



## **Police Foundation: Palm Beach Gardens by Thomas F. Murphy**

In last month's article, we spoke about how limitations in police funding due to the nation's current economic difficulties are being addressed by community leaders coming forward and establishing police foundations. The foundations are separate 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations whose mission is to solicit donations from the public. Those donations may result in tax benefits for the donors and additional resources for the police agency.

Here in Palm Beach Gardens we began to anticipate economic difficulties as early as 2007. Housing prices were beginning to stagnate or drop and home sales were decreasing. The city was working hard to maintain the same level of service without raising taxes and it was clear that departmental budgets would see severe cuts. On a more positive side however, it was well known that our residents had always shown their generosity by making donations for Police Department programs such as D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), PAL (Police Athletic League), the Police Explorers and more.

With the belief that individuals and businesses were willing to provide resources beyond tax dollars, the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation was formed, knowing that professional policing is essential to maintaining a safe way of life in Palm Beach Gardens.

A handful of civic-minded individuals came together late in the year and drafted the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, and with a grant from the FBI National Academy Alumni Association, the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation became a reality.

The board of directors of the newly formed foundation set their mission statement to be "...to secure private funding to enhance the safety of our community and the effectiveness of our Police Department."

In the years that followed the Foundation has received tremendous support from residents and local business owners as well as suppliers and outside business operators who do business within the City. That backing has resulted in the Foundation being

able to provide support in numerous areas that would not otherwise have been possible if tax dollars were the only source of funding.

Through donations, the Police Department has been able to purchase two K9 police dogs, one trained in explosives detection and another trained in drug detection. Specialized equipment to aid in the quick and safe locating of sufferers of Alzheimer's, Autism and other severe conditions, who have wandered from their care givers was funded by the Foundation. Advanced training courses for Police Officers in the management of rape and domestic violence cases was also funded by the Police Foundation.

In the area of community outreach, the Foundation sponsors the Annual Palm Beach Gardens Police Explorers Golf Tournament at PGA National. Police Exploring is a career-oriented program that provides educational training programs for young adults on the purposes, mission, and objectives of law enforcement. The program provides them with the experience, leadership opportunities and community service activities to help them decide on a career path within law enforcement and challenges them to become responsible citizens of the community.

The Foundation also sponsors the Annual Holiday Joy Drive. In its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the Joy Drive provides toys and in some cases basic needs, for families of underprivileged children during the holiday season.

Protecting Palm Beach Gardens requires constant vigilance and a commitment to staffing, equipment and expertise. When it comes to making sure our Police Officers have what they need to keep us safe, the Police Foundation and the support of our donors helps insure that we keep pace with the rapidly evolving technologies, strategies and training in law enforcement.

It's important to remember that the Foundation is the ONLY organization authorized to raise funds on behalf of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department. Additionally, the Foundation does NOT solicit funds by telephone or via telemarketers and no one is salaried or compensated in any way. The Foundation maintains a low cost ratio and 84% of all monies raised are spent on program activities.

The Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation's Annual Fund Drive is now under way. Annual giving campaign letters have been sent to all residents and businesses. As the year winds down and you enjoy the holiday season, give some thought to your 2012 charitable deductions... and write the check that will go a long way toward helping your Palm Beach Gardens Police Department. You can also make a donation online at [www.pbgpf.org](http://www.pbgpf.org)

Thomas F. Murphy has been president of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation, Inc. since 2007. Before helping to form the foundation he was a marketing executive with IBM Corporation and earlier a member of the Nassau County (NY) Police Department.