

Strong Foundation

Chicago Police Foundation stays 'True Blue' in its support for city's officers



From left, Chicago Police Foundation Chair John C. Robak and Executive Director Mary Ann Rose with Bob and Susan Anderson.



BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

One-by-one, the guests raised their paddles, a demonstration of just how True Blue the City of Chicago can be for its police officers. The Chicago Police Foundation's second annual gala had hit its fundraising portion of the evening on Nov. 5, and part of the auction gave patrons the opportunity to do some paddle-raising. With each paddle raised, another donation came from the city's business community that will facilitate safety, training and community outreach support for the rank-and-file officers.

So when all was said and counted, guess how much was raised at the Second Annual True Blue Event, at which the auction items included an autographed Joe Maddon jersey?

\$100,000?

Higher.

\$250,000?

Higher.

Yes, more than \$400,000 with funds earmarked for additional resources to strengthen the Department's capabilities to deal with technological, social and economic changes, better serve and protect the citizens of Chicago and enhance its trust with the public.

"We want to make sure the men and women of the Chicago Police Department know that we do appreciate their service, particularly from the business community," confirms John C. Robak, Chair of the Foundation and President and Chief Operating Officer of the renowned Chicago

environmental engineering firm Greeley and Hansen. "Our focus is to provide equipment that officers might have to pay for out of their pockets so they don't ever have to make a choice for something related to their safety."

The Chicago Police Foundation is in its second year of working as a not-for-profit organization established through the interest and support of the Chicago business community with the mission of enhancing overall public safety and helping to build stronger relationships between the community and the Chicago Police. In this season of giving to the police, the masses who attended the True Blue gala at the Hyatt Regency each gave above and beyond to help the Foundation continue to fortify its presence and increase impactful support to the Department and Department officers.

How much impact is a work in progress, and will be for years and years, according to Robak. But an immediate impact came in the 7th District on Nov. 13 when two rookie officers were able to save the life of a gunshot victim using their Law Enforcement Medical and Rescue Training (LEMART) life-saving kits. Those kits were part of the 400 the Chicago Police Foundation provided to recruits and were distributed when they graduated from the Chicago Police Academy on Oct. 21.

The Foundation is working on meeting its initial commitment of providing 2,000 such kits for officers during the next four years, and hopes to make one available to all officers on patrol so nobody will have to buy their own. Or not buy their own. If the Foundation has its way, no officer will ever have to pay for the training and resources

they need to be safe.

“We are so happy and thankful they have this organization that brings together support for the community and the well-being of officers,” asserts Sergeant Kelly Schnoor, who is assigned to assist James Rousell, the Department’s Chief of Strategy and Operations and serves as liaison to the Chicago Police Foundation. “It’s refreshing to know that the business community and the people of Chicago support the city’s officers.”

Schnoor added that the Department is working to raise awareness for the Foundation to the officers it wants most to serve. To help, she orchestrated members from the Mounted Unit, the K9 Unit, Bomb Techs, the CPD Honor Guard and Pipes and Drums Corps to attend the True Blue event, interact with guests and help them understand what the Chicago Police does every day. She also observed that the distribution of the LEMART first-aid kits helped give officers hope that the city is interested in them serving to the best of their abilities.

As a result, the Foundation would like to build on that momentum by pursuing other initiatives to support Chicago coppers. There has been discussion about working with the Chicago chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NOBLE) to educate high school and elementary school youths about the work of police officers. The Foundation is also interested in providing resources to support patrol units, including perhaps helping to expand the bicycle patrol.

“We’re just beginning discussions with the CPD to look at types of training and safety-related equipment for those individual officers on patrol,” Robak explained. “When our board members see that the contributions like the LEMART program are going to something that will make a difference in the law enforcement community, they are energized. They are inspired.”

ComEd has recently joined such businesses and organizations as @properties, BMO Harris Bank, CBRE Inc., Pugh, Jones & Johnson, Magellan Corporation, LAZ Parking Midwest, LLC, the Chicago Zoological Society, Brookfield Zoo, James McHugh Construction Co., Mesirow Financial, Loop Capital and United Service Companies with representatives on the Chicago Police Foundation Board with the leadership of Robak and Executive Director Mary Ann Rose. Robak, Rose and all board members are volunteers. That is the type of support the city has for the police, especially in the realm of safety, training and community outreach, three principles a certain Chicago Lodge 7 president identified as critical to successful law enforcing during these challenging times in his groundbreaking speech to City Club of Chicago in June.

“That’s something the Chicago Police Foundation is in a genuine position to support,” Robak adds. “We can provide the resources to expand those programs and, over time, have a positive impact on law enforcement and the greater community.” ♥



OUR CITY, OUR SAFETY.

The Chicago Police Foundation is dedicated to providing supplemental resources for safety equipment, technology, training, and community outreach programs that support the efforts of the men and women of the Chicago Police Department.

The Chicago Police Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization.

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