



Chief's Update
April 5, 2013

Dear Tempe Police Employees,

"Because I want to help people..." This phrase is one of the most common responses to the question many of us were asked during our initial job interview or during the first day of the police or detention academy. The question being some variation of the form, "Why do you want to become a [police officer, detention officer, dispatcher, etc.]?"

As we move throughout our careers and focus on our job specialties, it is easy to lose focus on why we chose to dedicate our lives to a career in public service. Whether our personal or professional lives become more complex or we are forced to contend with temporary bouts of adversity, we must work hard to ensure our idealism doesn't get replaced by apathy. Once it does, it is extremely hard to bounce back.

One way to prevent ourselves from falling into the *apathy trap* is to remind ourselves daily of not only our responsibility to serve others, but of the tremendous impact we have on people's lives. Regardless of our respective assignments, we all can remember incidents where we made a positive impact on someone's life. Whether it was a person to person contact or a telephone contact, you have undoubtedly helped a person when no one else could – or in certain instances – would. It is those instances which give credence to the phrase, "Because I want to help people..."

This month, there are several opportunities to do something which will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the lives of others. Specifically, it is our support for the *Special Olympics of Arizona* and the annual *Law Enforcement Torch Run*. With a mission to "provide year round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities," the Special Olympics is about helping others who look up to us as heroes - encouraging and assisting athletes to not only express - but highlight - their abilities rather than be side-lined by their disabilities.

Historically, the Tempe Police Department has supported the *Special Olympics of Arizona* through its t-shirt sales and participation by having employees volunteer to run in the annual *Law Enforcement Torch Run*. Unfortunately, support and participation has waned over the years and it is time to make a renewed commitment to those who truly need our help.

With approximately 2,300 athletes in our Special Olympics region, it has come time to increase not only our fundraising efforts, but our participation in running in the Special Olympics Torch into the stadium as Tempe has always been the final leg of the relay.

For anyone who has participated in the Torch Run, words can barely describe the exhilaration one feels when running through the streets of Tempe with a symbol carried throughout our state signifying the strength of the human spirit over adversity. Typically, traffic comes to a stop, members of the public wave and honk their horns in support, and upon entering a stadium filled to capacity with cheering competitors, spectators, and supporters one is quickly overwhelmed by the positive energy being directed towards them; solidifying the shared bond between law enforcement and the members of our disabled community.

During the month of April, the Tempe Police Department is sponsoring events to assist in the fundraising efforts for our community's athletes. Specifically, this Saturday (April 6th) we are partnering with the document services company Shred-It and the Special Olympics of Arizona to hold a shred-a-thon at the Hardy Substation from 0900-1300 hours. During this event, employees and members of our community can protect themselves from identity theft by shredding up to 5 boxes of personal documents for free. A donation table will be set up for anyone who would like to make a financial contribution to the Special Olympics.

In closing, I ask that you join me in showing your support in some form or fashion for the *Special Olympics of Arizona* and the upcoming *Law Enforcement Torch Run*. Whether it is purchasing a single raffle ticket and/or running in the Torch Run (we could really use some additional torch bearers), I am confident that by doing so, you will feel a renewed sense of living up to your desire "to want to help people."

Tom Ryff
Chief of Police