



April 2024

Welcome to Neighbors in Uniform, a monthly newsletter that provides information about Gwinnett County Police events, topics, programs, and initiatives. We are honored to have the respect and trust of the residents we serve and protect, and we're happy to be a resource and support.

### Gwinnett Police Department shines at the 2024 VALOR Awards

The Gwinnett Chamber recently held its 19<sup>th</sup> Annual VALOR Awards, celebrating the bravery and dedication of public safety professionals. Among those honored were members of the Gwinnett Police Department:

- **Medal of Merit:** Lieutenant Collin McClendon
- **Communications Officer of the Year:** Heather Cassele
- **Public Safety Officer of the Year:** Corporal Michael Ricks
- **Public Safety Unit of the Year:** Gang Unit (pictured below)



Thank you, Gwinnett Chamber, for recognizing the bravery and critical role that first responders play in our communities. Our officers spend countless hours away from their own families to ensure the safety of others. This dedication sometimes means trading the warmth of home for the uncertainty of the streets and the laughter of their children for the cries of strangers in need.

Thank you to all our public safety professionals who risk their lives daily. In the face of adversity, we appreciate your resilience. May we never take for granted the peace you preserve and the lives you save.

### Reducing Gwinnett 911 hold times

Communications officers handle a variety of calls ranging from minor car crashes to life-saving CPR instructions daily. Last year, the 911 Center received an average of 2,032 calls per day, with an average

hold time of 1 minute and 27 seconds. As of March 2024, the average hold time has been reduced to just 16 seconds. Our staffing increase during peak times and improved training operations are major factors in our goal of improving wait times. In the most recent reporting period of March 2024, 84 percent of calls were answered within 20 seconds, and 94 percent of calls were answered within one minute (excluding abandoned calls).

Gwinnett Police would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our 911 communications officers for their efforts in reducing call hold times. Ensuring that Gwinnett residents receive high-quality service is important to us and improving the overall operation of the 911 Center is crucial in achieving this goal.

This week we celebrate **National Public Safety Telecommunicators week**. In the video below, communications officers give a glimpse into their world – what a typical day brings, the unexpected twists that keep things exciting, and why they love this essential job.

Visit the [Gwinnett 911 Center](#) website to learn about when and how to use 911, when to call our non-emergency number, and for answers to frequently asked questions.

Our department is always looking for dedicated people to join our team of amazing staff in the 911 Center. To learn more about the position and to apply, visit [Gwinnett911Careers.com](#).

### Drop off expired medications at Drug Take Back Event



On **Saturday, April 27**, we're once again partnering with the Drug Enforcement Agency for National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. Residents can dispose of unwanted or potentially dangerous prescription medications.

The Take Back Day is an effort to prevent medication misuse and opioid addiction. If you want to contribute to making our communities safer by removing unneeded medications from your home, please stop by police headquarters or a [precinct near you](#) from **10:00am to 2:00pm**. You can also drop off expired medications at

the Earth Day recycling event on the same day at Coolray Field.

Liquids, syringes, sharps, and other non-prescription drugs will not be accepted. No appointment is needed and anyone dropping off prescription drugs will not be asked about medical history nor how they came into possession of the medications. To learn more, visit [GwinnettCounty.com](#).

### Take a Firearm Safety and Security class at your local precinct

Learn guidelines and best practices for safe gun handling by joining one of our Firearm Safety and Security classes. The classes are offered at all police precincts and taught by local law enforcement personnel.

Registration is required to participate, and seating is limited. Youth who plan to attend must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Residents are prohibited from bringing their own guns to class. All classes start promptly at 6:30pm.



Visit [GwinnettCounty.com/FirearmSafety](#) to register for one of upcoming classes below:

- **Monday, May 6**, North Precinct, 2735 Mall of Georgia Boulevard, Buford
- **Wednesday, June 5**, East Precinct, 2273 Alcovy Road, Dacula
- **Wednesday, July 17**, Central Precinct, 3125 Satellite Boulevard, Duluth

### Celebrate Diversity at the 10th Annual Gwinnett Multicultural Festival

Join us in celebrating the rich tapestry of cultures that make up our vibrant community at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Gwinnett Multicultural Festival and County Government Open House on **Saturday, May 18** from **10:00am to 2:00pm** at Gwinnett Place Mall, located at 2100 Pleasant Hill Road in Duluth.

This year's festival promises an array of exciting activities and performances that showcase the global diversity of Gwinnett. The festival is a free family-friendly event with plenty of activities for kids, including face painting, inflatables, and a touch-a-truck area featuring specialized vehicles from our public safety departments. Families can also take advantage of free car seat checks offered by Gwinnett Police and Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services.



The festival will kick off with a naturalization ceremony to welcome our newest citizens. You'll have a chance to visit more than 60 exhibits and meet the people who work in Gwinnett departments to discover services and programs available to residents. There will also be a diverse selection of delicious foods from around the world. For more information about the festival and open house, email us at [PDCommunityAffairs@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:PDCommunityAffairs@GwinnettCounty.com) or learn more [here](#).

### Youth Police Academy is back this summer

Our annual Youth Police Academy ramps back up this summer! The academy is free and open to students living in Gwinnett who will be enrolled in grades 7 through 12 as of August 2024.

- **Middle School: June 24 to 28**
- **High School: July 8 to 12**

We curate an unparalleled glimpse into the world of law enforcement and the vital role it plays in our society. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about CPR/AED, emergency vehicle operations, crime scene investigations, internet safety, K-9, and much more. The hands-on approach is not just a learning experience but an exciting adventure into the world of policing; it's a launch pad for our youth to become informed, responsible, and proactive.



If you know a student who is ready for an adventure, encourage them to apply [here](#). Space is limited. The **application deadline is May 3, 2024, at 8:00am**. Learn more by visiting [GwinnettCounty.com/YPA](http://GwinnettCounty.com/YPA). If you have additional questions or require more information, please email us at [PDCommunityAffairs@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:PDCommunityAffairs@GwinnettCounty.com)

### April is National Volunteers Month - Thank you to all Gwinnett Police volunteers!

We want to recognize and thank all of the community volunteers who give their time and energy to support Gwinnett Police's mission.

Thank you to the Police Citizens Advisory Board members (pictured below), who provide recommendations related to law enforcement policies, procedures, practices, and training; the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association of Gwinnett who support staff and residents year-round; the Volunteer Citizens on Patrol who help patrol our parks; the Community Oriented Police Service (C.O.P.S.) liaison and block captains who lead our Neighborhood Watch programs; and all other volunteers who willingly give of their time and talents, helping us to reach out and connect with the community in meaningful ways. Please know that your efforts are highly valued and deeply appreciated!



### Safety Tip of the Month: Pedestrian Safety

Follow these tips to keep you and your loved ones safe while crossing the road:

- Always use crosswalks while crossing the road. Avoid jay walking.
- Be sure to stop and look both ways several times before crossing the road.
- If crossing to the other side of the street, do so quickly.
- Reduce distractions. Avoid looking down at your phone or walking with earphones in.
- Try not to carry heavy items if you plan on crossing the road. This may slow you down.
- Wear brightly colored clothing if you plan on walking. Avoid areas that are not well lit.
- If you go out drinking, avoid walking home even if you live close by. Call a taxi or rideshare service or contact a friend to pick you up.



For questions regarding the Neighbors in Uniform newsletter, please contact Rachael Warnsley at [Rachael.Warnsley@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:Rachael.Warnsley@GwinnettCounty.com) or 770.513.5348. Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#) @GwinnettPD.





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