Volunteers in Policing (VIP)

In the aftermath of September 11th, President Bush, in his 2002 State of the Union Address, called upon citizens to volunteer their services in his newly formed USA Freedom Corps and Citizen’s Corps programs. One organizational offshoot of these was announced and initiated as the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS). Across the country people were requested to volunteer to help their local law enforcement agencies. The main thrust of this was to enable citizen-volunteers to train and become proficient in non-hazardous, routine police tasks in order to free up professional police officers to spend more time in combating and preventing crime and terrorism.

When this Federal Program was announced, the Redondo Beach Police Department found itself far ahead of the game. In 1994, the Department started recruiting qualified, community minded men and women as Volunteers-In-Policing (VIP). Since that time Redondo Beach VIPs have established an impressive record in providing support to the RBPD staff and assisting in building community confidence and awareness in law enforcement. Their duties and numbers have continued to expand. Our volunteer force keeps busy by contacting citizens and businesses with crime prevention materials; performing vacation security checks; monitoring city parks and schools; checking handicapped parking spaces and citing violators; detecting/processing graffiti crime reports; insuring graffiti removal; assisting at DUI/Driver’s License checkpoints; performing traffic control duties at community marathons and other events; and other duties as assigned. VIPs operate a specially marked police vehicle, utilize police radios and wear a distinctive volunteer uniform. They are also on call to assist in lost child searches and other emergency situations.

Individuals selected as VIPs must put in a minimum of four hours per week, however most exceed this requirement. VIPs are trained to perform assigned duties with a friendly, customer oriented approach and to apply common sense to the varied situations they encounter. They do not become involved with hazardous situations of any type. If any type of confrontation looms, they back away and call for Police Officer support. When on patrol they serve as an extra set of eyes and ears for the Police Department. They maintain two-way radio contact with the Redondo Beach Police Department Dispatch Center at all times.

Primary recruitment for the VIPs focuses on persons who either live or work within or in close proximity to Redondo Beach. Anyone interested in volunteering their time to this program is encouraged to apply. Applicants will be contacted for an interview. They will then be asked to provide the necessary information to complete a background check. Interested persons can contact Officer Michael Diehr by phone at (310) 379-2477 x2493 or by email mike.diehr@redondo.org.