MERIDIAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Education & Prevention
Annual Report

August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022

MERIDIAN ANTI-DRUG COALITION
STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY
Introduction

The Meridian Police Department's mission is to provide the highest quality service in partnership with our community, to preserve and protect life and property through education, prevention and enforcement. As we continuously work to fulfill our mission, we provide a variety of education and prevention efforts throughout the community. This annual report highlights the prevention and education efforts provided by the School Resource Officer, Drug Prevention / Meridian Anti-Drug Coalition and Crime Prevention Units. In addition to our many partnerships, the work we do with West Ada School District helps strengthen and foster relationships creating a community where people can safely live, work and raise a family.

From August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022, The Meridian Police Department facilitated 504 prevention events and trainings throughout the year, reaching 43,969 community members. These educational opportunities covered a variety of topics, reached all age groups and were held at a variety of locations throughout the City of Meridian.
School Resource Officer (SRO) Unit

For the 2021-2022 school year the SRO unit consisted of 10 officers and 2 supervisors (Sergeant and Corporal) assigned to the 37 schools within the city of Meridian. The SROs are primarily assigned to the elementary, middle, and high schools of the West Ada School District (WASD), but also work with other schools within the City. They provide police services within the school setting focusing on safety, prevention and education. The SROs are able to immerse themselves into the school environment to work directly with the school's staff, parents and students. The SRO program:

- Is a school-based policing effort where officers assigned to schools are encouraged to be teachers, counselors and law enforcement officers.
- Builds relationships with students by being visible and accessible.
- Provides a safe learning environment within the school to promote learning.
- Develops positive relationships with students, parents and staff while helping solve problems impacting youth.

The SROs are an instrumental part of school safety and help the school prepare for any safety situation that might arise. As an example, at least 2 lockdown drills are performed annually at each school to ensure that everyone on the school campus is prepared for an emergency.

Throughout this year, the SRO Team has continued to work on building trusting relationships with the youth in our schools. Part of our approach is to ensure that the SRO is visible and accessible to the school population. As COVID restrictions are lifted, we were able to increase our engagement level with school visits, events, and athletic events.

School safety has been another area of continued focus for the SROs. By focusing on school safety, our hope is to avert school violence from occurring by reducing the opportunities for violence while being ready to act if violence was to occur. We continue to work on all aspects of school safety using the Idaho Standard Command Responses for Schools (ISCRS).
With the continued support and commitment to providing a safe environment for our students and staff within the WASD, Mayor Simison and the Meridian City Council approved funding for an additional 6 SROs and an additional Corporal for the 2022-2023 school year. Five (5) of those SROs will be dedicated to working within the elementary schools, one (1) SRO will be assigned to the campus containing the West Ada School District Office, Renaissance High School, and the Idaho Fine Arts Academy and the second Corporal will provide additional supervision and support to the team.

As the size of the SRO increases, the visibility and availability of SROs in all schools is expected to increase. This helps to improve the school’s preparedness level in the area of school safety and increase the time to build trusting relationships with the school community.

From August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021, The SRO Unit engaged with students at 401 events and trainings throughout the year, reaching 12,397 youth.

SRO EVENTS/TRAININGS

- Alive@25
- Criminal Justice/Law Class
- Elementary School Visits
- Internet Safety
- K9 Demonstrations/Presentations
- Life Skills Trainings
- Personal Safety
- School Safety Trainings
- Special Events
- Sporting Events

401 SRO PREVENTION EDUCATION EVENTS/TRAININGS
12,397 YOUTH REACHED
Drug Prevention Unit &
Meridian Anti-Drug Coalition (MADC)

Since 2004, MADC members have come together to strengthen our community through substance abuse prevention. A continual process of data driven analysis helps us improve existing prevention programs and identify where new strategies are needed. Each year we help community members of all ages build skills to safely navigate drug choices. We also assist in policy change, resource referrals and create drug bulletins to educate community members about the most current drug trends in our area. This level of prevention education would not be possible without the extraordinary amounts of donated time and talent from volunteers of all ages.

Last year the Drug Prevention Unit operated under one full-time Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator, who also serves as the MADC Director. In partnership with several Units throughout the Police Department and The MADC membership, we worked hard to maintain our service standards providing prevention education throughout our community.

From August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022, The Drug Prevention Unit & MADC engaged with students and community members at 63 events and trainings throughout the year reaching 26,054 community members. A few event highlights include:

- Red Ribbon Week resources requested for more than 1,700 West Ada School District students.
- New prevention partnerships with The Meridian Library District, Boys & Girls Club, Pioneer Title Federal Credit Union and The Gyro Shack.
- A new record high for the amount of prescription medications safely disposed of at a single Rx Take-Back event (1,071 lbs.) and the number of National Night Out Parties requesting drug prevention (15 parties, reaching 487 community members).
- Resuming MADC’s annual presence at the two biggest Meridian Speedway races, providing prevention information to an estimated 2,918 community members.
As we look to the year ahead, we are thrilled to announce the former part-time Anti-Drug Coordinator position has become a full-time position. Thanks to the support of the Mayor, City Council and many others, Meridian is the only City in Idaho to have two full-time employees dedicated to drug prevention.

As coalition membership, community and statewide support continues to grow for the work of The Meridian Anti-Drug Coalition, we will continue to enhance and expand our contributions to public health through education and prevention working in partnership with Units throughout the Meridian Police Department.

**DRUG PREVENTION UNIT & MADC EVENTS/TRAININGS**

- Alcohol Compliance Check & Shoulder Tap Operations
- Breathalyzer Event
- Cannabis Compliance Checks
- Community Presentations
- Life Skills Classes
- Monthly MADC Meetings
- Prescription Take-Back Events
- Prevention Booths
- Public Safety Day
- Recovery Day Breakfast
- Red Ribbon Week
- Sparklight Movie Night
- Spring Safety Flings
- Teens & Substance Abuse

**63 DRUG PREVENTION & MADC EVENTS/TRAININGS**

**26,054 COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED**
Crime Prevention Unit

The Crime Prevention Unit’s mission is to develop and administer community-based crime prevention programs designed to reduce the fear of crime, reduce criminal activity, increase safety and reduce the likelihood of crime victimization.

The Crime Prevention Unit plays an active involved role with our community and provides resources, education and information to assist in keeping our community, families and businesses safe. Using community education we address the causes of crime and ways to reduce opportunities for crime to occur. Prevention is a proven method to lower costs of crime to individuals, neighborhoods and businesses. By working together, crime can be prevented.

In the last year, the Crime Prevention Unit was finally able to look ahead (post-COVID) and once again begin to plan and implement in-person programs in the community. We welcomed back events such as the Public Safety Academy, Bike to School Day and Spring Safety Flings which had previously been cancelled. The Youth Safety Academy added a 5th day which made it possible to take the group on a tour of the Ada County Jail and Dispatch Center, as well as integrate new presentations from the Ada County Prosecutors Office and the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT).

One of this year’s highlights in the Crime Prevention Unit was the “Have You Checked In?” campaign to bring attention to Mental Health Awareness Month and Youth Mental Health Week in May. The target audience of this campaign was Meridian youth parents and the mission was to provide parents a comprehensive overview of mental health resources and services provided by the Meridian Police Department. The week started with an unveiling of a new Mental Health Awareness patrol vehicle as well as the introduction of the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT). During the remainder of the week and throughout the month, we highlighted the Meridian Anti-Drug Coalition (MADC), the School Resources Officer Team and four community partners which we highlighted through video interviews conducted by the Crisis Intervention Team. The month was ended with a video message from Chief Tracy Basterrechea.
From August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022 the Crime Prevention Unit planned and implemented 40 events and trainings, reaching 5,518 community members. A few notable events and trainings include:

- Youth Safety Academy
- Public Safety Academy
- National Night Out
- Spring Safety Flings

In June 2022, the Unit said goodbye to Crime Prevention Specialist Kim Denton. She was a valuable addition to the Unit and will be hard to replace. Interviews to fill the position will take place in August of 2022.

**CRIME PREVENTION UNIT EVENTS/TRAININGS**

- Bike to School Day
- Community Presentations
- Coffee with a Cop
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Surveys
- Daycare/Preschool Visits
- Department Tours
- Identity Theft Education
- Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council
- Meridian Senior Advisory Board
- National Night Out
- Neighborhood Watch/HOA Meetings
- Personal Safety
- Prevention Booths
- Public/Youth Safety Academy
- Public Safety Day
- Spring Safety Flings
- Story Time w/ An Officer
- Treasure Valley Youth Safety Summit
- Trunk-or-Treat
- Walk to School Day

**40 CRIME PREVENTION EDUCATION EVENTS/TRAININGS**

**5,518 COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED**
Additional Information

DATA COLLECTION

The information we collect to generate this annual report also includes the event location, length of the event and target audience age groups. We examine different combinations of this data to evaluate how we can improve prevention education and outreach services for the community.

If you have questions or would like to request additional information regarding this report, please contact the Community Service Lieutenant, Shawn Harper.
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SRO TEAM (2021-2022)

Sergeant John Gonzales | jgonzales@meridiancity.org
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Officer Greg Kortan
Officer Leroy Sunada
Officer Robert Allison
Officer Jairo Villasano
Officer Dallas Denney
Officer Mark Payne
Officer Robert Rodriguez
Officer Jared Haustveit
Officer Kirk York
Officer Courtney Dozier

DRUG PREVENTION & MADC

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CRIME PREVENTION

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