Boy reunites with police rescuers

The owner of an empty building at 23rd and Prospect stopped by to check on it in October 2010 when he spotted a broken window and went to investigate. He looked inside and saw what he thought was a dead baby boy wrapped in a sheet, lying on the floor of the abandoned building. He immediately backed away and called 911.

Then-East Patrol Officers Sean Clarke and Richard Salzman responded.

“We were expecting the worst,” said Clarke, now a detective in the Sex Crimes Unit. The officers said they’ll never forget what they encountered: A small child with a horrible skin condition wearing a saturated diaper. Beside him were an empty bag of Funyuns and an empty water bottle. The child was, in fact, 3 years old, but very small due to malnourishment. He was dehydrated, covered in open sores, but still alive. As the officers loaded him into an ambulance, a woman showed up.

“She said it was her child because she recognized his cry,” said Officer Salzman, who now is assigned to the Westside Community Action Network Center.

She’d left the boy in the abandoned building at least overnight while she worked as a prostitute on Prospect Avenue. The officers arrested her for neglect. The boy was loaded into the ambulance and transported to Children’s Mercy.

He spent three weeks there getting treatment for a severe bacterial skin infection. He was then placed in the care of foster parents John and Janet Richardson of Independence, Mo. Janet Richardson said she had no intention of adopting him – just caring for him until he was better and could get a permanent placement. But that didn’t happen.

Rocking the uncomfortable little boy back to sleep was worth it.

Janet and John have three biological children and four adopted children, ranging in age from 9 to 42. They said they want all their adopted children to know their history. They even obtained a copy of KCPD’s file on Josiah’s neglect case. They’ve told Josiah a lot about what he went through, leaving out some of the more unsavory details until he gets older.

When they first told him what happened, he said, “I want to meet my policemen who rescued me.” So they invited Officers Clarke and Salzman to Josiah’s formal adoption hearing on February 17, 2012. Both officers agreed it was one of the best things ever to happen in their careers. (Clarke has been at KCPD for 11 years, Salzman for 13.) “It was the best success story we’ve come across,” Officer Salzman said.

Detective Clarke says that in

“He instantly knew we were going to take care of him,” Janet said. “He fell right into our family.”

Older sister Haley, now 17 and also adopted, says she prayed for a little brother. She and the boy, now 9 years old and named Josiah Richardson, believe that’s how he ended up a permanent member of the Richardson family.

It was tough at first. Janet and John had to cover Josiah in medicated lotions and oils multiple times a day to fight the skin infection. He couldn’t sleep comfortably for two entire years. Janet caught the skin infection from him, but she now says it wasn’t a big deal.

Six years ago, Officers Sean Clarke (left) and Richard Salzman (right) found Josiah Richardson (center) abandoned and sick in a vacant building. With his adoptive family, 9-year-old Josiah met up again with Clarke and Salzman to say thank you.

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Officer named Mexican Consulate liaison

Officer Alex Cruz, East Patrol Division, was recently appointed department liaison between the KCPD and the local Mexican Consulate, Consulado de Mexico, 1617 Baltimore Avenue.

“I hope to help foster a more trusting relationship between the police department and the Spanish-speaking community here, which should make information sharing better, helping to solve crimes in the community,” Cruz said.

Chief Darryl Forté requested this partnership about a month ago after meeting with Consulate staff. They provided him with astounding statistics tallying the number of daily visitors.

“I felt we were missing a lot of opportunities to interact with people,” Forté said.

Forté’s goal is eventually to assign a full-time officer; encouraging police interaction with Mexican nationals in what they consider a comfortable and safe environment, while serving as a resource.

Desirée Colomé of the Mexican Consulate feels Officer Cruz is a great step toward strengthening the collaboration between police and the Consulate. She appreciates Chief Forté’s disposition and supports this initiative; acknowledging it will be a two-way avenue. The Consulate will assist the department’s community outreach activities and provide input to better address the needs of the Mexican population of this city.

Colomé is confident this partnership will render huge benefits, stating, “We want law enforcement agencies to see the Consulate of Mexico as a valued ally in their daily activities, when overcoming the challenges they face in terms of approaching the Spanish-speaking community and in any other capacity we could be of any help.”

Forté said, “Both the Mexican nationals and the police must increase understanding of customs and practices of each other in order to create safer communities.” Bien dicho.

Boy with tough start in life thanks police

Continued from p. 1

patrol, he often wondered what became of people he contacted. When Josiah asked to meet up with the officers again on August 16 (he wants to make it an annual event, which the officers are only too happy to oblige), Detective Clarke finally looked back at the case file to see Josiah’s biological mother had been formally charged on numerous counts of neglect. He was heartened to see justice was served.

Officer Salzman said despite all the awful things police encounter, they don’t get desensitized to a case like Josiah’s.

“You never get used to anything involving a child,” he said. “It’s the very worst.”
On Friday, August 5, the Kansas City Police Mounted Patrol, along with the Jackson County Sheriff’s Mounted Posse, saddled up and led over 200 equines and their riders from Hale Arena on the City’s Westside to the Liberty Memorial Mall. While gathered on the terrace between Liberty Memorial and Union Station, several speakers, including Sergeant Joey Roberts of the KCMP, thanked attendees for their show of support and recognized fallen officers and their families. KC Cowboys for Cops organized the event to honor KCPD, support law enforcement and collect donations for funds for first responders. Traffic officers on two and four wheels escorted the group along the 4.3-mile trail, ensuring a safe journey. The route was sprinkled with curious local residents and area workers, some with signs showing their support.

The new North Patrol Division, 11000 NW Prairie View Rd., had a Topping Out event Aug. 12. This marks the half-way point on the building’s construction.

PAL Ice Cream Giveaway

Free ice cream, donated by the Police Athletic League Board, was distributed to neighborhood children to help promote PAL’s August 9 Back-to-School event. Officer Titus Golden was on hand to help the ice cream vendor, a partner of PAL, pass out the treats and fliers promoting the next day’s event. A PAL officer followed the truck driving a police vehicle to help promote police in the community. The cold treats were a hit with both the kids and parents.

Community Picnic at EPD

East Patrol Division members joined with a group of community activists, Peace and Love Under God (PLUG), to host a free picnic for the community on Saturday, August 13. Leading up to the picnic, PLUG held daily demonstrations outside East Patrol at 27th and Prospect for 30 days to promote unity and peace among police and other community members. Local businesses and individuals donated everything from pizza to radio promotions for the event. Many people living in and around East Patrol got to know the officers who serve their area.
Upcoming Events
September 13
Board of Police Commissioners Meeting

September 25
Broadway Bridge Run

September 27
25-Year Ring Ceremony

The mission of the Kansas City Missouri Police Department is to protect and serve with professionalism, honor and integrity.

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Officially Speaking

Awards
Special Unit Citation
East Property Crimes Section
North Property Crimes Section
South Property Crimes Section

Life-Saving Award
Sergeant Caleb Lenz
Sergeant Dennis Wycoff
Officer Shawn Davis
Officer Gary Knapp
Officer Christopher Lear (2)
Officer Kelly Stamm

Meritorious Service Award
Captain Chip Huth
Officer Richard Jones
Officer Michael Mezzacasa
Analyst Deborah Hagen

Certificate of Commendation
Sergeant Corey Carlisle
Officer Joshua Gantt
Officer Benjamin Hasket
Officer Aaron Smith
Crime Scene Technician Stacie Frobenius
Crime Scene Technician Benjamin Simmons
Forensic Specialist Lavonda Jackson

Obituaries
Retired Sergeant John Parkinson
Retired Officer Donald Winfrey
Retired Civilian William Scheibel

KCPD now on Instagram

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