



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 29, 2020

A LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY

To our community members throughout Kitsap County,

The death of Mr. George Floyd in Minneapolis is indefensible. As law enforcement professionals who have dedicated our careers to serving others, it sickens us to watch the video.

As law enforcement officers, we take an oath to perform our duties in a lawful, professional, and competent manner. This includes:

- Exercising restraint,
- Providing prompt medical attention to those exhibiting signs of distress and,
- Interceding when observing a fellow officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is reasonable under the circumstances.

That did not happen in Minneapolis. A man needlessly lost his life because of the actions of one police officer and the inaction of his partners. When we fail in our duty, we expect to be held accountable. We commend Minneapolis Police Chief Arradondo for his appropriate and immediate action in terminating the involved officers.

We want our community to know that communication with our officers is important and as we discuss George Floyd's death with our officers and deputies, the range of their emotions have gone from shock to embarrassment to outrage. They recognize the impact that an incident 1700 miles away can have on our local community's perception of their law enforcement officers here at home.

Kitsap County law enforcement is committed to building trust through community engagement. We have joined with Bremerton Unit 1134 of the NAACP in the Community-Law Enforcement dinner, an event which brings great understanding between the community and the law enforcement officers. We also participate in the Police and Community Together (P.A.C.T.) forum, hosted by Mt. Zion Baptist Church. At P.A.C.T, community members and law

enforcement officers sit together to have hard conversations about important topics like Mr. Floyd's death, police training and tactics.

As law enforcement leaders, it is our job to put systems in place that give our communities a professional law enforcement service they can trust to treat them fairly and rely on in times of need. We do that by establishing sound policies, setting clear expectations for conduct, and training our officers on the appropriate use of force, de-escalation and bias awareness.

Chief Joe Clark
Bainbridge Island Police Department

Chief Matt Brown
Port Orchard Police Department

Chief Jim Burchett
Bremerton Police Department

Chief Dan Schoonmaker
Poulsbo Police Department

Sheriff Gary Simpson
Kitsap County Sheriff's Office

Chief Mike Lasnier
Suquamish Police Department