



City of Tampa

Jane Castor, Mayor

Tampa Police Department

Lee Bercaw

Chief of Police

411 N. Franklin Street

Tampa, FL 33602

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To the entire Tampa community,

September 30 marked 100 days since I officially took the oath as your Tampa Police Department Chief of Police. I am extremely proud of our continued crime reduction, and I am energized by the relationships being developed throughout our community. I look forward to launching new initiatives and seeing our ongoing partnerships help us ensure we keep Tampa safer, together.

In my first 100 days, the philosophical approach of the department was clearly defined so that every situation encountered by a member of the Tampa Police Department would be treated as an opportunity for a community-oriented policing approach. Every officer has been instructed to get to know their community and its concerns, and to take proactive measures in making the community safer. The goal is for every community member to know the officer who patrols their neighborhood.

Some community engagement efforts focused on in my first 100 days include:

- **Town Hall Tuesdays:** Launched as an open forum for residents to meet with department personnel and provide relevant updates about what is happening in their neighborhood, Town Hall Tuesdays also provide an opportunity to address any specific questions or concerns, ranging from safety tips to recruitment efforts.
- **Neighborhood Watch Programs:** After analyzing crime trends, it was noticeable that lower crime rates were directly correlated with strongly established NHW groups. Our Community Engagement Officers and Community Partnership Liaisons work directly with residents in neighborhoods with inactive or absent NHW groups and help them establish one in their area.
- **S.P.O.R.T.S.:** Our newest initiative, Sharing Possibilities with Our Residents Through Sports (S.P.O.R.T.S.), is specifically geared towards creating a positive relationship between law enforcement and the city's younger residents through our shared love of sports.

Wellness, for our community and our officers, is one of my primary concerns. In this profession, it is important to be able to quickly recognize what our community and first responders struggle with, and then be able to provide the appropriate support they need, whether it is a person experiencing a mental health crisis or a person simply in need of a helping hand. Our Behavioral Health Unit and Homeless Affairs Liaisons provide this support to the community; and the Peer Support Program, which was launched during my first 100 days, serves to assist those within the department.

There is outstanding leadership development at the Tampa Police Department. We recently held a historic promotional ceremony, honoring 50 members of the department taking on higher levels of responsibility. As we continuously work towards shaping our department's future, we are also working towards developing the next generation of officers; recruiting more women in law

enforcement as part of the 30x30 initiative, as well as more officers who were born and raised in Tampa. Our efforts now include two annual fully paid Police Recruit Scholarship Program opportunities, currently open to interested applicants. Our department should be as diverse as the community we serve.

Day 101 and beyond.

A recent study conducted by the Major City Chief's Association ranked Tampa as one of the lowest in violent crimes compared to cities of similar size. Of course, these achievements are only possible due to the strong and long-standing relationships of our community and their public servants. Together, our work has resulted in a decrease in total violent crime when compared to this time last year. In addition, more than 1140 guns have been seized. These favorable statistics do not mean our work is complete. While we continue to reduce crime, we must also reduce the fear of and opportunity for crime.

How do we accomplish this? Together.

In Tampa, there are nearly 400,000 residents and just under 1,000 officers. We can only be effective in preventing crime with the support and assistance of the public. We have expanded our community outreach and youth services to provide positive mentorships and role models for our youngest community members. Juvenile-related gun crimes remain a concern. In most cases, the juveniles steal guns from unlocked vehicles. We need the assistance of our community, and all responsible gun owners, to secure all firearms and lock your cars.

Those coming to work at the Tampa Police Department are expected to live by the golden rule: "Everyone is to be treated with dignity and respect." Every officer is also expected to be the kind of police officer who is the best of the badge and earns and deserves the community's support. In an expansion of our Quality Assurance Program, we will soon launch a new initiative seeking input from those who interact with TPD by way of text messages, emails, and mobile-friendly surveys to crime victims, reporting parties, and other members of the community. The input of those we serve will help to make us a better, more responsive police department.

I have served my entire law enforcement career with the Tampa Police Department. Ensuring a strong future for the department, and a safer community for those we serve are goals that I take pride in, professionally and personally. I appreciate the input and concerns I have heard in our community forums and Town Hall Tuesday meetings. I thank you for your continued support in helping us make Tampa safer, and stronger, together.



Lee Bercaw
Chief of Police