

2022

# ANNUAL REPORT



**Winnetka Police Department**

Brian O'Connell, Interim Chief of Police

***The Mission of the Winnetka Police Department  
is to protect life and property;  
preserve a peaceful community;  
prevent, detect, and investigate crimes;  
justly enforce laws;  
and protect the rights of all citizens.***

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

I am pleased to present you with the Winnetka Police Department's annual report for 2022 and share some of our accomplishments from the year.

We continued to adapt and navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining focus on our core values of police services to the community. Officers remained dedicated, not allowing the hazards of the pandemic to interfere with providing safety and security. We also continued to assist those who struggled and were in need of additional resources.

As was a common theme with law enforcement around the country, our agency identified a growing concern in the area of mental health calls for service. Not only was there an increased demand for law enforcement to respond to calls involving mental health, but there was also a need for law enforcement to evaluate and determine the best possible approach to resolving the situation. We worked diligently to focus our efforts on two principles: 1) maintaining safety, and 2) providing aid and necessary resources for the most beneficial outcome for everyone involved. For perspective, the Winnetka Police Department responded to 234 incidents that were assisted by the use of social services. Over the last two years, we have witnessed a 129% increase in these calls for service.

The police department continues to prepare and train in many areas, including critical incident responses. The horrifying events on July 4th in Highland Park made critical incident response preparation a tragic reality. We mourn for the lives lost and the countless others who were injured and struggle post-incident. Law enforcement acted without hesitation. How we train and how we prepare were evident that day. As we began to slowly move forward from this incident, we will never forget the lives lost, the injured, and the courageous efforts of the countless law enforcement professionals who responded that day.

In a continuing effort to progress and provide additional safety resources to the community, the Winnetka Police Department began the implementation of License Plate Reader Cameras. We were not alone. As a result of meetings over several months with area departments as part of our membership with NORPAC (Northern Region Police Assistance Consortium), we strategically placed cameras in areas of town that assist both the community and our law enforcement partners. These cameras have already proven highly successful by assisting investigations with NORPAC communities in solving serious crimes.

We continue to challenge each other to connect with the community far beyond a law enforcement encounter. We have participated in community events such as the Special Olympics, security surveys for Winnetka businesses, school police visits, community presentations, and Ride-to-School programs. We are appreciative of these opportunities to allow the men and women of the Winnetka Police Department not only to continue as guardians, but as people who are committed to a strong, positive partnership with the community we serve.

Brian O'Connell  
Interim Chief of Police

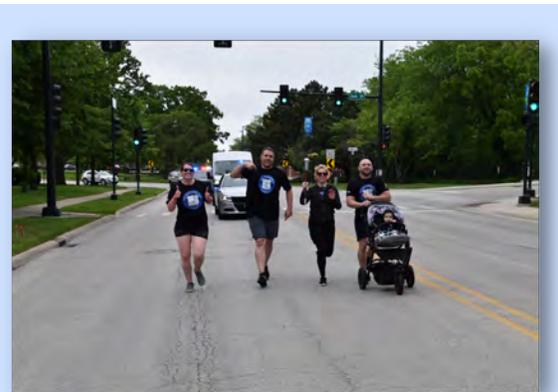
# SPECIAL OLYMPICS FUNDRAISING



The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) for Special Olympics is the largest grass-roots fundraiser for Special Olympics. Their primary goal is to partner with law enforcement to raise awareness of acceptance and inclusion of those with intellectual disabilities. The Winnetka Police Department has long been a supporter of the LETR and for many years, we have participated in the Torch Run and joined other local departments at their Cop on a Rooftop events.

In 2022, we began a concerted effort to participate in additional fundraising events and further support this cause. For the first time, we hosted our own Cop on a Rooftop event at a Dunkin store. We also participated in our first Plane Pull and earned the award for Highest Fundraising Team at that event. Over the course of 2022, we raised over \$21,000.00 for Special Olympics and will be listed as a top fundraising department on the 2023 Law Enforcement Torch Run t-shirt.

The commitment and teamwork demonstrated by our staff to organize and participate in these events was inspiring. We plan to continue our involvement moving forward, raising awareness for Special Olympics through our efforts.



# OFFICERS' MAILBOX

November 2022

"This police contact was by far the best police experience I ever had, and these officers should be recognized. Officer Palarz and Officer Huinker were polite, professional, courteous, helpful, and patient. They were able to figure out the issue with my cell phone so my home address could be entered into GPS. This might not be a big deal to most people, but at my age, the frustrations of being lost made me feel scared. I would not have figured out how to get home without their help."

October 2022

"I had a minor fender bender this afternoon at Willow and Hibbard. Officer Dorsey came for the report, and I am writing to commend him for his professionalism and demeanor in his handling of the situation. Without blowing smoke, I could tell he has been very well trained in how to handle this type of situation (and probably many others)."

June 2022

"This afternoon, I spoke with Officer Rodriguez while attending the Village Green carnival with my daughter. We were speaking about the sad school event in Texas and I asked him about the training/protocols if such an incident were to occur here. You should know that he was excellent at talking with us about the WPD response and I was reassured and pleased to know we have such fine officers in our community."

March 2022

"Dear Sergeant Strzelec,  
  
We can't thank you enough for your kindness and compassion when you came to check on my mom's passing. You explained everything you need to get done clearly and went about your business in an un-intrusive way. We appreciate your thoughtfulness in our time of trauma and loss. Thanks again so much and for being one of Winnetka's finest."

October 2022

"Dear Officer Gonzalez,  
  
Thank you for making my birthday so special. It was so nice to meet you and check out your cool motorcycle. Thanks for keeping our community safe."

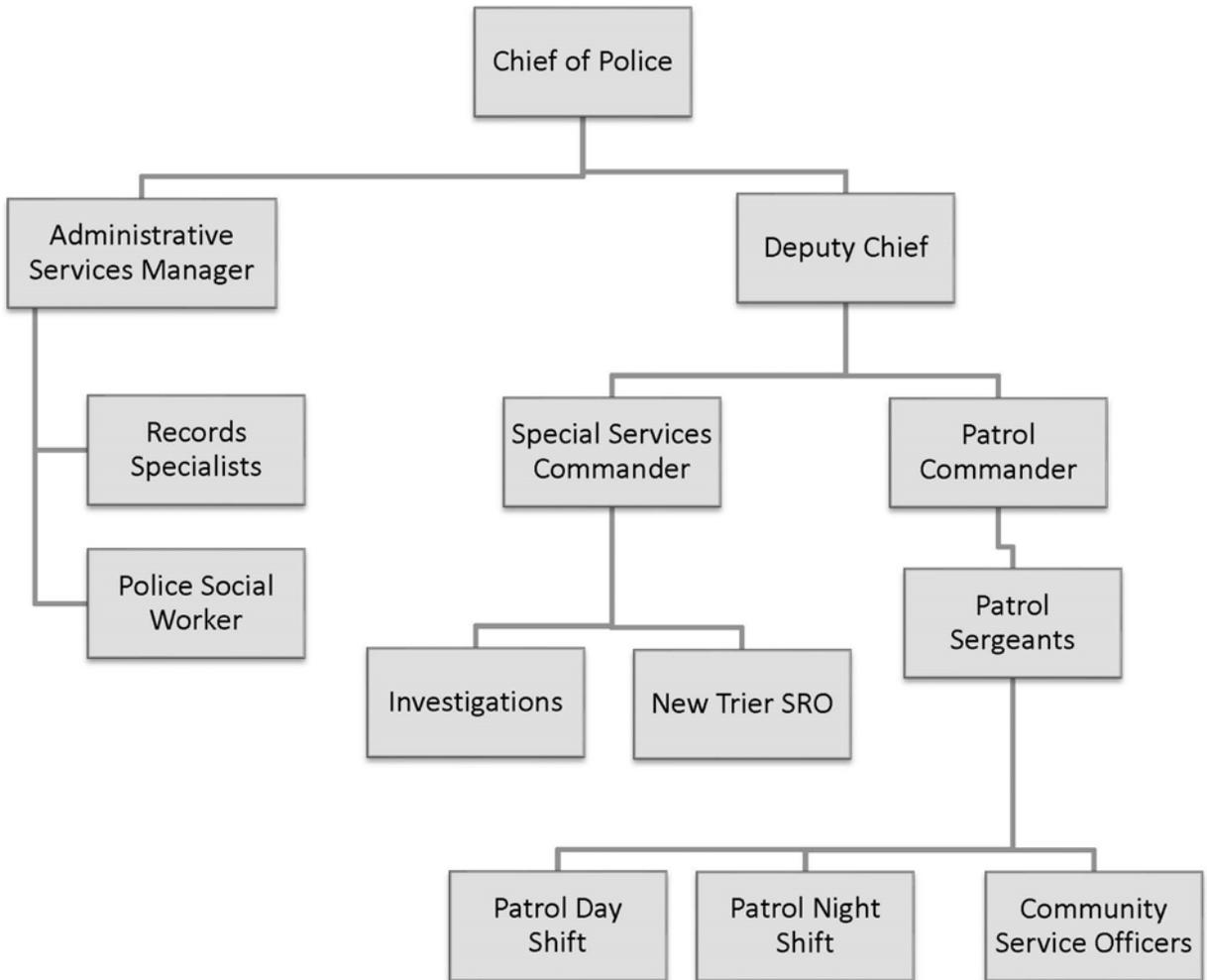
September 2022

"Our puppy (he is 80 lbs) broke through our wooden fence today and was running loose in the neighborhood and CSO Walsh couldn't have been more helpful in finding the dog, building trust with the dogs (and neighbors) and delivering our dog back safely to us."

June 2022

"On early Tuesday afternoon, members of the police and fire department responded to a chemical spill near our son's house. I estimate that, from the time of their arrival until the problem was fully resolved, members of the police and fire department spent about 45 minutes at the scene. Throughout that time, we observed conscientious and thorough professionals doing what they've been trained to do. It gives us great confidence that this same attitude and professionalism will be there both in more serious situations and even the minor ones."

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



# DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Winnetka Police Department is comprised of 38 employees who serve in both full and part-time capacities. The department employs 28 sworn officers, including the Chief of Police, who are responsible for enforcing local and state laws throughout the community. In addition to the sworn officers, the police department includes 10 civilian staff members who are responsible for all non-law enforcement duties, including administration, record keeping, parking enforcement, and social services. In 2022, the Winnetka Police Department responded to 18,736 calls for service. For detailed information regarding crimes, arrests, and citations, refer to the chart on page 14.

## ***Patrol Division***



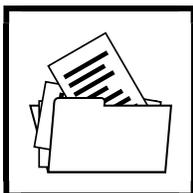
The Patrol Division is the most publicly visible unit of the department. The division is led by the patrol commander who oversees 5 sergeants and 16 uniformed patrol officers. Sergeants and police officers work 12-hour shifts and regularly rotate between day and night shift. The Patrol Division is responsible for self-initiated field activity such as traffic enforcement and premises checks, as well as responding to emergency and non-emergency calls for service. This includes traffic crashes, burglaries, disputes, and suspicious activity.

## ***Investigations Division***



The Investigations Division is comprised of two investigators, a school resource officer (SRO), and is led by the special services commander. This division conducts complex criminal investigations that require more time and involvement than the calls for service handled by patrol. These cases include identity thefts, burglaries, death investigations, and more. Additional responsibilities include conducting inspections of liquor vendors, identifying emerging crime trends, and participating in task forces such as NORTAF Burglary and NORTAF Major Crimes.

## ***Records Division***



The Records Division is staffed by three records specialists, who are overseen by the administrative services manager. This division is the primary customer service hub of the department. Records Specialists assist all police department visitors and non-emergency callers by answering questions or directing calls to proper staff. They are responsible for maintaining all police records, including cases, arrests, traffic crashes, and citations/warnings. They also process expurgements, Freedom of Information requests, false alarm invoices, and administrative adjudication requests.

# 01

## **Community Services**

The Winnetka Police Department employs two full-time and three part-time Community Service Officers (CSOs). They primarily work during the day and are tasked with handling a variety of non-crime related calls for service, including parking enforcement, animal control, and school crossings.

# 03

## **School Resource Officer**

Since 1992, the police department has assigned a School Resource Officer to New Trier High School. The SRO serves as a liaison between the school and police and primarily investigates crimes that occur on school grounds. The SRO also conducts educational presentations to students.

# 05

## **Evidence Technician Unit**

The department currently has 11 members trained as evidence technicians (ETs). All members of this unit are required to complete the basic ET course prior to appointment. They continue with advanced specialized training including photography and fingerprint development and recovery.

# 02

## **Police Social Worker**

The Winnetka Police Department has a part-time in-house social worker. The social worker provides advice and resources to citizens during times of crisis or when expertise is needed beyond that which a police officer can provide.

# 04

## **Business Liaison Officer**

The Business Liaison Officer assignment was created in 2020 to provide business owners a point of contact in the police department. This officer visits local business owners' concerns and ensure they are aware of crime trends in the area that could affect them.

# 06

## **Youth Investigations**

Our officers regularly interact with juveniles through juvenile-in-crisis complaints, child abuse allegations, or criminal investigations. Such cases require the expertise of trained officers who are knowledgeable about juvenile law. The department had 11 certified juvenile officers in 2022.

# CRIME PREVENTION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The Winnetka Police Department is committed to assisting residents with crime prevention and safety. To assist in these efforts, the police department offers the following services to residents:



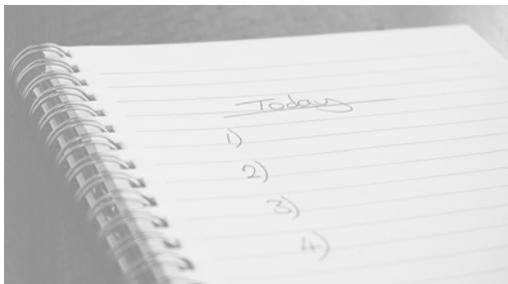
**House Watch:** When a resident is absent from a home, they can add their residence to the vacation watch list. Officers periodically walk the exterior of the home to ensure it appears secure. Officers conducted 643 house watches in 2022.



**Burglar Alarms:** The police department encourages residents to utilize their burglar alarms as residences are often burglarized when a functioning alarm has not been set. Patrol officers respond to all alarms, even though most ultimately prove to be false. In 2022, officers responded to 709 burglar alarms.



**C.O.R.E. Cards:** C.O.R.E. stands for "Crime Opportunity Reduction Education." These cards notify residents of criminal opportunities involving their property. Officers can leave C.O.R.E. cards at residences, businesses, or on vehicles when they see vulnerable property. Officers issued 590 cards in 2022.



**Special Watches and Checks:** Patrol officers utilize the special watch database to familiarize themselves with traffic concerns, special patrol needs, community events, and parking issues. Officers add information regarding recent crimes to ensure all department members are aware. Officers performed 5,992 special watches and checks throughout the year.

# EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

## Retirements

In 2022, two long-serving employees retired from the department: Sergeant James Harrison and Detective Ian Levy.

We wish them happiness and success in their future endeavors.



## Promotions

The department was honored to promote Officer Marcin Beskur to Sergeant in 2022. Additionally, CSO Nicole Palarz successfully completed the entry-level patrol officer hiring process and is now a police officer with our department.



## New Hires

The department welcomed three new members in 2022 - Patrol Officers Ruslana Slyvchuk and Juan Sandoval, and Community Service Officer Sahir Kullab.

We look forward to many successful years ahead with each of them.



# REGIONAL COOPERATIVES & PARTNERSHIPS



## ***Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System***

The Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) is a statewide law enforcement mutual aid system established after September 11th, 2001. ILEAS provides support through manpower and equipment when a law enforcement agency has exceeded its own capabilities.



## ***Northern Illinois Police Alarm System (NIPAS)***

NIPAS is a coalition of agencies who provide mutual aid to one another in the event of an emergency. NIPAS is divided into two teams: Emergency Services Team (EST) and Mobile Field Force (MFF). The Winnetka Police Department is an active member of NIPAS and provides an officer to serve on each team. The EST is comprised of personnel who are trained in special weapons and tactics for hostage and barricade incidents, high-risk warrant service, major crime scene searches, and other tactical incidents. The MFF provides crowd control for public demonstrations, civil disturbances, and other events involving large crowds. Both teams train on a regular basis throughout the year.



## ***NORTAF Violent Crimes Task Force***

In 1997, thirteen north shore suburbs formed the North Regional Major Crimes Task Force to assist member communities with significant criminal investigations that exceed a single agency's resources. The Violent Crimes Task Force investigates homicides, kidnapping, and critical school violence incidents. Each member department supplies personnel, expertise, equipment, and support. In addition to responding to call-outs, this unit participates in training to enhance the skill level of all personnel. The task force consists of administrative and support personnel, investigative personnel, and forensic specialists. NORTAF Violent Crimes Task Force had 4 activations during 2022.

### ***NORTAF Major Crash Assistance Team***



The NORTAF Major Crash Assistance Team (MCAT) was developed to assist member agencies with the investigation of fatal or near-fatal motor vehicle crashes. MCAT provides a rapid response and professional crash investigation for all major crashes in the NORTAF communities. Winnetka currently has one officer assigned to MCAT as crash investigators. MCAT had 19 activations during 2022, 5 of which were for fatal crashes.

### ***NORTAF Burglary Task Force***



The Burglary Task Force is responsible for investigating burglary patterns throughout the member communities. The task force is activated when any of the member agencies observe a residential or commercial burglary pattern occurring in their area. The Winnetka Police Department currently has one officer assigned to this task force. In 2022, the Burglary Task Force had 6 activations resulting in 24 arrests and cleared 228 cases.

### ***Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Academy***



The Winnetka Police Department is a member of the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA) which provides a cooperative approach to emergency preparedness and response. Located in Glenview, NIPSTA currently has thirty-three member agencies that enjoy a year-round curriculum. For police members, NIPSTA provides training in a wide array of subjects including tactical driving, forensics, and tactical scenario-based training.

### ***Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Laboratory***



The Winnetka Police Department is a member of the nationally accredited Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Laboratory (NIRCL). NIRCL offers a wide variety of analysis including: forensic biology (DNA), chemistry, fingerprint and footwear analysis, toxicology and more. Partnering with NIRCL enables the Winnetka Police Department to have crime scene evidence processed and analyzed in a timely manner.



# A YEAR IN PHOTOS



**WINNETKA POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
*Crimes, Arrests, Citations and Activities, 2020 - 2022*

GROUP A OFFENSES	REPORTED		
	2022	2021	2020
<b>Crimes Against Persons</b>			
Murder	0	0	-
Negligent Manslaughter	0	0	-
Justifiable Homicide	0	0	-
Non-Consensual Sex Offenses	3	2	-
Aggravated Assault	5	4	-
Simple Assault	25	8	-
Intimidation	3	0	-
Kidnapping / Abduction	0	0	-
Consensual Sex Offenses	0	0	-
Human Trafficking	0	0	-
<b>TOTAL Crimes Against Persons</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Crimes Against Property</b>			
Robbery	0	0	-
Burglary / Breaking & Entering	8	8	-
Larceny / Theft Offenses	70	48	-
Motor Vehicle Theft	17	2	-
Arson	0	0	-
Destruction of Property	43	31	-
Counterfeiting / Forgery	2	2	-
Fraud Offenses	88	72	-
Other Crimes Against Property	0	0	-
<b>TOTAL Crimes Against Property</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Crimes Against Society</b>			
Drug / Narcotic Violations	32	26	-
Drug Equipment Violations	12	6	-
Other Crimes Against Society	3	0	-
<b>TOTAL Crimes Against Society</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>COMMON CALLS FOR SERVICE</b>			
<b>Total Calls for Service</b>	<b>18,736</b>	<b>19,768</b>	<b>19,792</b>
Burglar Alarms	709	707	665
Fire Department Assist	356	325	253
Noise / Other Disturbance	286	305	275
Parking Complaint	421	394	281
Suspicious Incident	587	491	594

ARRESTS & CITATIONS	2022		2021		2020	
	148	153	134	209	199	190
<b>TOTAL Custodial / Arrests</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>TOTAL Ordinance Citations</b>						
<b>OFFENSE TYPES</b>						
Animal Violations	13		19		11	
Battery	2		8		7	
Burglary	6		3		0	
Cannabis Violations	45		30		49	
Criminal Damage to Property	1		9		14	
Disorderly Conduct / Harassment	16		3		3	
Domestic Battery / Violation O.P.	6		4		5	
DUI	28		16		17	
Excessive Speed	44		51		132	
Hit and Run	2		1		0	
Liquor Offenses	3		6		5	
No Valid D.L. / Suspended D.L.	33		31		13	
Other Agency Warrant Arrests	5		7		6	
Other Drug Violations	0		1		3	
Public Nuisance	32		109		76	
Theft	5		12		13	
Trespass	27		10		17	
Other Arrests & Citations	33		23		18	
<b>PARKING</b>						
Total Parking Citations	2,747		1,485		1,631	
<b>TRAFFIC</b>						
Traffic Citations	652		756		759	
Traffic Warnings	1,124		1,100		1,057	
Injury Traffic Crashes	22		26		21	
Non-Injury Traffic Crashes	265		256		305	
<b>OTHER DEPARTMENT SERVICES</b>						
House Watch	643		520		626	
Directed Traffic Assignments	2,138		2,341		1,994	
Special Watches and Checks	5,992		5,230		7,608	
Crime Prevention Cards	590		682		731	

# **WINNETKA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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