

A Message from Chief Moulton (originally published in the Scarborough Leader):

For this week's article I would like to introduce you to a new program that the Scarborough Police Department is initiating to assist those in our community who may have special needs.

A few weeks ago, our dispatch center received a call involving a missing child. The child was reported to have autism and had already been missing for a few minutes. In the case of a missing child, it is always essential that we respond quickly. Because an autistic child may have a tendency to gravitate toward water and/or may not have an accurate sense of danger, it is even more critical that responding officers locate the individual as quickly as possible. Fortunately, in this case the child was located at a residence in the neighborhood and everything was fine. This case did, however, give us the opportunity to pause and think about how we could be more efficient in handling these situations.

Clearly our objective is to locate the person as quickly as possible. With that in mind, the more focused our search can be, the greater our chances are of being successful. Having specific information such as where the individual may have gone previously or where there are pools or other bodies of water, etc. would be of tremendous value to us.

When this particular call took place, we were fortunate to have an officer on duty that has a child on the autism spectrum. This officer worked closely with our dispatchers to make sure that the right questions were asked in order to provide officers with some specific direction. After this call, I had occasion to speak with the officer about the importance of specific information not just about the individual's identity or description but also about the nuances of their special needs. Is there a word "trigger" that would help us communicate with the individual? If the individual is not verbal, what method of communication can be used? Is the individual scared of uniforms, hats, emergency lights, etc.?

It occurred to me that with the advances in technologies in our dispatch center, we have the ability to attach certain information to either an individual or an address. An example might be a business that uses and/or stores dangerous chemicals. We have the ability to document the chemical type and location on site to assist first responders in dealing with the situation while keeping everyone as safe as possible. Likewise, if an individual has been assaultive toward police officers in the past, we can flag that information so that officers dealing with this individual in the future will automatically receive that warning.

After discussing this at length, I asked the officer if he would help draft a form that might be used to collect specific information that could be helpful in the event that we had to locate, assist, or communicate with an individual that may have special needs. The officer was more than willing to do that and the program that we now offer is a result of his work. Although the idea was the result of a call involving an autistic child, the form was designed to capture information that is relative to a variety of special needs spanning all age categories.

The intent of the program is to offer a voluntary registration process whereby an individual or an individual's parent, legal guardian, or legally chosen designee can provide as much specific information and description as they choose. We also have the ability to include a picture if the individual so desires. This information will be entered in the computer system and attached to the individual's name as well as the street address of their residence. The information is kept confidential and will only be available to Scarborough's police officers and public safety dispatchers. In the event that a call is received regarding a registered individual, or from the residence of a registered person, the information provided will immediately be brought to the attention of the responding officers.

Using the laptop computers in the patrol vehicles, the information including a picture, if supplied, will be readily available to the officer. The computer system will also provide an aerial photograph of the individual's neighborhood. By using the map, the on-duty supervisor will have the ability to coordinate a more in-depth search if necessary. As an added level of security, we also have the ability to display an aerial photograph of any of the public schools in Scarborough. In the unlikely event that a child went missing from a school, the officer would have a map of the child's school and surrounding area immediately available.

Obviously, it would be nice if we never had to use any of this information. However, in the event that we do, I am in hopes that our preparation will provide us with the greatest opportunity to be successful in keeping our citizens safe. Anyone wishing to participate in this program can find the necessary forms and release on our website at <http://www.scarboroughmaine.org/departments/police>

If you would like to see a live demonstration of how the information is stored and used, or if you have any ideas, concerns, or comments please feel free to reach me at 730-4399 or by email at rmoulton@scarboroughmaine.org

Robert Moulton

Chief of Police

Please fill out the following forms as clearly and completely as possible.

Please sign the Release From and call the Chief's Administrative Assistant, Cathy Chandler, at 207-730-4399 to make arrangements to drop off this packet.

Thank you.

SCARBOROUGH POLICE EMERGENCY INFORMATION RELEASE FORM

This form is being completed voluntarily to allow specific information to be used by first response/law enforcement personnel to assist the person named in this form. I am registering myself, or I am the parent, legal guardian, or legally chosen designee of the person being registered. My relationship to the person being registered is _____.

I am giving my permission to the Scarborough Police Department to retain and distribute this information for the sole purpose of identification and assistance to the person at risk. I understand this information will be kept confidential and will only be used by emergency personnel for the stated purpose.

I understand that the information provided can be added to or deleted from the system by my written request. I also understand that there may be instances where this information may not deter incidents from taking place. The Scarborough Police, in gathering and maintaining this information, make no representations or promises that such incidents can be prevented.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Name of Person: _____

Date: _____

**SCARBOROUGH POLICE EMERGENCY
INFORMATION FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WITH
AUTISM OR OTHER DISABILITY**

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Medical Condition or Disability(s)

Photograph Provided: YES _____ NO _____

Alias or Nicknames: _____

Physical Description:

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Eye Color: _____

Hair Color: _____ Eyeglasses: _____ Left or Right Handed _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Address: _____

Home: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Address: _____

Home: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Emergency Contact Name and Telephone (other than parents/guardian):

Marks/Scars/Tattoos or other identifiers:

Please list closest body of water and area swimming pools:

Is the individual verbal: _____

If not what method of communication can be used:

Please list any word triggers that would help us communicate with the individual:

Does the individual have a history of aggressive behavior:

If yes please explain:

Please list any calming techniques:

Is the individual scared of Law Enforcement or Emergency Services: _____

If yes please specify: (uniform, hats, lights, or sirens)

Any behaviors that is normal to the individual that may be misconstrued as threatening or aggressive:

Please list any sensory or sensitivity issues such (example touch)

Does the individual have an accurate sense of danger:

Please list any specific interests: (examples water, swimming, swing sets etc)

Please list friends in the neighborhood the individual may go: (please include phone numbers and address if applicable)

Please list any places individual has been located in the past:

Are there any other medical conditions we should be aware of:

Is there any other information that would be helpful to Emergency Personnel:
