

Officer Kyle Davidson Nominated by Officer James Edwards

***On May 14, 2023, Officer Davidson responded to a rollover traffic crash at 22nd and Seneca Streets. The crash resulted in two victims being pinned inside one of the vehicles. Noticing the occupants were in distress, Officer Davidson first freed a child from the vehicle and then helped to free the child's father from the severely damaged car. His courage and compassion reflect great credit upon himself, and the St. Joseph Police Department. In recognition of Officer Davidson's actions on May 14, 2023 he is awarded the Chief's Letter of Commendation.

Officer Bryson Wahlgren Nominated by Nora Cogdill

***On June 26th, 2023, at 500 North 19th Street Officer Bryson Wahlgren responded to a reported structure fire where a woman was not able to exit without assistance and was trapped in a bedroom. The residence was filled with smoke with no flames showing. The smoke created a hazardous situation for the family and their pets. Without hesitation Officer Wahlgren entered the home, found his way to the room where the woman was located and assisted her and the family dog out of the home.

Officer Wahlgren, your willingness to enter the residence without the proper personal protective gear shows great courage and commitment to the community and the profession of Police Officer. Thank you for going beyond what is normally expected of a police officer. Your actions are a credit to Nights Squad B, the St. Joseph Police Department, and the City of St. Joseph. In recognition of Officer Wahlgren's actions on June 26th, 2023 he is awarded the Chief's Letter of Commendation.

Sgt. Coy, Officers Woolery, Wahlgren, Rice, Cristobal-Esteban, Mapel and Dispatcher Justice nominated by CMDR Sweiger

***On May 28, 2023, members of Night Shift Squad B responded to 3600 North Village Drive on a reported suicidal person. Upon arrival a man holding a gun to his head could be seen through a window of one of the hotel rooms. Understanding the complexity of the situation, officers met at a nearby location and began working out a plan of action.

Officers Wahlgren and Rice maintained visual surveillance on the subject and began reporting his actions within the hotel room. Concurrently, Officer Mapel and Sergeant Coy made phone contact with the man. Over the next few hours officers noticed the man walking around the hotel room pointing a handgun at himself and around the room.

Officer Mapel while speaking with the man on a cell phone learned that he planned to take his own life at midnight. Fearing for the safety of other patrons Officers Woolery, Cristobal-Esteban and Wahlgren entered the hotel and began evacuating adjacent rooms.

After four hours of intense negotiation while watching the man repeatedly placing the gun to his head, officers were able to safely bring the incident to a conclusion when the man surrendered without violence.

Sergeant Coy, Ofc. Mapel, Ofc. Woolery, Ofc. Wahlgren, Ofc. Cristobal-Esteban, Ofc. Rice and Dispatcher Justice your actions on May 28th, 2023, at the Holiday Inn Express showed exceptional ability to lead and manage assets during a high stressful situation. You all showed exceptional teamwork and problem solving that safely resolved a very dangerous and life-threatening situation. Your actions are an example for us all and bring great credit to the City of St. Joseph and the St. Joseph Police Department. You all are worthy recipients of the Chief's Letter of Commendation.

Citizens Kevin Wells, Stanley D. Lee and Leona Kay Wilfong nominated by Det. Sgt. S. McClintick

***On April 9, 2024, at approximately 1800 hours, a citizen was brutally attacked outside his apartment building by a twenty-six-year-old resident impaired by alcohol and possibly other substances. As the victim exited his vehicle, the assailant, in a fit of aggression, directed his violence towards the victim, pulling him from the building and viciously assaulting him. Despite victim's attempts to defend himself, he sustained multiple severe injuries, including broken fingers, cracked ribs, a bruised eye, and internal head bleeding.

At around 1808 hours, citizen Kevin L. Wells, who had been working nearby mowing his lawn, heard the disturbance and observed the attack. Simultaneously, citizens Leona Kay Wilfong and Stanley D. Lee, passing by in a vehicle while delivering food to the homeless, saw the assault and immediately stopped to help. Together, they bravely intervened, with Wilfong and Lee assisting the injured victim while Mr. Wells physically confronted the assailant, placing himself between the attacker and the others to prevent further harm. Despite continuous threats from the assailant, Wells kept him at bay while Wilfong contacted the police.

Thanks to their courageous actions, they prevented further injury to the victim and themselves until police arrived and took the assailant into custody at 1813 hours.

The selfless and quick responses of Kevin L. Wells, Stanley D. Lee, and Leona Kay Wilfong in the face of danger exemplify extraordinary courage and community spirit. Their willingness to put themselves at risk to protect another has made a profound difference and reflects great credit upon themselves and their community. Kevin Wells, Stanley Lee and Leona Wilfong are worthy recipients of the Citizens Distinguished Service Commendation.

Officer Losson, Sgt Babb and Ofc. Alex Simon nominated by Sgt. Babb

***On October 1st, 2023, at 1937 hours, Sergeant Babb, Officer Simon, and Officer Losson responded to a medical emergency at 5310 Sawyer Street, where a male had collapsed from apparent cardiac arrest.

Sergeant Babb provided strong leadership and ensured seamless coordination with the Fire Department. Officer Simon gathered vital information for EMS and kept the distressed family calm, displaying professionalism under pressure. Officer Losson, while still in training, performed effective CPR alongside the Fire Department, making valuable contributions until EMS arrived.

Their teamwork, professionalism, and dedication reflect great credit on all three officers and their commitment to the community. Ofc. Losson is awarded the Life Saving Medal and Sgt. Babb and Officer Simon are awarded the Chief's Letter of Commendation.

Officer Justin McElroy nominated by Captain Chase Cotter

On December 26, 2023, at approximately 2205 hours, Officer Justin McElroy was on patrol in St. Joseph, Missouri, when he identified a U-Haul box truck as a suspect vehicle in a felony theft. After notifying dispatch, Officer McElroy initiated a traffic stop, but the vehicle fled, resulting in a pursuit over a distance of three miles. During the pursuit, a tire deflation device was deployed by another officer, disabling the truck. A female passenger in the vehicle called 911, stating she was not the driver.

The truck eventually became stuck on railroad tracks in an industrial area off Garfield. Officer McElroy took cover and observed the driver aiming a firearm in his direction. Acting swiftly and using sound tactics, Officer McElroy returned fire, striking the truck's open door and preventing the suspect from returning fire. The suspect later exited the vehicle with the firearm and surrendered, indicating he had been shot, though it was later determined no gunshot wounds were sustained.

Immediately after securing the scene, Officer McElroy, a trained member of the Special Response Team, began providing medical aid to the suspect, while ensuring the safety of the female passenger and communicating effectively with arriving officers. His actions demonstrated bravery, tactical precision, and a commitment to preserving life, even under threat. Officer McElroy is receiving the Meritorious Conduct Medal.

Officer McElroy recently received the Governor's Medal of Valor for this same incident.

Officer Ainouch and Citizen Michael Stotts nominated by Sgt Jeremy Peters

***On November 10, 2023, Officer Ainouch displayed exceptional bravery and determination while responding to an armed robbery suspect fleeing on foot. After pursuing the suspect, Officer Ainouch gave multiple commands to surrender, which the suspect ignored while reaching for his waistband.

Acting swiftly, Officer Ainouch deployed his taser with limited effectiveness, but despite the dangerous situation, he maintained control and engaged the suspect physically.

In a crucial moment, Michael Stotts, a security guard who had called the police, courageously stepped in to assist Officer Ainouch. Together, they successfully brought the suspect to the ground, with Stotts helping secure the suspect's hands while Officer Ainouch maintained control. Officer Ainouch's professionalism and composure under pressure, alongside Stotts' bravery, led to the apprehension of the suspect, who was later found to have discarded a backpack containing realistic airsoft guns and stolen items from the armed robbery.

Officer Ainouch went above and beyond, demonstrating extraordinary courage and dedication to duty, responding to the call even after his shift had ended, and using a less lethal option during a highly stressful and dangerous incident. His actions, along with the courageous intervention of Michael Stotts, reflect great credit on both individuals.

In recognition of their heroic efforts, Officer Ainouch is awarded the Meritorious Conduct Medal, and Michael Stotts is recognized with the Citizen's Distinguished Service Commendation for his valuable assistance in a dangerous situation.

Sgt Dave Hernandez-Gross nominated by Commander Olszowka

***On December 10, 2023, while working the Booking Desk Sergeant Hernandez-Gross granted a request by a city prisoner wanting to take a shower. Seeing no reason to deny the request, Sergeant Hernandez-Gross allowed the prisoner to take the requested shower. Following established protocol, the prisoner was locked in the shower room alone for both security and privacy.

While making cell checks Sergeant Hernandez-Gross knocked on the shower room door to check on the inmate and heard a noise from inside that gave Sergeant Hernandez-Gross concern. Sergeant Hernandez-Gross unlocked and opened the shower room door to find the inmate attempting to take his own life by hanging.

Sergeant Hernandez-Gross rushed over to the hanging inmate, lifting him up, taking the pressure off the inmate's neck. Once the some of the pressure was taken off the man's neck Sergeant Hernandez-Gross was able to loosen the knot tied around the man's neck. Sergeant Hernandez -Gross yelled for assistance and Deputy Sill came to his aid.

Together Deputy Sill and Sergeant Gross where able to get the man to the floor. Noticing the man was not breathing Sergeant Gross pushed on the man's chest and he began to immediately breath, saving the

man life. The inmate was then placed in the recovery position awaiting an ambulance and transportation to the Mosaic Emergency Room for further medical treatment.

For saving the life of an emotionally disturbed man on December 10, 2023, Sergeant Hernandez-Gross is awarded the Life Saving Medal.

Sgt. Peters, Ofc's Ainouch, Phillips, and Meehan nominated by Commander Sweiger

On April 21, 2024, a structure fire occurred at 1307 Francis Street. Sergeant Peters, Officer Ainouch, and Officer Phillips arrived on scene and took immediate action to save lives. Sergeant Peters, unable to access the building due to the fire, broke a window and manually rescued a trapped individual. Officers Ainouch and Phillips retrieved a mattress and used it as a landing zone for residents on the second floor, enabling at least two people to jump to safety. Their swift and courageous actions directly saved lives, earning them the Lifesaving Medal.

Officer Meehan provided critical support by identifying displaced residents and coordinating with the Red Cross to set up emergency shelter. Her compassion and dedication to ensuring the well-being of the community in a time of crisis is highly commendable, and for her efforts, Officer Meehan is awarded a Chief's Letter of Commendation.