



Ft. Pierce Police Department News Release



08.02.07

R. Sean Baldwin

Chief of Police
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Police Chief touts success of city-wide juvenile curfew

Two 17-year-old Indian River County boys weren't too happy when they were stopped by police after midnight, joy-riding with someone they hardly knew.

The two teens were charged with violating the city's Youth Protection Ordinance and referred to the Police Department's Juvenile Diversion Program. After being counseled by Detective Daniela Dreizehnter, both boys received sanctions including 8 hours of community service, 500 word essays, and had to write letters of apology to their guardians and the police officer who detained them, said Detective Dreizehnter, who oversees the diversion program.

Based on the essays and letters, Detective Dreizehnter has recently received from the two teens it appears the boys have learned their lessons and the Youth Protection Ordinance is having the impact officials had hoped for when it police officers began enforcing it on May 1.

"It's not only working here, but we are also receiving inquiries from other jurisdictions that are considering the ordinance for their communities," said Chief R. Sean Baldwin.

One of teens stated, he learned about the dangers of peer pressure and how you can get in trouble by associating with the wrong people. He also wrote an apology letter to his grandmother for interrupting her sleep saying, he was being selfish and not thinking about the consequences of being stopped by the authorities.

Though she was awakened in the middle of the night and had to pick up her grandson at the Juvenile Assessment Center, the teen's grandmother lauded the program in a written statement: "As a guardian I feel this is a very good, even above superior program. It helped with my grandson's attitude of being out car riding with someone that you don't really know nor where they're going and why. Being responsible is the most important lesson here and doing the right thing."

The other teen, who faced the same consequences, said he will not be out past curfew in Fort Pierce any more. His grandmother was equally appreciative of the Juvenile Diversion Program and had this to say, "I surely was very satisfied with this program because the program helps kids like him straighten up and go the right way. Thank you very much."

"This scenario is one example of the positive impact that the successful implementation of the Youth Protection Ordinance has had since being more than two months ago," said Detective Dreizehnter. "Things have been going really well."

Since police began enforcing the curfew, the Department has made great strides in curbing youth-related crimes. The juvenile curfew starts at midnight and ends at 6:00a.m. seven days a week.

"The curfew is a tremendously powerful tool that is helping us protect the community we serve," said Chief Baldwin. "It allows officers to intervene and take action that prevents kids from getting into serious trouble that lurks in the witching hours, which is exactly why it was created and adopted."

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