



# Bowling Green State University Police Department

Connecting with the community on a deeper level with community policing programs is a difficult challenge for many local law enforcement agencies, but the Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Police Department faces an especially unique challenge – their constituency is always changing.

Chief Monica Moll was recently interviewed while over 19,800 students were just beginning classes for the 2016-2017 school year. As Chief Moll pointed out, “it is a continuous effort to reconnect with the students.” Of the over 6,300 students living on campus, almost half of them are new to the BGSU community and they bring their own perceptions of police with them — good or bad. How does the BGSU Police Department seek to connect with students? Through continuous outreach efforts that focus on those groups that may be most likely to have experienced discrimination or have a distrust of police officers. BGSU has embraced and been very successful in their outreach efforts through the program “Not in Our Town.”

“Not in Our Town” is a national program launched in 1995 with the mission “to guide, support and inspire people and communities to work together to stop hate and build safe, inclusive environments for all.”

Four years ago Bowling Green was struggling with how to confront acts of racism and hatred on campus and in the community. City and university leaders joined together and adopted the “Not in Our Town” program. However, the initiative is not merely a one-size fits all template – each community develops its own program recognizing that real change and success will only take root on a local level. The effort took off in Bowling Green. More than 12 community organizations and over 50,000 individual pledges were behind the effort. In June 2016, Bowling Green was recognized by Not in Our Town with a National Award for enhancing the quality of life in the community and on campus.

Chief Monica Moll is quick to point out that the “Not in Our Town” initiative is a “joint effort requiring collaboration between the community, the University, the City of Bowling Green’s Police Division, and the BGSU Police Department”. To support the movement on campus, the BGSU Police Department is active in sponsoring community forums, connecting with minority communities, participating in “Coffee with a Cop” events, and hosting forums on campus called “Real Talk with Real Cops.” They have also co-sponsored a basketball tournament with minority students and local law enforcement officers called “Together We Ball.” The key is to

connect with students and change their perception of police, and to encourage both police officers and community members to treat all views and people of all backgrounds with respect. As Chief Moll stated, the “Not in Our Town” initiative successfully ties city and university policing together. “Students don’t typically look at the car or police patch, they see all police agencies as one, which makes it even more important to present a united and consistent message between the two agencies.”

The BGSU Police Department has many other successful community programs. They participate in the national “It’s On Us” campaign to end sexual violence, and they also assign university police officers as liaisons to specific residence halls, administrative buildings and academic buildings. However, the philosophy of working together for safe and inclusive communities – the tagline for “Not in Our Town” – is what sets the BGSU Police Department apart.