



**THE HEART
BEHIND
THE BADGE**



The Heart Behind the Badge

Dear Community and Supporters,

For the past six months I have been Executive Director of the Chula Vista Police Foundation which has been an amazing journey. I have witnessed first hand the love each officer has for the community and pride in their job. I have seen the compassion each officer carries out their duties. The demands placed on our public safety professionals is impressive. Their job takes **courage**.

The officers are trained in public safety, yet they have become mental health experts, addiction treatment assistants, juvenile and family therapy counselors and more. The challenges of homelessness have similarly fallen on their shoulders. Chula Vista's Homeless Outreach Team is rooted in compassionate care and has become a model for similar teams around the world. Our officers take on these diverse responsibilities because of their reverence for **humanity**.

Our officers are sometimes called to homes in desperate need of help only to learn there is an elderly homebound. The individual is in need of assistance to go to the store for basic needs or purchase their prescription drugs. The officers do these acts of kindness, why? Because the officers think 'That could be my grandma or grandpa,' demonstrating **compassion**.

A police officer's job is sometimes thankless, often emotionally exhausting, and always physically draining. This is true now more than ever. We have seen horrific scenes in the media – shocking videos of officers in other regions doing horrible things that have eroded public trust and tainted the uniform for all who wear it. The actions committed by these few have also impacted our local officers and damaged their morale. But they continue to work each and every day, with the same compassion and care for our community. They are models of **dedication**.

At the same time, the Chula Vista Police Department continues its work to enhance community safety and de-escalate encounters. The department's Drone as a First Responder program has been a huge success on the west side of the city. Drone technology has allowed officers to get "eyes on" emergency situations from the air. It has provided more time for officers to evaluate potential threats, or the absence of threats, before entering a dangerous situation. It has allowed officers to have better tools, more distance, and cautious techniques to de-escalate many situations. The program has gained worldwide attention. The department wants to expand the program onto the east side of the city, but the program continues to be unfunded. Funding for the drone program does not come from the city's general fund budget.

Instead, the generous contributions of the Chula Vista Police Foundation, coupled with other resources, has helped to provide this incredible tool to our community. If you would like to support the expansion of this program, the Police Foundation appreciates your donations which are tax-deductible. (Visit us at chulavistapolicefoundation.org.) The Police Foundation supports the department as a national leader in *innovation*.

In closing, I encourage us all to remember how the community of Chula Vista is unique from so many others. Let us speak out with a unified voice to share why the Chula Vista Police Department is different than others seen on the news or social media feeds. Let us educate others on why Chula Vista is so special. The attached document provides many more facts and details. I encourage you to get to know Who We Are – A Comprehensive Look at the Chula Vista Police Department. [who we are](#)

I ask for your support, your prayers, and your voice – not just today, but for the long road ahead. Let Chula Vista be a light in what sometimes feels like a darkening world. Let us unite our hearts as we stand together with the Chula Vista Police Department and its personnel. Join me as we thank the men and women in uniform for their dedication to making our city the safest in San Diego County

With love and prayers-

Becky Cortez



***Becky Cortez, Executive Director
Debbie Escobedo, Chair***

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