



ALEX PERRY/SUFFOLK NEWS-HERALD

Lenise Bazemore, 14, Leonid Terekhov, 14, and Josh Drake, 14, listen closely to Suffolk Police Department Forensic Technician Stephanie Durbin during the mock crime scene investigation at the Health and Human Services building on Hall Avenue Thursday morning.

Students investigate using real-world techniques

BY ALEX PERRY
STAFF WRITER

In the Thursday morning heat and humidity, a group of 10 teenagers investigated a stolen vehicle outside of the Health and Human Services building in downtown Suffolk. They used forensic tech-

niques to collect evidence and took both pictures and detailed notes. They even made a cast of a footprint in the dirt nearby, using dental stone casting material.

For his part in the exercise, Leonid Terekhov, a 14-year-old rising freshman at Nansmond River High School, careful-

ly collected fingerprints from the handle of the white Ford Explorer.

It wasn't easy at first – dusting the handle, applying clear tape and safely removing said tape to transfer that print to a piece of paper – but eventu-

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ally the young Forensics Camp investigator got the hang of it.

“When I did it the first time it was hard, but then it got easier and easier. It was fun,” Leonid said.

Leonid was one of 52 students in the Suffolk Commonwealth’s Attorney’s eighth annual Forensics Camp, a week-long summer class that’s held free of charge. Sessions were held daily from June 17-21 for students ages 12 to 15.

On Thursday, teams of students each faced a different crime scene scenario, such as an assault at a card game and a bank robbery. Suffolk Police Department Forensic Technician Stephanie Durbin’s team of students dealt with a stolen vehicle case.

According to this scenario, a white Ford Explorer – which on Thursday morning was a Suffolk Police vehicle issued to Durbin – was reported missing more than a week prior.

The vehicle was spotted by Mary DeLugo, the scenario’s victim character played by assistant Emma Shearin, 17. The victim determined that there were items in the vehicle that didn’t belong to her, and Shearin – as DeLugo – remained on the scene to answer any questions from the team.

“We want them to kind of work their way through what a criminal would have done in this situation,” Durbin said.

The team gathered interesting items from the vehicle, like a soda can and a receipt, neither of which belonged to the victim.

Any and all items that may have possessed DNA or other evidence were collected according to protocol. They also collected an eliminator DNA sample from the victim, as well as her fingerprints.

Durbin stressed to the students that it’s all about properly, carefully and thoroughly gathering as much evidence as possible to identify a suspect.

“It’s not just one piece of evidence they’re look-

ing at, it’s multiple (pieces),” Durbin said, “and it’s about (thinking) through the possibilities of how that item was utilized instead of just taking it at face value.”

Students at the camp learned that crime scene investigations are not like what you see on television shows. Shows like “The Flash” may show these types of investigations, but not accurately, rising King’s Fork High School freshman Nierica Flythe, 14, said.

“(This camp) taught me a lot,” Nierica said. “It taught me how to do fingerprints, (and) it taught me how to be a good CSI.”

Students learned the realities of forensic science used in crime scene investigations during the summer camp. They also heard from prosecutors about how that forensic evidence is used in trials, with guest instructors like Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney Thomas Shia, Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Carmen Cabrero and Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney Vaughn Breedlove.

Students that took the class in the past came back as assistants, like Emma Shearin, to earn up to 20 hours of community service towards high school graduation.

This was the third year that Lenise Bazemore, a 14-year-old rising freshman at KFHS, participated as a student in the program. She said she’s enjoyed coming to this camp because she wants to one day be a Commonwealth’s Attorney herself.

“(Community Outreach Coordinator Joan Turner) just makes it feel like home,” Lenise said. “I was shy at first. This made me have more friends and socialize more.”

Their measurements, observations and other critical-thinking exercises at these scenes incorporated “STEM” subjects, Turner said, and demonstrated the real-world applications of those skills, as well as what they offer in potential careers.



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Maj. David Miles and Suffolk Sheriff's Deputy Sandy Toby deliver a Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 41 Christmas food basket to Suffolk resident Tracey Trevathan and her grandson Donald Trevathan, 5, on Friday.

Law enforcement delivers Christmas cheer

BY ALEX PERRY
STAFF WRITER

For its 27th year, the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 41 made its annual delivery of Christmas food

baskets to needy families in Suffolk and Isle of Wight on Friday, with help from volunteers and the North Main Street Walmart.

The lodge partnered with North Main Street Walmart to

procure 25 food baskets this year. Each basket included ingredients for a delicious holiday meal: a turkey, a five-pound bag of potatoes, two cans of corn, two cans of green beans, a bag of mixed fruits,

two cans of gravy, a box of stuffing mix, a package of rolls, one pie and one gallon of iced tea.

This is the first year that the

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lodge has partnered with the Walmart store for the food baskets, according to Suffolk Sheriff's Deputy Sandy Toby, but the two groups already had a strong partnership through the annual Cops and Kids event.

The 18th annual Cops and Kids was held earlier this December and gave 17 children — who may have received little or nothing for Christmas otherwise — the opportunity to shop for toys with law enforcement officers.

“To be able to partner with them and their Lodge is a great opportunity,” said Shonda Hill, store manager at North Main Street Walmart. “It’s a great way to be able to give back to the community.”

Approximately 12 volunteers — both Suffolk and Isle of Wight sheriff's offices among them, along with retired Suffolk Sheriff's Office and Suffolk Police — met at the Walmart Friday afternoon to pack their vehicles and deliver the baskets.

Five baskets went to needy families in Isle of Wight County, while the remaining 20 baskets went to help Suffolk families.

“This is awesome,” Tracey Trevathan said when Suffolk Sheriff's Deputy Toby and Maj. David Miles delivered a basket on Friday to Trevathan's Suffolk residence. She was joined

at the door by Donald Trevathan, her 5-year-old grandson. “Thank you so much.”

Toby, who will be the next president for the lodge effective Jan. 1, has been participating in these Christmas food deliveries for nine years. She's gotten to know many of these families well, and has developed a great rapport with several of them.

“I've actually developed great relationships (with) several of the repeat families,” she said. “I check on them throughout the year, and make sure that all is well, and see if their kids need anything extra. It's just great community involvement and caring about what's going on with them.”

“There's great relationships that are built from us doing this every year,” said Allan Iversen Jr., director and state trustee for Lodge 41. Reactions from families that receive these baskets range from simple “thank you's” to teary-eyed hugs, Iversen said. “This has actually touched the lives of a lot of people in the city of Suffolk, and we're proud to do it for them.”

It's a Lodge tradition every winter that helps more families enjoy the holiday season.

“Everybody should be happy for Christmas,” Toby said. “We don't want anybody going without.”



ALEX PERRY/SUFFOLK NEWS-HERALD

Suffolk Fire and Rescue's Fire Medic 2 Joe Jarman, 42, and Lt. Travis Saunders, 39, walk across the bridge over Bennett's Creek on Route 17 with an escort of support vehicles on Tuesday morning.

Firefighters step up for a cure

BY ALEX PERRY
STAFF WRITER

Two Suffolk firefighters walked westbound on Bridge Road under damp, overcast skies Tuesday morning. They

already had 3.2 miles under their belt in the last few days, but still had roughly 100 more to go on foot.

Fire Medic 2 Joe Jarman, 42, and Lt. Travis Saunders, 9 are with Suffolk Fire & Rescue

and Suffolk Professional Firefighters Local 2801. They have 29 years of combined firefighting experience in Suffolk — 16 for Jarman and 13 for Saunders — and they're avid fundraisers for the annual

Fill the Boot campaign, which raises money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

They left Suffolk Fire Station 5 on Bridge Road early

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Tuesday morning to keep marching. Their sacks had clothes, medical supplies, toiletries, food, water — which Jarman said was the heaviest thing of all — and their boot to collect donations.

They were aided by support vehicles and the gestures made by others on and off the road. Drivers honked their horns as they drove by the pair on Bridge Road, flashing smiles and waving at them as they sped past.

“That happens a lot,” Jarman said as he and Saunders marched on.

Jarman and Saunders began their “March for MDA” on Sunday when they started by the statue of King Neptune at the Virginia Beach oceanfront. The plan is to take the Fill the Boot campaign on the road by hiking 10 miles to arrive in Richmond on Friday.

Word of the journey has already spread, and their story has already raised awareness for the MDA. Each step they take only adds to this stir of support.

“These two guys are sacrificing their time away from family, away from the academy, away from their companies to care for others,” said Suffolk Fire Chief Michael Barakey said at the station Tuesday morning, “and that’s what firefighters do.”

Beyond walking, rucking (exercising by walking with a weighted pack) and configuring their packs, there wasn’t much else they could do to prepare for this undertaking, Saunders said. But the weather had been good up to Tuesday morning and there wasn’t much hassle thus far — aside from blisters on their feet.

The city of Suffolk teamed with the fire department to help escort them through stretches of road that had no sidewalks or parking lots. Pam King of Local 2801 said they’re keeping up with any “changing needs” they

may have as they move closer to Richmond.

They’ve also benefited from donations by both businesses and citizens. There was even a gift basket waiting for them at Station 5 when they arrived Monday night.

“The biggest thing is making sure they have what they need,” King said, because these two aren’t stopping. Rain or shine, they’re “all in,” she said.

Their spirits are lifted by the constant outpouring of support from people on their route, whether its pedestrians, cyclists, drivers or others.

“Everybody has been great, (and) we’ve collected almost \$00 in the past few days,” Saunders said. “We’ve had people coming out of businesses and hunting us down. We’ve had people pulling over and getting out (of their cars).”

“Running out of restaurants,” Jarman added with a laugh.

The March for MDA is another step forward for the partnership between MDA and the International Association of Fire Fighters that began in 1954, when IAFF vowed to keep up its support until a cure was found, according to the press release.

The two organizations are encouraging states to expand newborn screening programs for neuromuscular conditions by adding tests for specific disorders. This would give newborns with these conditions the best possible chance at receiving the care and support services they need as early as possible.

Louise Zingaro, the executive director of the MDA of Greater Virginia, said that this partnership has helped the organization provide services to those affected by these conditions for the past 65 years. Research has revealed more than six new treatments that help to slow the progress of these debilitating con-

ditions and build hope for the families that are affected by them.

Jarman and Saunders have been supporting MDA’s efforts in numerous other ways as well, Zingaro said, like cooking meals at camps that have fed dozens of children. Their long walk is just further evidence of their commitment.

“When you think how precious people’s vacation time or free time is these days, for them to give this amount of time for the cause and for the awareness is truly heartwarming, and I think it’s further evidence of that close relationship between the IAFF and MDA,” she said.

They’re walking for brave individuals like 9 year-old Cole, who has Duchenne muscular dystrophy. He’s the MDA ambassador that comes to each Suffolk Fire & Rescue station to remind the first responders why they’re out there to fill the boot, whether it’s hot, cold, raining or snowing, said.

Cole and his classmates from school will be traveling to cheer the men on at some point during their meaningful walk.

“The diseases that we’re trying to raise money for take the ability to walk away from people that are affected by it. We thought what better way to honor them than by walking,” Saunders said.

According to the “March for MDA” page on filltheboot.donordrive.com, \$5,090 has been raised towards the \$10,000 goal. Search “March for MDA” on filltheboot.donordrive.com

to make a donation, and follow the march at [facebook.com/marchformda](https://www.facebook.com/marchformda).




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