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ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE



2015 RISING SHIELDS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT NAMED BY ILLINOIS CHIEFS OF POLICE

Springfield, IL: Three up-and-coming leaders in various fields of law enforcement have been selected by the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (ILACP) as the 2015 recipients of "Rising Shields of Law Enforcement" for their leadership in advancing the field.

Sgt. Michael Rodriguez (Buffalo Grove Police Department), Deputy Jason Plichta (Lake County Sheriff's Department), and Master Sgt. Calvin Brown (Illinois State Police, Collinsville district) were chosen for the awards from among nominees representing large and medium-sized local police departments as well as a state agency. They will receive their awards on June 13, 2015 at the ILACP Summer Training Conference in Wheeling, IL.

The Rising Shields awards encourage outstanding leaders under the age of 45 and below the rank of Deputy Chief or Lieutenant to continue to grow in the profession. The awards serve to educate the public about the many contributions of sworn officers and others who work in law enforcement, and they help communities better understand the often unrecognized roles that law enforcement personnel play in keeping communities safe. ILACP President Chief Fred Hayes recognizes the importance of these deserving Rising Shields. "Collaborating with each year's honorees helps us to better understand and meet the needs of law enforcement's next generation of top tier leadership," Chief Hayes said.

Sgt. Michael Rodriguez



Selected as a Rising Shield in the medium-sized department category, he began his career with the Buffalo Grove Police Department in 1996. Buffalo Grove Police Chief Steven Casstevens describes Rodriguez as very team-oriented and having tremendous connections to the community. As supervisor of the Traffic Unit, Rodriguez has led several state and national award-winning public safety initiatives, including the ILACP Traffic Safety Challenge and the IACP Challenge. In conjunction with the League of Illinois Bicyclists, Rodriguez worked to improve the safety of the bike route system. "The only way to advance our profession is to change with the times. We must be creative and willing to fail. Only when we remain persistent will we achieve our goals," Rodriguez said.

Deputy Jason Plichta



The honoree in the Rising Shields large department category began his law enforcement career as a patrol officer in December 2007 at the Round Lake Beach Police Department. In July 2010, he began his service to the Lake County Sheriff's Office. He is currently assigned to the Traffic Unit, with his primary focus on DUI enforcement. During 2014, led the department in DUI arrests. He also works as a crash investigator and is responsible for investigating traffic accidents that involve serious injuries and fatalities. Deputy Plichta has a passion for teaching and in 2013 became a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE). "Deputy Plichta has spoken with the Lake County State's Attorney's Office and can provide

testimony in DUI/Drugged driving cases. Plichta has instructed in DUI enforcement at the Illinois State Police Academy," said Lake County Chief John Byrne, explaining that because of his experience in DUI enforcement, Plichta has made "Lake County streets and citizens safer." Deputy Plichta is an advisor for the Lake County Sheriff's Office Explorer Program, and also gives his time to Special Olympics fundraising events.

Master Sgt. Calvin Brown

Selected in the state agency category, Sgt. Brown serves as the squad supervisor for the Metro East Police Assistance Team (MEPAT), an intelligence-centered program combining patrol and investigative officers into a single unit to combat violent crimes. For MEPAT, Brown developed an intelligence storage and sharing site for gang information, allowing large-scale multi-agency investigations. "He understands societal changes and the challenges facing law enforcement today and takes responsibility for developing and using new approaches to positively impact operations," said Illinois State Police Major Chris Trame. Brown is currently pursuing his master's degree through the "Cops for Credits" program. With a strong desire to constantly improve, he has volunteered for and accepted various assignments and training opportunities with the Illinois State Police.

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NOTE: High-resolution pictures are available upon request from Ed Wojcicki, ILACP Executive Director – ed@ilchiefs.org.