

**DEPARTMENT of
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Mayor Baraka and Public Safety Director O’Hara Join New Jersey Attorney General Grewal, Acting U.S. Attorney Honig and Newark Police Foundation Chairman Porrino to Launch “Cops and Kids Community Policing Contest”

Aimed at Building Stronger Relationships between Newark Youth and Police

Newark, NJ – June 17, 2021 – Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka and Public Safety Director Brian A. O’Hara joined New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, Acting United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey Rachael A. Honig, and Newark Police Foundation Chairman Christopher S. Porrino to announce Newark’s first-ever “Cops and Kids Community Policing Contest” today.

During a press conference held at Belmont Runyon Elementary School, the Newark Police Foundation launched the program aimed at addressing the need for more constructive engagement between Newark youth and police. The event featured a barbecue, police officers interacting with children, members of the Newark Police Mounted and Motorcycle Units and NPD1, the Newark Police helicopter.

“Newark has made big strides over the years through creative community policing initiatives,” Chairman Porrino said. “COVID-19 abruptly halted those efforts, but the trust and confidence built through community engagements in Newark before the pandemic paid huge dividends. As the pandemic fades, the importance of restarting in-person police-community engagement cannot be overstated.”

“I am pleased that the first order of business of the reconstituted Newark Police Foundation is to strengthen relationships between the community and police,” Mayor Baraka said. “It’s especially important that these engagements begin with our youth because the positive experiences our kids have will naturally be felt by their families, and will resonate with all residents of the City of Newark being back together again.”

“This initiative embodies the wisdom that police must be seen as fully engaged members of the community and guardians of the safety and well-being of all residents,” said Attorney General Grewal. “If police are visible in the community only when there are red lights flashing and sirens wailing, then the divides that have been created as a result of the murder of George Floyd and other tragic breaches of justice across the U.S. will not be bridged. Through programs such as this one, we are embracing community policing in New Jersey and bringing police and residents together in ways that foster

dialogue, fellowship, trust, and mutual respect. Of course, the best starting point to build a stronger future is with our young people. I commend General Porrino and the Newark Police Foundation for continuing to build on the great work that Mayor Baraka and Director O'Hara have been doing to advance community policing and policing excellence here in Newark.”

“During the five years the Newark Police Department has been operating under its consent decree with the Department of Justice, we have seen Newark take significant steps forward in the area of community outreach, including the establishment of community engagement officers in every precinct and a commitment to engage in proactive outreach programs like the Summer Initiative,” Acting U.S. Attorney Rachael A. Honig said. “The events of the past year have shown that efforts like these work, and that meaningful reform can be achieved without sacrificing public safety. The program announced today is another positive development in this area, and an important reiteration of Newark’s dedication to ensuring that its residents and the public safety officials who protect them continue to develop better communication and understanding.”

“We simply cannot thank the Newark Police Foundation enough for partnering with us to meaningfully engage Newark youth this summer,” Director O'Hara said. The “Cops and Kids Community Policing Contest” couldn’t have come at a better time—following the lockdown of summer 2020, when Newark police community engagements were extremely limited for health and safety reasons. I am pleased that the foundation is supporting police and Newark youth. This initiative also coincides with the Department of Public Safety’s citywide Summer Initiative, aimed at engaging the community with a variety of programs, including community roll calls, Fire Division open houses and daily events hosted by each Precinct.”

The Newark Police Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, will fund grants to each of Newark’s seven precincts to develop and implement a community policing initiative with youth engagement as a priority. Later this year, each initiative will be evaluated for effectiveness and judged by members of the Newark community and the Foundation. The winning initiative will be announced at an event during which all the initiatives will be showcased by the police officers who created them.

The precinct that develops the winning initiative will have a grant established in its honor, and the program will be implemented citywide with funding from the Foundation and through private donations. The New Jersey Attorney General’s Office will also contribute funding to assist the Newark Police Department with the implementation of these programs. The Foundation will also pursue grant opportunities in support of strengthening community engagement between Newark police and the City’s youth.

Click here for photos of the event: <http://bit.ly/nwk-cops-and-kids>

For more information about the Newark Police Foundation, please visit www.newarkpolicefoundation.com.