

## **LIVONIA POLICE OFFICER MAX CHRISTIE**

The most effective deterrent to crime in any community is a 24-hour police presence on the streets. Criminals prefer soft targets and hesitate to risk operating in areas where they know patrol officers are constantly on the lookout for illegal activity.

Livonia Officer Max Christie demonstrated this dynamic in the early morning of October 4 when he was conducting a directed patrol of a tobacco shop. His intervention in a B&E in progress led to the downfall of a criminal team and the recovery of many stolen weapons. It also sent an unmistakable warning to bad guys contemplating a similar crime: “You’ll have better odds somewhere else!”

While Officer Christie was checking the tobacco shop just before 3 a.m. he heard a loud crash from a short distance away. When he went to investigate he discovered that a minivan had backed into and demolished the window of a weapons store – a licensed dealership carrying a full inventory of guns and gun accessories. Part of the vehicle was inside the structure and the back hatch was open. He quickly advised dispatch of the situation.

Any possibility that what was going on might have been a vehicular accident evaporated when four armed suspects, dressed in dark clothing and wearing ski

masks, exited the store through the smashed-out window, and ran through the adjacent parking lot. This was the start of a mad getaway scramble.

The minivan took off, cut through the parking lot and turned west. Three of the four subjects who had left the store first also took off on foot in that direction. The fourth ran north. Then the minivan changed directions and went north, then east and off into the distance. Rather than an escape strategy it was a frantic, every-man-for-himself stampede set off by Officer Christie's disruption of the B&E.

Now outside of his patrol unit, Officer Christie saw another suspect, also wearing all black and a ski mask, coming out of the glassless store window. He shouted an order to "hit the ground" and the man complied. At that point he saw another ski mask pop into view inside the store. That subject did not go to the ground as ordered. He exited, ran through the parking lot and away into the darkness.

After two more officers reached the location and took the suspect on the ground into custody a K-9 unit went into action. Things soon went from very bad to much worse for the suspects. The tracking process, which started at the scene, led to the arrest of two more men by Officer Christie and a pair of colleagues. They had been hiding in the shrubs behind the store and gave up without resistance.

Handguns were found in the shrubs and scattered around the parking lot. More were found in the suspects' minivan, which had been abandoned near an area

condo complex and was located by the K-9 track. The vehicle had been stolen just prior to the B&E.

Officer Max Christie, your proactive patrol work aborted a serious crime in progress and helped achieve further essential law enforcement objectives. It resulted in the recovery of numerous handguns that would have undoubtedly been used for illegal purposes. It provided the foundation for a subsequent investigation that identified the suspects and resulted in their arrests. Your excellent patrol work, exemplary professional procedure and sound decision-making led directly to the dismantling of an organized criminal group whose members intended to arm themselves for use in future crimes and also sell guns to other criminals.

For all of these reasons you have earned, and I am pleased to present, POAM's 2013 Distinguished Service Award.

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