

Constitutional Policing: Understanding Your Community

Voiceover

00:00

This is *The Beat*—a podcast series that keeps you in the know about the latest community policing topics facing our nation.

John Wells

00:08

Hello my name is John Wells and on behalf of the U.S Department of Justice, COPS Office, I'd like to introduce you to Commissioner William Evans of the Boston Police Department. Commissioner Evans is here today to discuss his perspectives on constitutional policing. Thank you for making time to join us today.

Commissioner William Evans

00:21

Oh thank you for having me.

Wells

00:23

Commissioner, in your opinion, what does constitutional policing mean to you?

Evans

00:26

Well, to me, constitutional policing means respectful policing. You know, respecting people's rights as we go about our job, but also, you know, the public respecting the tough job we have to do. You know there's a lot of give and take, and our main goal is to keep the community safe and do it in a manner that follows the laws. It's mutual respect, it's common sense. It's just making sure we you know, respect each other.

Wells

00:52

How have you been able to adapt your training to leverage concepts of fair and impartial policing?

Evans

00:57

We start in the academy. You know we do inherent bias training in the academy. We bring in a lot of speakers. We bring in mothers who have lost young children to violence to speak to the officers so they understand what the child and the mother and the whole family unit is going through; bringing gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender groups in, we let them speak to the officers. We have our officers Youth Connect come in and the youth in the neighborhood come in and speak to our officers. We bring a lot of

culture into our academy so when the officers come out of the academy, they have a better understanding of the community and they're actually part of the community.

Wells

01:37

How has the culture of your department affected the way your officers interact with the community?

Evans

01:41

Well, when they come out of the academy, they understand them. They understand the culture and they understand that a lot of these kids don't have a lot—the victims of you know, society where there's unemployment, there's disadvantage, there's inequity. So we try to teach that and bringing the groups in when our officers come out, they have a lot of empathy for what a lot of these kids go through. And I've always talked to the academy classes and I try to stress with them there is no such thing as a bad kid out there. All the kid needs is the right opportunity and they can be anything that they want to be. And that's the culture, that's the message we're trying to send and I think it resonates with a lot of the officers, and it helps in our effort in community policing.

Wells

02:24

In the wake of Ferguson, Missouri, what can the community and law enforcement do together to discuss and collaborate on issues related to race, disparity, and equity?

Evans

02:32

Well, I think we can all pull together, dig down deep to what's causing the friction that's going across the country. I think we continually meet with clergy, we meet with our community partners, we're meeting with the youth. Just last night, we had a youth/police dialogue where myself and my command staff met with about a hundred kids from the community and we discussed issues surround race, we discussed issues around stop and frisk. We were there to hear their perspective on what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong, and what they believe we could do better. So it's a mutual respect but it's also a learning curve where we know we don't know everything, we know we're not perfect, and we interact with all members of the community to say hey, what could we be doing better. You know, I think after Ferguson, all departments have to have that dialogue whether it's good or not so we'll all a better police department.

Wells

03:28

Commissioner, thank you for your time and your expertise.

Evans

03:30

Thank you.

Voiceover: *The Beat* Exit

03:32

The Beat was brought to you by the United States Department of Justice, COPS Office. The COPS Office helps to keep our nation's communities safe by giving grants to law enforcement agencies, developing community policing publications, developing partnerships, and solving problems.

Voiceover: Disclaimer

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