when an SUV made an improper left turn in front of him at the intersection of Northwest 36 Street and 53 Avenue.

Officer Larsh was on his motorcycle, driving to a training session. The impact threw him from his bike, over the hood, and his body cartwheeled through the air approximately 30 feet before he slammed onto the pavement and slid for approximately 20 feet.

He was rushed, in critical condition, to Jackson Memorial Hospital's Ryder Trauma Center, where he spent three weeks in the Intensive Care Unit, and underwent ten surgeries. His aorta and bladder were ruptured. He sustained multiple fractures; to his pelvis, lower right leg, a big toe, and a kneecap. His left quadriceps muscle was severed, elbow dislocated, and he had torn skin on both hands, and many lacerations on his body. The way he landed, on his side, likely prevented more severe injuries, he said.

Despite the extensive injuries, Officer Larsh, 49, was released from the Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Miami on Friday, August 12, 2022, four months after the accident. He walked out of the facility with the use of crutches, and spoke briefly with reporters about his ordeal.

"I was completely broken, and now I'm walking out the door, going home after four months, with my family and my extended family, and all the brothers and sisters who serve along with me, who have been part of my units, and it's an amazing day, truly an amazing day," said Officer Larsh. "I don't sit down and take things, I get up and get after it, I'm a United States Marine, and we don't lay down and take it, we get back up and keep going forward."

While the driver of the SUV was ticketed for "failure to yield right-of-way/improper turn," and no other offense, Officer Larsh pleaded with motorists to refrain from texting while driving. He said texting while driving is something that he and other patrol officers see all too often.

"People, put down your phones, driving is a huge responsibility, and the repercussions of not paying attention are crazy, there are just so many horrible things that can happen," he said.

Officer Larsh had a special dinner on his first day back home, his favorite, Chicken Parmigiana, and planned to rest a bit before immersing himself in therapy, five days a week, several hours a day, with a goal to get back to full duty before the anniversary of his accident. As for whether he will return to a motorcycle, he said "that is a question best left for another time."

Standing next to him during his release from the rehabilitation center, his son, Matt Larsh Jr. said, "I'm just glad to have my dad back at home."

Beautification of Neighborhood Park In Northside District Reflects Collaboration Between Community and Police

By Brian Ballou



Members of the Northside District were hard at work on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, helping to beautify the Rocky Creek Park in the Brownsville Community. Residents and Miami-Dade County officials also pitched in. (Photos by Brian Ballou)

Members of the Northside District's Neighborhood Resource Unit noticed recently that the Rocky Creek Park in the Brownsville Community needed refurbishing. The paint on the playground equipment was dull and there was rust on the structures. Tall weeds were choking out the grass and perennials. A space that was created to draw children to play, and residents to mingle, was showing neglect.

The officers decided to do something about it, to beautify the park with the assistance of residents, local businesses, and the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department. On Wednesday, August 10, 2022, approximately 20 Miami-Dade Police Department officers and police explorers, along with residents, parks employees, and Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime and several of his staff members, helped spruce up the park. Over four hours, and under sweltering heat, they drove pick axes and shovels into hardened soil, pulled out stubborn weeds, spread mulch, and brushed bright green and bright yellow paint over the playground apparatus. As a finishing touch, they planted beautiful purple flowers and hung small birdhouses, painted by neighborhood children, on a large tree in the park.

The beautification project was about much more than just dressing up an outdoor activity space. Community parks can drive revitalization. They are gathering places that can accommodate arts, music, and holiday festivals. They are "tangible reflections of the quality of life in a



community," according to the National Recreation and Parks Association.

Many residents say the quality of life in the community has steadily improved in recent years, and they point to the efforts of the Miami-Dade Police Department to drive out criminal activity.

"I am so thankful that the Miami-Dade Police Department has been so responsive to us," said Ms. Gloria Cohen, who lives directly next to the park. She has lived in Brownsville for 38 years. "You look around and things are really different now. I can actually enjoy being outside, and that was not the case before," she said.

Major John Barrow, of the Northside District, said the area has undergone a transformation, and the Department

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Reflects Collaboration Between Community and Police

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is focused on strengthening its partnership with the community. “I was a sergeant here in 2012, and I remember this very block, we came out here a lot for calls for service,” Major Barrow said. “It has changed so

much since then, and that is what happens when residents and police work together towards a common goal.”

The Brownsville Community stretches 2.25 square-miles and has a population of about 15,000 residents. The park is on the western edge of the community, and abuts an industrial zone to the west.

Mr. Kenneth Kilpatrick, President of the Brownsville Civic Neighborhood Association, said the beautification project fits in with the concept of “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).” According to the International CPTED Association, urban design, incorporating built structures and natural environments, can have a tremendous impact on crime deterrence, known as “territorial influence.”

“This is a prime example of that, when people see that there is care of property, folks think twice. This is a really big deal, because you don’t see drug dealers typically utilizing a brand new park. What is happening today speaks to morale and it speaks to the unity of the community,” Mr. Kilpatrick said.

Police Complaint Officer Receives Major County Sheriffs of America Award

By Brian Ballou



On Thursday, September 8, 2022, Police Complaint Officer Katrina M. Gregorisch, of our Communications Bureau, was awarded the Major County Sheriffs of America 2021 Dispatcher of the Year award. On Thursday, June 24, 2021, PCO Gregorisch received a 911 call from a female located inside the Champlain Towers South condominium complex in the Town of Surfside, and advised her and her family to exit immediately. When the family was trapped in a stairwell, PCO Gregorisch talked them through an alternate route that eventually led them outside. PCO Gregorisch instructed the family to continue towards the beach area to get out of harm’s way. PCO Gregorisch’s ability to calmly assist those survivors reflects positively on the Miami-Dade Police Department and the community she serves. Congratulations on a job well done!

Florida Sheriffs Association Recognizes Five MDPD Officers for Over 40 Years of Service

By Brian Ballou



Director Ramirez (center) presented the Florida Sheriffs Association's Lifetime Achievement Award to (from left to right) Major Thomas B. Buchanan, Major Jose A. Fernandez, Officer Thomas Rodriguez, and Officer Barry Hoffman. Sergeant Miguel E. Fleitas is also a recipient, but did not attend the presentation on Friday, July 29, 2022 (Photo by Angelica Kellner)

Five Miami-Dade Police Department employees recently received the Florida Sheriffs Association's Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing them for over 40 years of service to law enforcement.

Personnel received their awards in front of their family members, fellow officers, and friends during an outdoor celebration at the Fred Taylor Headquarters Building. The recipients are Major Jose A. Fernandez, of our Communications Bureau, Major Thomas B. Buchanan, of our Intracoastal District, Sergeant Miguel E. Fleitas, of our Northwest District, Officer Barry Hoffman, of our Midwest District, and Officer Thomas Rodriguez, of our Warrants Bureau.

The most senior awardee, Officer Hoffman, began his career in November 1973. Major Fernandez started in January 1981, Major Buchanan in January 1982, Sergeant

Fleitas in April 1978, and Officer Rodriguez in March 1981. The Department was known as the Public Safety Department when they started.

Director Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III thanked the officers and their families for their commitment and support.

"To the younger generation, look at these men who have served for so many years, who left and came back and still serve, who proudly wear the uniform each and every day, just think of all the stories and experiences that they've gone through, the joys, the tragedies, the heartache, the anger that they've been through all these years," Director Ramirez said. "And when it's their time to walk away, that's when they will tell us it's our Department. So long as these gentlemen are still here, it's their Department, we're just tagging along for the ride."



Recent Retirements

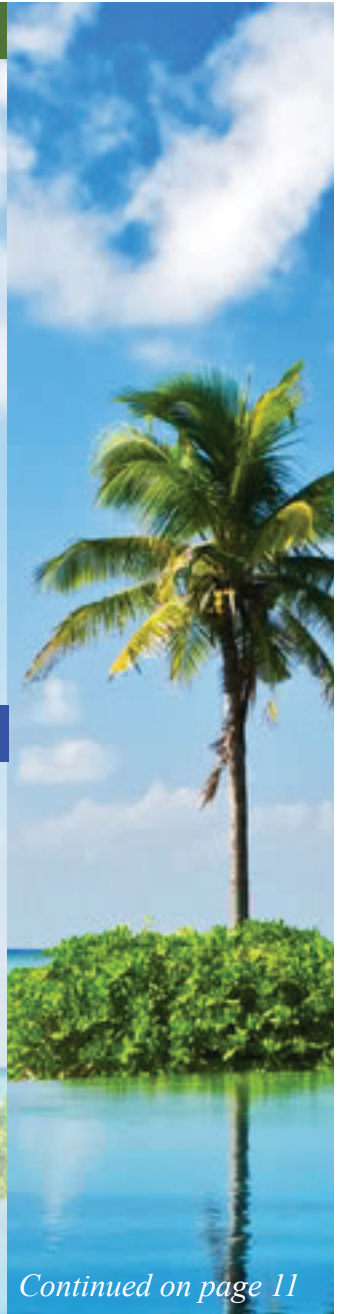
MDPD recently said farewell to 30 employees (13 sworn officers and 17 professional staff) who retired after periods of service ranging from 38 to 9 years. Director Alfredo “Freddy” Ramirez III, the Department’s Command Staff, and the entire MDPD family wish our colleagues many, many years of happy retirement.

Sworn

Sergeant Janel Ruiz.....	26
Sergeant Jacquelyn T. Sneed-Magwood	29
Officer Wastine A. Allen	17
Officer Albert B. Bonilla	30
Officer Syle R. Kinney	20
Officer Carlos V. Labrada	33
Officer Edward J. Machado	17
Officer Marc J. Martinez	27
Officer George E. McReynolds III	27
Officer Ivette M. Perez	28
Officer Carlos A. Rodriguez	25
Officer Marlene Taborda	25
Officer Luis G. Torres	28

Professional Staff

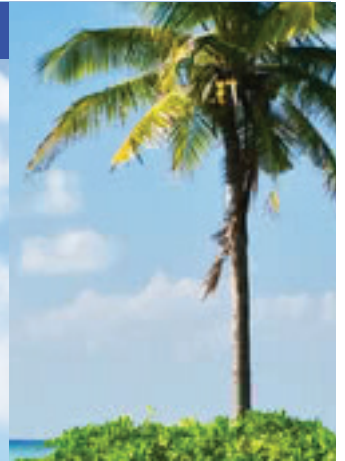
Police Records Technician 1 Surzelle M. Bertrand	22
MDPD Warrants Technician Sandra S. Bisram	34
MDPD Court Support Specialist 1 Marina T. De Jesus	32
Imaging Records Technician Carolyn E. Dennis	21
Word Processing Operator 3 Michael Douce	38
Administrative Secretary Renee Fletcher	30
Secretary Julie S. Perez	27
MDPD School Crossing Guard Margarita Piard	16
Secretary Audrey Y. Ragin	35
MDPD School Crossing Guard Maria Ramos	10
MDPD School Crossing Guard Orlando Ramos	9



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Professional Staff*Continued from page 10*

Public Service Aide Manon E. Hagan Stevens	37
Police Dispatch Supervisor 2 Tammy A. Torok	30
MDPD School Crossing Guard Jose Urbano	17
Clerk 2 Lucia Valles	31
Personnel Technician Vivian A. Velar	16
MDPD 911 Communications Manager Deborah M. Wesolowski Gross	30



Thank You Blood Donors!



The Miami-Dade Police Department and OneBlood held successful blood drives at the Miami-Dade Police Department Headquarters on Wednesday, July 20, 2022, Wednesday, August 3, 2022, Thursday, August 4, 2022, and at the Miami-Dade Public Safety Training Institute on Thursday, August 15, 2022. Special thanks are extended to the donors listed below for helping save lives

Captain Luis M. Poveda
 Lieutenant Carlos A. Alvarez
 Lieutenant Stacy C. Barasch
 Lieutenant Joel Bello
 Lieutenant Christopher J. Diaz
 Lieutenant Olenka Ryan-Guerra
 Sergeant Alain Cruz
 Sergeant Franco A. Cugge
 Sergeant Kenneth P. Horgan
 Sergeant Luke A. Marcklioli
 Sergeant Jorge Martinez

Sergeant Sheldon C. Mohammed
 Sergeant Gloria Packingham
 Sergeant Ronald Perez
 Sergeant Robin N. Pinkard
 Sergeant Petra R. Reeves-Evans
 Officer Marco A. Alfaro
 Officer Jessica Alvarez
 Officer James M. Boone
 Officer Selma L. Curtis
 Officer Marvin F. Davis
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 Officer Jose Hernandez
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 Officer Ricardo Landrian
 Officer Yariel D. Mata
 Officer Douglas Melendez
 Officer Lazaro M. Menoud
 Officer Weston K. Reid
 Officer Alexis Rodriguez
 Officer Roberto Silvestre
 Officer Steve Sklavounos

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Thank You Blood Donors!



Officer Julianne Terp
 Police Reserve Officer Jorge Aguiar
 Criminalist 2 Christopher Barr
 Police Records Technician 2 Evelyn C. Bethel
 Paralegal Assistant Catalina R. Hernandez
 Secretary Lena D. Heyward
 MDPD Investigative Specialist Latrise Holloway
 Criminalist 2 Adriana Kristaly
 Executive Secretary Esmeira Y. Moya
 Personnel Technician Oneida Ortega
 Police Records Specialist 1 Rodrigo A. Sepulveda
 MDPD Criminalist Supervisor Michael W. Shannon
 MDPD Forensic Bureau Commander Stephanie L. Stoiloff
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 Mr. Francisco Carreras
 Ms. Yara Contijoch
 Ms. Doretta Crooks
 Ms. Kellie Cruzcoriano
 Ms. Edna Delcastillo
 Mr. David Diconza

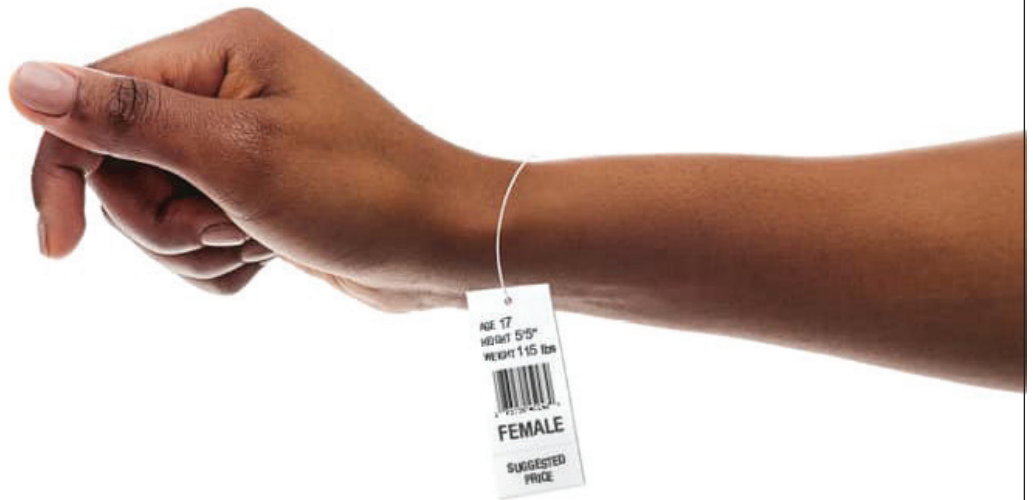
Mr. Frank Escariz
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 Ms. Myrian Herlle
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 Mr. Abram Kupfer
 Mr. Raymel Llerena
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 Ms. Erika C. Sierra
 Ms. Carol Sotoaguilar
 Mr. Joseph Verneer
 Ms. Aileen Vidal
 Mr. Michael Weissberg



Thank you for **saving lives**

Help
is
Available.

Human Trafficking



“Human Life Is Not For Sale”

Anyone can experience trafficking in any community. If you have information on human trafficking:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-37-37-888. Anti-Trafficking Hotline Advocates are available 24/7 to take reports of potential human trafficking.
- Text HELP to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 233733. Message and data rates may apply.
- Submit a tip online using the National Human Trafficking Hotline's anonymous reporting form. Please note that if the situation is urgent or occurred within the last 24 hours, we would encourage you to call, text or chat.
- Text or call 305-FIX-STOP (305-349-7867)



July/September 2022
Vol. 39, No.3

ALERT Newsletter
Published by the
Miami-Dade Police Department
Public Information Section
9105 NW 25 Street
Doral, FL 33172
305-471-1900

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Miami-Dade Police Department



Daniella L. Cava
Mayor



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Oliver G. Gilbert, III Vice-Chairman

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County Attorney

Miami-Dade County provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and services and does not discriminate on the basis of disability. “It is the policy of Miami-Dade to comply with all of the requirements of The Americans with Disabilities Act.”