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Department of Community Engagement and Public Information

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The City of Oak Park to Add Additional Community Resource Officer to its Public Safety Department

March 15, 2018, Oak Park, Michigan – The City of Oak Park is adding an additional Community Resource Officer position to its existing Public Safety team to expand our presence in educational environments while providing more opportunities for interaction with our residents.

The need for an additional Community Resource Officer is obvious in today’s climate, says Public Safety Director Steve Cooper. “We continually try to build our community relations, particularly for those in kindergarten to twelfth grade. We are finding it important to connect with children at a younger age in an effort to make their first experience with law enforcement a positive influence and then build upon that,” he said of the position that will activate in July. “We not only want our young community members to feel safe and secure, but to feel comfortable in approaching any one of our officers when the need should arise.”

Officer Devin Benson serves as the Department’s existing Community Resource Officer. The position requires an officer to maintain a presence in the schools and provide educational safety programs for Oak Park’s three school districts – Berkley, Ferndale and Oak Park, along with several Jewish, charter, pre-K, nursery and Montessori schools.

“For our part, this additional position will allow us to provide a positive presence and influence to our developing younger generation,” stated City Manager Erik Tungate. “Times have changed and our school children are faced with many more challenges than we encountered years ago. We are proud to be able to assist our public school administrators to serve and protect our children during these challenging times. Our children deserve to have safe environments and relationships with those who can support their needs.”

In addition to supporting today’s youth, Officer Benson and the new Community Resource Officer will represent the Department’s interest at all major City events; interact in meaningful and supportive ways with our senior populations; and create and serve the needs of the City’s Neighborhood Watch and Block Club activities. They are also responsible for coordinating the City’s crossing guard program, overseeing the Volunteer Parking Enforcement Patrol, and maintaining the Department’s entire fleet of public safety vehicles from outfitting and maintenance to changeovers.

The expansion of the Community Resource Team adds to the Department’s ability to build community relations. The Department launched their first Canine Unit and deployed the popular Ice Cream Patrol in recent years. It also continues to conduct Citizens Academy programs for both adults and for youth.

The benefits of building community relations to a public safety department are many. “We have a very strong relationship with our community members,” stated Director Cooper. “Not only do we take great pride in serving and protecting this fine community, but we also feel the support they provide back to us in our day-to-day operations. As a public safety officer you never know from day-to-day what your working day will entail. Our days are made more enjoyable knowing our community members stand alongside us in our efforts.”

About Oak Park: The City of Oak Park is situated on the southern-most border of Oakland County, Mich., and serves as a suburban ambassador to Detroit. Incorporated as a city in 1945, Oak Park’s current population exceeds 29,300 and is home to more than 500 local businesses, including corporate headquarters.

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