



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

ALFREDO "FREDDY" RAMIREZ III



When I took office on January 13, 2020, I never thought in my wildest dreams that we would go through what we have. In 25 plus years of service, I have never seen this Department face such challenges; but through perseverance, we have stood up to those challenges, from Super Bowl LIV, to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, and a sudden negative turn in perceptions of police. And yet, at no time did our employees ever waver from continuing to provide the highest level of service.

We planned and trained for two years for Super Bowl LIV, and during the dozens of events leading up to game day, the game itself, and post-game activities; we maintained, along with our local, regional, state, and federal law enforcement partners, a tight ring of security. We also partnered with federal, regional, and local law enforcement agencies to create the Super Bowl LIV Human Trafficking Committee, and together, we made dozens of arrests and recovered 13 victims of human trafficking.

Soon after Super Bowl LIV, our nation was confronted with the pandemic. Through the steady beat of dire prognostications, we portrayed a sense of stability and continuity. Just as we have done when a natural disaster hits the area, we continued to serve our community and

help citizens sift through the morass, so that they could adjust to the "New Normal." We adjusted internally too, learning how to support each other while staying socially distant.

When protests erupted in cities throughout the country, we kept order here while respecting peaceful assemblies. We have felt the wrath of violence against us. In separate incidents in 2020, two of our officers were shot, and in another incident, several Homicide Street Violence Task Force detectives took on a barrage of gunfire at close range as they sought to apprehend a violent felon.

We are thankful that our officers survived those dangerous encounters, and that we were able to bring justice for several homicide victims, including a seven-year-old girl killed in a drive-by shooting, a pastor killed by crossfire between two groups of men, a football coach slain by a teen, and a nine-year-old autistic boy drowned by his mother. We also cracked two cold cases, bringing closure for a family of a young girl who was brutally raped and murdered 16 years ago, and bringing to justice a serial rapist who terrorized south Florida in the 1980s.

Moving forward, we are ready to stand in the face of any challenge. This Department is special, we hold ourselves accountable, and we stay on mission. We are courageous and tenacious, with a blue-collar grit that is reflected throughout this Department. I wish each and every one of you and your families an exceptional 2021!

Sincerely,

Alfredo "Freddy" Ramirez III  
Director



# Head of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Visits Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) to Discuss Ongoing Collaboration, Thank Wounded Detective

By Brian Ballou

MDPD detectives and DEA agents were approaching an apartment in West Miami on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, as part of a narcotics operation, when suddenly they were fired upon from inside the unit. In the barrage of gunfire, a bullet narrowly missed hitting an MDPD detective in the head, but struck his left ear.

The narcotics operation was another example of the long history of teamwork between the MDPD and the DEA. On Monday, November 16, 2020, Mr. Timothy J. Shea, the Acting Administrator of the DEA, and Mr. Keith Weis, the DEA's Miami Division Special Agent in Charge, visited the Fred Taylor Headquarters Building to further discuss that critical partnership, and to also deliver a certificate of appreciation to the injured detective and another detective who was on-scene who helped apprehend the shooter. The two detectives also received U.S. flags that were flown over the U.S. Capitol.

"The DEA could not do its job without you," Mr. Shea told Director Ramirez and members of his command staff. "I can't thank you enough for the support we get here . . . I appreciate what your officers did in this situation." Director Ramirez said of the close call involving the MDPD detective, "That day we were very fortunate, but it is also very sobering." The detective who was injured was rushed to a hospital, treated, and released later that night.

Mr. Shea said both law enforcement agencies share the same focus, to provide citizens the freedom from the fear of crime. "Much of the violence in this country is fueled by drug trafficking, and we see that from the brutal cartels in Mexico up to the streets of Miami, and it's true across America, so that's been our goal and working with this

Department has been a true honor," Mr. Shea said.

The partnership may go unnoticed by the public because most of the work is clandestine, but Director Ramirez said that in his conversations with community stakeholders,

such as clergy and members of the Miami-Dade County Community Relations Board, he has assured them that the Department's relationship with its federal law enforcement partner is strong.

During the meeting, Director Ramirez spoke of how illegal drugs corrupt youth, and drag them into a false narrative that they will get rich through their nefarious activities, but only leads to "a highway of death." He also spoke of how the Department is focused on long-term solutions through its gun violence initiative, which focuses on programs and services for at-risk youth and individuals involved in



Director Ramirez recently met with Mr. Timothy J. Shea (middle), Acting Administrator of the DEA, and Mr. Keith Weis (right), the DEA's Miami Division Special Agent in Charge, to promote their ongoing collaborative efforts to reduce violence crime in south Florida. (Photo by Anthony Nunez)

street gangs.

Mr. Shea said the DEA's own initiative to reduce violent crime could become a resource for the MDPD's initiative and vice-versa. "Maybe some of the stuff we do in terms of our violent crime initiative can spill over to some of the work that is being done by this Department," he said, adding that a gun that was recently seized by the DEA in south Florida was tested and found to have been used in a drug homicide in this region.

Special Agent in Charge Weis said that when he started his current job, in August 2020, one of his first calls was to Director Ramirez. "This is a great partnership and I really look forward to continuing the great relationship with MDPD."



# MDPD Human Trafficking Squad wins Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Award After Record-Setting Period

By Brian Ballou



*The MDPD's Human Trafficking Squad was recently awarded the 2019-2020 "Task Force/Team of the Year" from the FDLE. Members pictured from left to right are: Detectives Chaz G. Felder, Jessica Barriel, and Johnpaul Valentin, Sergeant David F. Quintas, MDPD Victim Advocate Elba M. Suarez, and Lieutenant Luis M. Poveda. (Photo by Anthony Nunez)*

Eighteen victims of human trafficking, six of them missing juveniles, were reunited with their families, and their captors arrested after 288 investigations conducted from January 1, 2019, through April 30, 2020, by the MDPD's Human Trafficking Squad.

On Monday, September 14, 2020, the Squad was recognized for its work as it was presented with the 2019-2020 "Task Force/Team of the Year" from FDLE. A virtual ceremony was held due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements. FDLE made the announcement in conjunction with its Florida Missing Children's Day, an annual event to increase public awareness of the state's missing children.

"From patrol officers and canine units to analysts and investigators, we thank all of you for your unwavering commitment to this effort," said Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. "While Missing Children's Day is a day of remembrance, it is also a day of hope, hope to make child abduction a thing of the past in our state . . ." he said.

It was a record-setting period for arrests and convictions. Eight individuals were charged with human trafficking; in one case, a man was sentenced to 19 years in prison.

The Squad investigated tips of possible human trafficking, sifting through social media for leads to predators, and conducting surveillance at the Miami International Airport and local bus and truck depots, using their skill

of observation to spot victims. The Squad reached out to students, educators, and counselors, medical professionals, faith-based organizations, hotel and motel employees, and other law enforcement agencies as part of their effort.

Members of the Human Trafficking Squad are Lieutenant Luis M. Poveda, Sergeant David F. Quintas, Detectives Jessica Barriel, Johnpaul Valentin and Chaz G. Felder, and MDPD Victim Advocate Elba M. Suarez.

Large scale events tend to attract prostitution rings, so the Squad developed a plan to combat human trafficking during Super Bowl LIV events, which ran from the last week of January through Sunday, February 2, 2020, game day, and days after the game. The Squad worked for a year prior with local, state, and federal authorities. In one case, the Squad established communication with a potential victim, and discovered additional victims, including a 15-year-old girl, who had been missing for two years. In total, 13 victims of human trafficking were recovered.

"I cannot be prouder of the work that the Squad has done," Director Ramirez said. "In these tough times for law enforcement, the profession being shunned upon, the Miami-Dade Police, no matter what's going on out there, we're doing our job, we help people and we bring people to justice."



*Not complying with the mask order or new normal guidelines can result in a penalty of \$100 for individuals and \$500 for businesses.*

**Call 305-4POLICE  
to report non-compliance.  
[miamidade.gov/coronavirus](https://miamidade.gov/coronavirus)**

# MDPD's Cold Case Squad Solves 2004 Murder of Teenage Girl

By Brian Ballou



The Homicide Bureau's Cold Case Squad recently solved a 16-year case, relying on advancements in DNA to provide the evidence needed to arrest Mr. Raul Mata for the murder of his stepdaughter, Miss Dilcia Mejia. The victim's family thanked the Department during a press conference. Pictured from left to right are: Mrs. Delcia Oliva, the victim's mother, and Ms. Trinidad Gonzalez and Ms. Keisy Iriarte, the victim's cousins. (Photo by Anthony Nunez)

Miss Dilcia Mejia was just 16 when she was brutally murdered on September 17, 2004, in the Colonial Acres Mobile Home Community in Miami, and for the next 16 years, the case went unsolved.

Miss Mejia's stepfather, Mr. Raul Mata, called 911 on that day and told a dispatcher "someone killed my daughter." When MDPD police officers arrived at the residence, Mr. Mata directed them to her lifeless body. Her throat had been slashed. Mr. Mata denied any involvement in the horrific crime, and there was not enough evidence at the time to conclusively link him to the murder, but Miss Mejia's mother, Mrs. Delcia Oliva, and other relatives suspected that he was the killer.

Mr. Mata and Mrs. Oliva eventually separated. She moved to Texas, and Mr. Mata settled in Watsonville, California, a small city along the central coastline's agricultural region. He remarried and fathered a child. At the age of 46, he had seemingly left everything behind.

Advancements in forensics technology gave law enforcement agencies a novel way to scrutinize DNA and other evidence, and when an anonymous citizen called MDPD in March 2020 and asked detectives to take another look at the case, the Cold Case Squad, within the Homicide Bureau, investigated Miss Mejia's murder with renewed vigor, a "fresh set of eyes," as if the murder had just occurred.

"The squad pored over the evidence, applying the new technology, and their relentless efforts painted a clear picture of the person responsible, Mr. Mata," said Major Jorge Aguiar, who commands the Homicide Bureau.

"It's very unfortunate that this young lady was in the same household with a person she trusted, who ultimately took her life," Major Aguiar said. He personally notified Mrs. Oliva by phone that Mr. Mata was taken into custody in California on Monday, September 21, 2020, and charged with first-degree murder. "Calling the family was one of the most rewarding moments of my life," Major Aguiar said. He thanked the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office and the Watsonville Police Department for their assistance in the investigation. The pain of losing Miss Mejia had weighed heavily on the family throughout the years, and especially during the month of September, which marked her birthday and was a grim reminder of her death; but now, the family has closure.

As he awaited extradition to Florida, Mr. Mata committed suicide in his cell, according to the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office in California.

## MDPD Earns "Excelsior Recognition" Status, Maintains Dual Accreditation

By Brian Ballou

The MDPD was recently reaccredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) Inc., a national accreditation, and the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, a state accreditation.

The Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation covers 97 standards ranging from the use of roadblocks to procedures for backing up computer files, and since 2004, the Department has passed the process with flying colors. With five consecutive

reaccreditations every three years, dating back to October 6, 2004, the commission bestowed its highest achievement, "Excelsior Recognition" to the Department on Thursday, October 15, 2020.

CALEA covers approximately 484 standards, which are evaluated with on-site visits, observations, and review of documentation. The Department was reaccredited by CALEA on Friday, July 31, 2020, and has maintained accreditation every four years with that agency since 1993.



# MDPD Unveils Newest Breast Cancer Awareness Car

By Brian Ballou

It's a Ford Taurus Police Interceptor, with a black push bumper grille guard attached to the front, and a customary LED light bar attached to the hood, but there is something distinctly different about the rest of the vehicle. It is wrapped in a neon shade of pink across the hood and on its haunches, with the same shade for other design elements and a lighter hue of pink running across the door.

The car is the MDPD's latest version of its Breast Cancer Awareness Car, and this one contains a heartwarming feature across the top of the trunk, the names of 14 former employees who lost their lives to cancer.

"Whether we have faced it ourselves, or someone we love has, nearly all of us here today have been affected by breast cancer in some way," Director Ramirez said during the unveiling of the vehicle on Friday, October 16, 2020, in front of the Fred Taylor Headquarters Building.

The car will be used for community and special events and parades to educate the public about breast cancer and promote engagement between law enforcement and the community. It retires the old car, a faded Crown Victoria Police Interceptor with scorched and cracked pink stenciling, a sun-damaged relic beyond its years of service as an ambassador. The design for the new car was conceived by Graphics Technician Juan A. Perez.

One of the names on the back of the new car is Dorinda Ash, who worked for 28 years with the Department. Her last assignment was as a detective at the Airport District. She retired in 2004, and left south Florida to live with her extended family in Atlanta. She cherished her time with her grandchildren, and in 2010, was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of breast cancer. She was

given six months by her doctor, but survived for almost four years, passing away on January 25, 2014, at the age of 58. Her best friend, Ms. Virginia Walker, who also retired from the Department, submitted Mrs. Ash's name to be recognized on the car.

"She was a fighter, fought the whole time," said Mrs. Ash's daughter, Ms. Tosha Saunders, who flew from Atlanta to Miami with other family members to attend the event. "To see my mother's name on that car, is overwhelming. I can't put into words what it means to me, to my family, for this Department to honor her memory in that way."



The MDPD recently unveiled the latest edition of its Breast Cancer Awareness Car, which has the names of 14 former employees of the Department who lost their lives to cancer. Ms. Tosha Saunders points to her mother's name, Mrs. Dorinda Ash, a former MDPD Detective. (Photo by Brian Ballou)





# MDPD Officer Uses Decorative Skills to Update Second Floor Display Case

By Brian Ballou

Officer Barbara Chavez, of the Public Information & Education Bureau (PIEB), has a penchant for designing, so when it came time to updating the glass display case along the wall of the hallway leading to the second floor Cafetorium, she was picked for the job.

The display has five panels that showcase MDPD's major campaigns, features Officers of the Month, and is used as an exhibit to highlight departmental entities.

"I have images in my head of how I like to decorate and do things, and then I go with it, and that's it," Officer Chavez said. For months, she collected and squirreled away photos, and perused dozens of color schemes and palettes at arts and crafts stores. Officer Judy Chacon-Robles helped out. They finished the display on Tuesday, October 20, 2020, and invited Director Ramirez and PIEB Chief Hector Llevat, now retired, to view it.

"Wow, this is amazing," Director Ramirez said, as he saw the display. He stopped in front of the panel dedicated to his investiture on Friday, February 21, 2020. "I don't even remember taking that picture," he said, pointing at a photograph of him flanked by his family.

As she was constructing the panel, Officer Chavez had a photograph taken of the Director's badge and then she collaborated with Graphics Technician Juan Perez to create a multi-layered enlargement of it that appears three dimensional. She also enlisted her brother-in-law, a carpenter, to cut laminate wood planks to use as a decorative cover for the base of the panel, and she used rustic wallpaper she had at home to create the background.

For the Super Bowl panel, she bought tufts of artificial grass to fit the base. Three people sent her photos of the Hard Rock Stadium, and she chose the one with the best quality and again worked with Graphics Technician Perez to add a splash of color and other effects to the photo.

Another panel is dedicated to the Department's COVID-19 mitigation efforts. Officer Chavez gathered photos featuring officers in Personal Protective Equipment assisting at testing sites and food distribution sites. The panel also includes COVID-19 safety tips.

There is a panel featuring photos of the Officers of the Month, with a wavy blue backdrop. Officer Chavez said she did not have to put any time into that panel as it was already nicely decorated by Officer Jennifer Valdes, who usually maintains the display, but didn't have the time to do it recently because she had to process Federal Emergency Management Agency forms.

The fifth panel is dedicated to the Department's Canine Units. Officer Chavez spent the most time on that display, delving into the history and finding old photos, researching as if it was a major college project. She often worked through evenings and on weekends to put the display

together. "It was a lot of work but it was really worth it, so rewarding," Officer Chavez said. Her effort is reflected in the panel. There is a photograph that stretches the entire width of the panel, with 20 officers and dogs from Special Patrol Bureau standing side-by-side. The panel also features Canine Units from the Airport District, Narcotics Bureau, and the Seaport Operations Bureau.

"I've been in this Bureau for 11 years, so everyone knows me well and they know I like to decorate," Officer Chavez said. "I'm glad I was chosen because I had so much fun with it."



Officers Barbara Chavez (pictured) and Judy Chacon-Robles worked for months on a project to update the second floor display case. (Photos by Brian Ballou)





MDPD recently said farewell to 23 employees (11 sworn personnel and 12 professional staff) who retired after periods of service ranging from 15 to 39 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

MDPD Executive Officer Eric Mendez .....	29
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Sergeant Andres Varela Jr .....	27
Officer William S. Bryant .....	39
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Officer Enrique J. Cuevas .....	31
Officer Yolanda D. Everett .....	33
Officer Maria Mederos .....	34
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# Thank You Blood Donors!



The MDPD and OneBlood held successful blood collection drives at MDPD Headquarters Complex on September 11, 2020, and November 12, 2020, and at the Miami-Dade Public Safety Training Institute on October 22, 2020. Special thanks are extended to the donors listed below for helping save lives!

Commander MDPD Information Services Jose L. Rivero

Major Fernand Charles Jr.

Lieutenant Maribel Artime

Lieutenant Edward Bermudez

Lieutenant Jorge A. Carreno

Sergeant Michael Chang

Sergeant Nitza Y. Dominguez

Sergeant Waukesha S. Kenon

Sergeant Joy Mellies

Sergeant Manuel A. Munoz

Sergeant Gloria Packingham

Sergeant Ronald Perez

Sergeant Arthur Utset

Officer Javier E. Aluart

Officer Ernest D. Bandiera

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Officer Joandeliz Borges

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Officer Danielle D. Jones

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Officer Francisco C. Suarez

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Police Records Technician 1 Myrlande Desulme

Criminalist 2 Yamil Garcia

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MDPD Wellness Program Facilities Manager Kelly J. Kennedy

Building Maintenance Supervisor Raul Montelongo

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Criminalist 1 Facundo D. Torino

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Mr. James McDonald

Ms. Lorena Ontaneda

Ms. Juleann Santos

Mr. Michael Santos

Mr. Felix Tito Lopez Tomas

Ms. Arcila Valdivia





# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) SAFETY TIPS

CONSEJOS DE SEGURIDAD POR EL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) • TI KONSÈY SEKIRITE SOU CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) LA

**Wear a face covering.**

Use una máscara facial. • Mete yon kouvèti vizaj.

**Practice social distancing.**

Mantenga la distancia social. • Pratike distans sosyal.

**Wash your hands often. When soap and water are not available use hand sanitizer.**

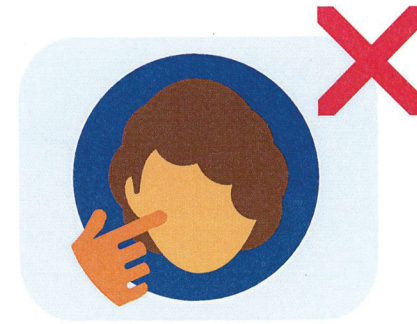
Lávese las manos frecuentemente. Si no tiene agua y jabón, use desinfectante de manos. • Lave men w souvan. Lè savon ak dlo pa disponib, sèvi ak dezenfektan pou men.

**Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.**

Limpie y desinfecte los objetos y superficies que se tocan a menudo. • Netwaye epi dezenfekte souvan objè ak kote moun manyen.

**Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.**

Quédese en casa si está enfermo, excepto para buscar atención médica. • Rete lakay ou lè w malad, sof pou ale chèche swen medikal.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**

Evite tocarse los ojos, la nariz y la boca. • Evite manyen je w, nen w ak bouch ou.

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)



October/December 2020  
Vol. 36, No. 4

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

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