



### Student Safety Primary Reason for SRO & SSO Program

Acting quickly, decisively and collaboratively is the best way to describe the implementation of the School Resource Officer and School Safety Officer program that’s been instituted in the Putnam Schools.

The discussion for the program stemmed from the recent school shooting incident that occurred in Uvalde, Texas, claiming the lives of 19 students and two teachers. The memories of Columbine High School, Stoneham Douglas School in Parkland, Florida and Sandy Hook also resonated vividly in the minds of Putnam decision makers.

A gathering of town leaders, including Police Chief Chris Ferace, Mayor “Barney” Seney, Finance Chairman David Coderre and former Superintendent of Schools Daniel Sullivan, unanimously concluded that student and faculty safety was a top priority. The decision to move forward was brought to the citizens in June and received community endorsement.

“I had been informally exploring this program with Superintendent Dan Sullivan for some time. We agreed it was time to take action and make our schools a safe haven for education,” said Chief Ferace.



School Resource Officer  
Kyle Maheu

With everyone on the same page, the program was laid out and implemented in time for the start of school in late August 2022. Officer Kyle Maheu, a 13-year member of the Putnam Police Department and a person described by Ferace as, “an excellent officer who makes sound decisions” was brought on to serve as the School Resource Officer (SRO). Coincidentally, Officer Maheu is a product of the Putnam School System.

In early August four individuals with previous backgrounds in law enforcement were also hired, trained and prepared to take on the duties of School Safety Officers (SSO).

The four SSOs, all retired with law enforcement backgrounds and authorized to carry a firearm, work staggered shifts enabling fulltime coverage in all three Putnam schools. Under the supervision of Officer Maheu the schools are also

monitored by a camera system on each campus.

“The feedback on the program and the SSOs has been extremely positive. These individuals have worked hard to seamlessly become part of the school community,” said Chief Ferace.

Heather Taylor, Principal of Putnam High School echoed Ferace’s comments. “The SSO at Putnam High School, retired State Police officer David Mattioli and his black lab retriever, Ambrie, greet the students every morning at ‘Clipper Crossing.’ He has become a valued member of our staff, attends all school events and even works out with the students in the fitness center. Overall, I’d consider the program a huge success,” she said.

The funding for the program was another example of Putnam leadership working ‘hand in glove.’ The SRO program, like other community departments, has been funded by the town government.



Security Safety Officer Mattioli and his canine friend Ambrie



SSO Mattioli and Ambrie greet student at Clipper Crossing

**WINTER 2023**  
**VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1**  
**IN THIS ISSUE**

- Student Safety..... 1
- Chief’s Corner ..... 2
- Officer Hailey Griffin..... 2
- Alarming Statistics ..... 2
- Chief Ferace Plays & Dreams ... 3
- Deaths Felt in Putnam ..... 3
- Winter Driving Tips..... 3
- Grayson Graduates ..... 4
- Meet School Safety Officers..... 4

## Chief's Corner

It's been more than three months since I experienced one of the saddest days of my career. That day is the morning I along with several members of our Department, attended the funeral services for the two Bristol Police officers who were outright ambushed and murdered by a gutless, ruthless killer. A feeling that still makes me angry to this day.

Looking back on that October morning at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, I still experience the pangs of sadness as I did when I sat with thousands of other law enforcement officials and citizens, honoring the lives of two dedicated police officers, Lt. Dustin Demonte and Sgt. Alex Hamzy.

Responding to calls for aid or assistance is the duty of every police officer. Along with that call to duty goes the possibility of danger, serious injury and even death. Our job is dangerous wherever you're enforcing the law but it's a duty police officers carry out with honor and professionalism, as Sgt. Hamzy and Lt. Demonte did on that fateful October night.

Another area of serious concern that I think of constantly is traffic and pedestrian safety. I can't stress enough, to drivers and pedestrians, the need to always be alert, whether behind the wheel or crossing a street. Pedestrian fatalities continue to rise every year. In the first three months of 2022 a total of 9,560 traffic fatalities occurred according to estimates by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. That's an increase of 7% over the same time period a year ago. Now is the time to double down on traffic safety and use caution, whether walking or driving.

In this issue you'll also read about the collaborative effort of our department with the Mayor and Board of Selectman, the Board of Finance and the Superintendent of Schools' office in instituting the School Resource Officer and School Safety Officer program in all the Putnam schools.

You'll also be introduced to our newest police officer, Shawn Grayson, who graduated from the Police Academy in Meriden on December 9, 2022. You will also meet another new member of the force, Officer Hailey Griffin, who was sworn in on August 29, 2022. The department now has a complement of 16 working officers and one individual on medical leave.

As we transition to the new year 2023, I wish everyone a happy and healthy year. Remember that winter driving requires extra care and caution under conditions that change almost daily in New England. And remember, my door is always open.



Putnam Police Chief  
Christopher Ferace

## Officer Hailey Griffin Ready for Duty in Putnam



Hailey Griffin

Hailey Griffin has the appearance of "the girl next door" or the All-American girl. Tall, nearly six feet in height, blond, flashing a pearly white smile, she might otherwise be mistaken as your best friend's sister. At first glance she may not come across as a police officer. In her police working blue uniform, Griffin demonstrates a 'command presence' about her that tells a different story.

A 2016 cum laude graduate of Post University where she majored in criminal justice with minors in psychology and emergency management, Griffin first realized that a career as a police officer was her calling when she did a summer internship in 2015 with the Putnam Police Department. It was then that the two-sport college athlete, basketball and volleyball, knew that her life's work was law enforcement.

"Since joining the Putnam Police Department I feel very comfortable in my job and in this community. The members of the Department were very welcoming and the administration has been great to work with," said Griffin, who officially became a Putnam officer on August 29, 2022.

Officer Griffin came over to Putnam as a fully certified police officer, having served as a member of the Plainfield Police Department for five years, where she rose to the level of detective, earning certification as such. Coming to Putnam, she felt, offered a variety of learning opportunities not available to her previously.

"Hailey has made the transition to Putnam in a seamless manner. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that was realized early on in her employment. She's also been accepted into the department and community very quickly," said Chief Chris Ferace.

Working on the midnight shift under the direction and guidance of Sgt. Niko Sezenias, Officer Griffin notes that she hasn't encountered any major issues. The matters she has been involved in, domestic issues, alcohol related incidents, fights, DUI situations and mental health difficulties have been handled reasonably, professionally and tactfully.

"My approach is to attempt to calm down situations by talking things through with the involved party. I feel very comfortable in handling myself. Having a body camera provides a sense of security in dealing with the variety of cases I've been involved with," said Griffin of her time in Putnam.

As a high school student in Plainfield, Hailey worked summers scooping ice cream. In college she enjoyed substitute teaching as a way to earn extra income. Becoming a police officer, though much different, is a calling that she knows was the correct decision. Coming to Putnam verified and solidified her career decision.

Officer Griffin joins Detective Donna Brown as the second female officer on the Putnam Police Department.



### ALARMING STATISTICS

"As the days get shorter and nights longer, pedestrian deaths are more likely to occur," Chief Chris Ferace.

- Thru Dec. 23, a total of 69 pedestrian fatalities in Connecticut. Most on record since 1988.
- Most pedestrian deaths occur between 6 to 9 p.m.
- Winter months are the deadliest for pedestrians.
- Pedestrian deaths are also attributed to drivers. Vehicles are larger (sedan vs. SUV); average speeds are much faster; easier access to technology in vehicles leads to distracted driving.
- At 20 MPH, 9 out of 10 pedestrians survive; at 40 MPH, 1 out of 10 survive.

Source: Connecticut Department of Transportation data & National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

## Chief Ferace Plays and Dreams When Not on Duty

The job of a police chief is a 24-hour position, requiring readiness whenever the phone rings or the text beeps. Although Putnam Police Chief Chris Ferace's position isn't the same as it is in a city such as Boston or New York, he's on call whenever and where ever he's needed in Putnam.

So, what does Chief Ferace do to relieve the stress and tension of the everyday duties that are constant reminders of his responsibilities to the Putnam community?

As a former college athlete, playing both soccer and rugby, Chief Ferace has always maintained an active life style when not in the office. He still plays soccer in a Men's Over 40 competitive league, on a team out of Southeastern Connecticut. He also puts some vacation time to good use by fulfilling some dreams he had as a kid by not only attending but also by participating vigorously in "Fantasy Camps" sponsored by professional sports organizations.

In the past 14 years he's been fortunate to attend the New York Yankees Fantasy Camp 10 times. As a staunch Yankee rooter in Putnam, traditionally Boston Red Sox territory, he's proud of his sojourns to Tampa, Florida and the Steinbrenner Complex, spring training home of the Bronx Bombers. One of his biggest camp thrills was meeting Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson at his first camp in 2009.

As a Yankees 'wannabe' he prides himself on still being able to try to cover the outfield like former Yankee centerfield greats Mickey Rivers and Bernie Williams when he's at camp. Although he says, "it's not getting any easier at my age." The chief is a member of the Bambinos, a group of guys from all over the country with a common love of baseball and the Yankees. In his 10 years in fantasyland, his team, The Bambinos, named in honor of Babe Ruth of course, have won five Fantasy Camp championships.

Most of the time our Chief bats in the 2nd spot in the lineup. This year he noted he was pleased with his performance at the plate, hitting for a high average. The Bambinos finished in second place, losing in the championship game. However, in the final game of camp, where the campers play against a team composed of retired "real" New York Yankees, Ferace went 1-for-2, a single and a pop out, off the servings of former Yankee right hander Jeff Karstens, who pitched for the Bombers in 2006-2007.

Regardless of how well or how poorly he or his team does at 'Fantasy Camp' it's a certainty that returning to duty at the Putnam Police Department, Chief Ferace is ready for action.



Chief Ferace at bat



Chief Ferace legging out a base hit.

## Bristol Police Department Deaths Felt in Putnam

Two highly respected police officers responding to a 'domestic violence' call on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 were ambushed and murdered in what is described as "a deliberate act to lure law enforcement to the scene" according to Connecticut State Police.



Lt. Dustin Demonte Sgt. Alex Hamzy

The shooting and killing of Bristol police officers Dustin Demonte and Alex Hamzy resonated around the country, the state and to the community of Putnam. The fact that this event occurred approximately one hour from Putnam, brought to light the fact that wherever a police officer is on duty his or her life is always in peril.

"This senseless act of violence angered me beyond belief. This was one of the most emotional incidents in my more than 30 years as a police officer. This man who ambushed these officers is an outright ruthless

killer," said Putnam Police Chief Chris Ferace. Arriving at the scene of the call for assistance, Lt. Demonte and Sgt. Hamzy along with Officer Alec Iurato, approached the scene, as they had been trained, from the side entrance of the home. Calling for the suspects to come out, the officers encountered an unsuspecting barrage of 80 shots from a semi-automatic weapon by the perpetrator. Lt. Demonte and Sgt. Hamzy were killed instantly. Officer Iurato, though injured seriously, made it to his cruiser for cover, where he took out the gunman with one shot from his service pistol.

"These three officers responded to the call professionally and without hesitation. The job of a police officer is dangerous wherever you work. This situation is a harsh reminder of just how dangerous our work is," said Chief Ferace.

Chief Ferace and several members of the Putnam Police Department traveled to Rentschler Field in East Hartford for the double funeral ceremony days later.

"When I first received the news of the murders my heart sank and my eyes filled with tears. The day I was sworn in as a member of the Plainfield Police Department, June 5, 1991, was the day that State Police Trooper Russell Bagshaw was ambushed and murdered. I'll never forget that day. The Bristol incident brought back memories of that day, and attending this funeral service was one of the saddest days of my career," said Chief Ferace.

The thousands of law enforcement officials and citizens who attended the funeral service was a demonstration of the strength and camaraderie police officers feel for their fellow officers. The unity derived from the presence at Rentschler Field is a reinforcing feeling that the service police provide, whether in large cities or small towns, is appreciated. On that sad day, the presence of the Putnam Police Department was proof of the brotherhood that exists in the law enforcement community.

## PUTNAM POLICE WINTER DRIVING TIPS

### DOS

- DO wear your seatbelt at all times
- DO be sure the tires are properly inflated
- DO keep gas tank half full
- DO clear snow off windshields, mirrors, roofs
- DO check wiper blades & battery life
- DO have a survival kit - shovel, blanket etc.

### DON'TS

- DON'T speed
- DON'T warm up your car in an enclosed area
- DON'T use parking brake in cold/wet weather
- DON'T tailgate snow plows or other vehicles
- DON'T use cruise control on wet/icy roads
- DON'T talk on cell phone or text while driving

**In General – Stay off the roads in snowy weather except for emergencies. STEER INTO THE SKID. REMAIN CALM. DON'T JAM ON BRAKES. REMOVE FOOT FROM ACCELERATOR.**

- Always lock your automobile.
- If you start your automobile to warm it up, DON'T leave the vehicle unoccupied unless it can be locked.
- Remember, in winter driving keep your eyes on the road. Driving on wet/slippery roads is hazardous.

### Grayson Graduates from Connecticut Police Academy



Officer Shawn Grayson flanked by Captain Justin Lussier (left) and Chief Chris Ferace.

On June 3, 2022 Shawn Grayson of Brooklyn, Connecticut entered the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden as part of the 375th Training Session of the Post Officer Standards and Training Council. Following 26 weeks of intense training, Grayson successfully completed the program, graduating on Friday, December 9, 2022.

“Being on hand for the ceremony with Captain Justin Lussier, we were extremely proud to see the newest member of the Putnam Police Department on stage for his badge and oath ceremony. We both feel Officer Grayson is a great addition to our department,” said Chief Ferace.

During his time at the academy, Officer Grayson was exposed to a wide variety of police training. His classroom time covered areas such as criminal investigation, accident investigation, motor vehicle law, the penal code, narcotics and search and seizure procedures. He also spent time on the firing range getting acclimated to different firearms and was trained in emergency driving techniques. Grayson, who is a good swimmer, also went through extensive water safety and water emergency training as well as crowd control techniques.

“Although the training was very rigorous, it helped me to build a good foundation on all aspects of law enforcement. Training with a diverse group of people in our class was also an opportunity to get a different perspective on many areas of our training,” said Officer Grayson.

A few days after graduation, Officer Grayson was in uniform and reporting for duty in Putnam. He is currently going through the next step in becoming a certified police officer, which is 400 hours of field training. Grayson’s primary Field Training Officer (FTO), is Officer Charles “Chip” Carney, although he’ll occasionally be exposed to riding and working with other officers.

“Going through field training is like taking what I learned at the Academy and putting it into the real world. It will be great to learn the practical aspects of police work from Officer Carney and others,” noted Office Grayson.

Officer Grayson, a 2017 graduate of Killingly High School, graduated from Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont, where he received

a degree in political science. He was a four-year member of the ROTC program. He is currently a 2nd Lieutenant in the Connecticut National Guard, HHC 192nd Military Police Battalion.

Officer Grayson, who works out regularly at the Hale YMCA said, “Coming to Putnam is a great opportunity as I’m from Northeastern Connecticut. I feel I’ve been well prepared and look forward to working with a great group of officers in Putnam,”

Upon receiving Police Officer Certification, Officer Grayson will be assigned to the Patrol Division on the midnight shift, according to Chief Chris Ferace.

### Meet Putnam’s School Safety Officers

In June 2022, acting quickly and decisively the community of Putnam instituted a School Resource Officer (SRO) and School Safety Officer (SSO) program. (See related story on front page.)

Four individuals, all with extensive law enforcement and safety backgrounds and certified to carry a firearm, were hired as SSOs. The four SSOs, three men and one woman, bring a combined 99 years of experience to the program. Officer Kyle Maheu a 13-year member of the Putnam Police Department was selected to serve as the SRO. Putnam Police Detective Donna Brown is the substitute SRO when Officer Maheu is in training or unavailable for duty.

#### PUTNAM SCHOOL SAFETY OFFICERS (SSO):



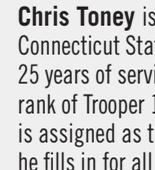
**David Mattioli** is a retired member of the Connecticut State Police with 20 years of service. He retired at the rank of Trooper 1st Class. SSO Mattioli is assigned to Putnam High School



**Julie St. Jean** is a retired member of the Norwich Police Department with 22 years of service. She retired at the rank of Sergeant. SSO St. Jean is assigned to Putnam Elementary School.



**Joseph Mattera** is a retired member of the Gloucester, Rhode Island Police Department with 32 years of service. He retired at the rank of Captain. SSO Mattera is assigned to the Putnam Middle School.



**Chris Toney** is a retired member of the Connecticut State Police with 25 years of service. He retired at the rank of Trooper 1st Class. SSO Toney is assigned as the substitute SSO, where he fills in for all three schools.

“Putnam is very fortunate to have hired this group of individuals, who all have the qualities and qualifications we were looking for in our search. I’m extremely pleased with the way they’ve integrated themselves into our school community. They bring a strong sense of safety and security to our buildings,” said Chief Chris Ferace.

#### Proud Community Partners

Putnam Police Department’s *The Community Beat* Newsletter is proudly sponsored by WIN Waste Innovation, Centreville Bank, and The Putnam Business Association.



Putnam Police Department  
189 Church Street  
Putnam, CT 06260  
www.putnampolice.com  
E-mail: putnampd.records@snet.net

POSTAL PATRON



NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 8