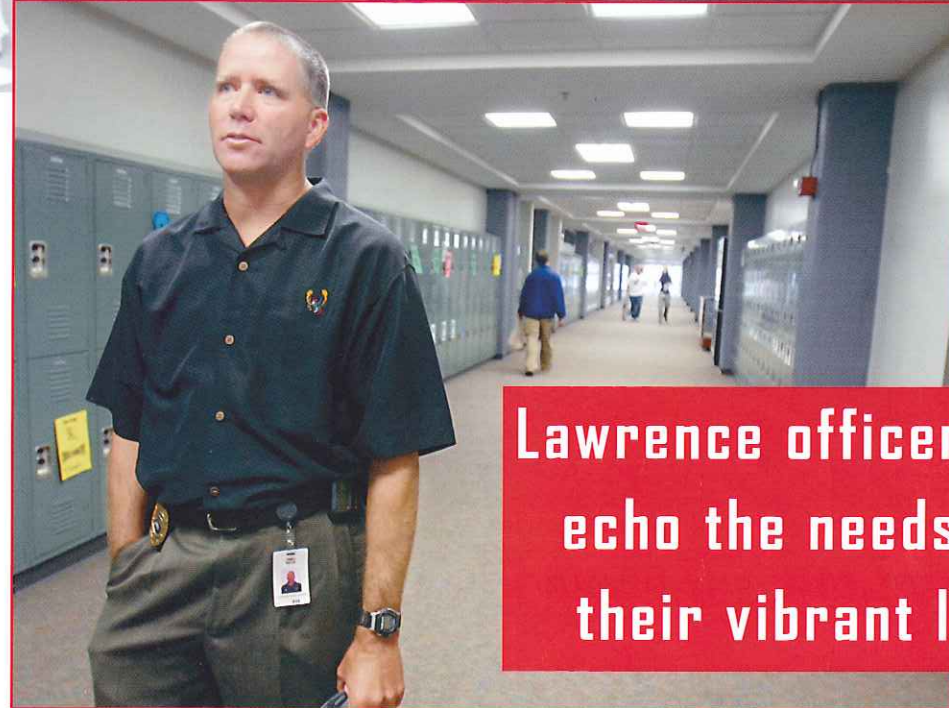
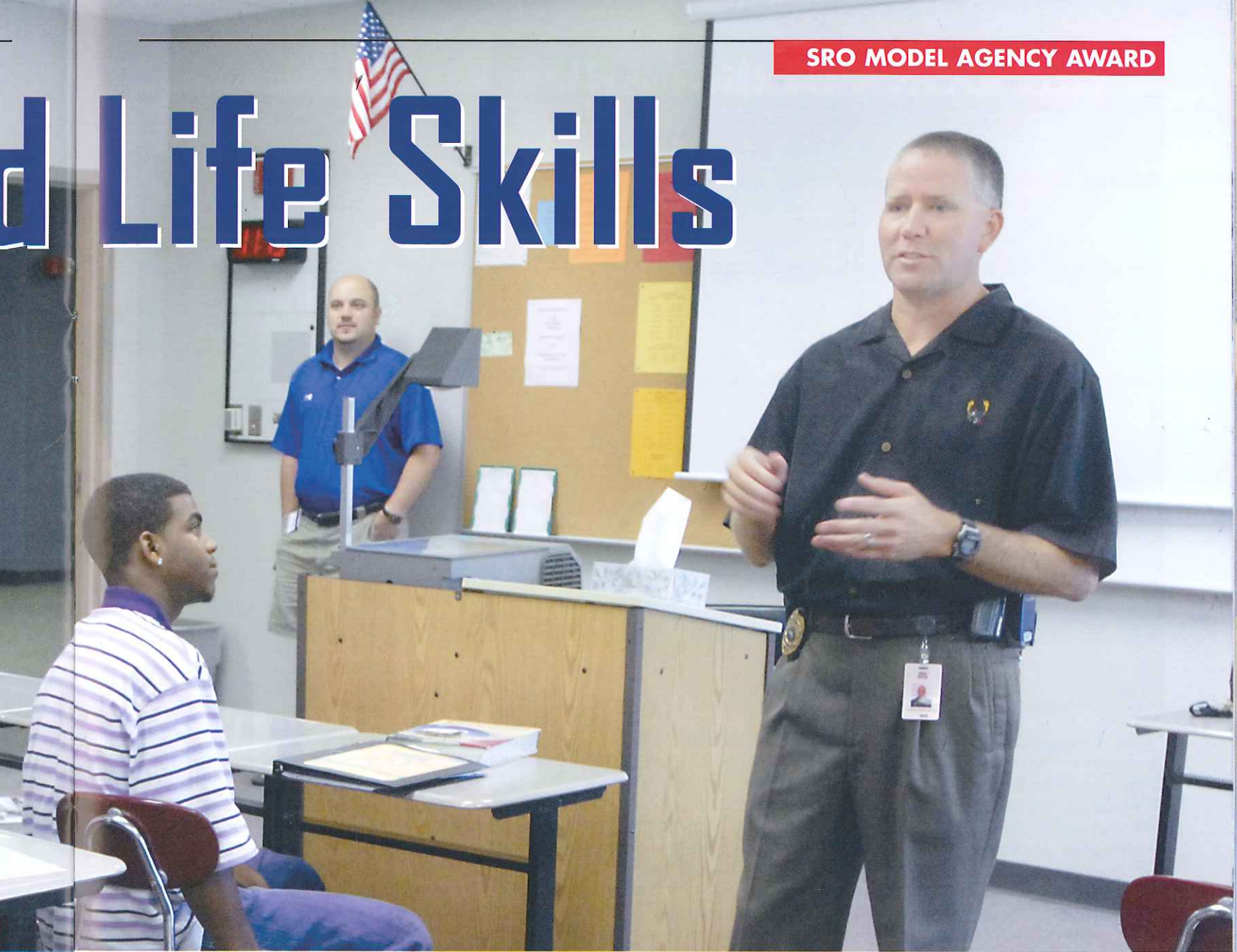


SROs Help Build Life Skills

By Captain Dan Ward, Lawrence (KS) Police Department



Lawrence officers and their duties echo the needs and demands of their vibrant local community.



Lawrence, Kansas is a diverse and multifaceted city that provides many of the amenities of a large metropolitan area, while still maintaining a strong sense of community. Located in northeast Kansas, Lawrence is just 45 minutes west of Kansas City and 30 minutes east of Topeka, the state capital. Lawrence offers a rich and fascinating history, a wide range of exciting cultural experiences, nationally recognized educational institutions, and some of the most unique and enjoyable shopping opportunities in the Midwest. Officers of the Lawrence Police Department have been active in the city's junior high schools since 1975, teaching a two-week 9th grade social studies class entitled "Law Enforcement

and the Criminal Justice System". However, the reality of placing a full-time Lawrence police officer in the community's public schools began in 1995 at Lawrence High School. Four school resource officers (SROs) were added March 1, 2002, through a Federal Department of Justice Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant (OJP/COPS Grant). The three-year grant ended in February 2005. Today, the SRO program has grown to include six officers, one in each of the community's four junior high schools and one at each of the two high schools. Presently, the six SRO positions are fully funded through the City of Lawrence. The SRO program services a school district that is host to over 10,000

students. The SRO program is overseen by one sergeant and falls under the purview of the Lawrence, Kansas Police Department's Community Services Division. Recognized as a vital element to ensuring the safety of children, the Lawrence Police Department SRO Program is committed in its partnership with not only the school district and its faculty and staff, but also the community's leaders, students and parents. The scope of the Lawrence, Kansas Police Department's SRO Program is magnified by the unique make-up of the community. Although SROs are assigned to specific schools, their duties echo the needs and demands of the local community; a community also home to two universities (University of Kansas and



Lawrence (KS) Police Department's School Resource Officers
 Second from left: Captain Dan Ward, Rick Gammill (Director of Special Operations, Safety and Transportation, Lawrence Public Schools), Officer Matt Sarna, Officer Kresten Spurling, and Officer Eric Barkley. At far left is Matt Liston, NASRO Region 8 Director; and far right is NASRO's Immediate Past President Carl Osburn.

Haskell Indian Nations University). As such, the tools used to educate elementary, junior high and high school students must also be adaptable to develop and prioritize educational and crime prevention programs for college students and the community at large.

The key to the success as a unit can be credited to the proactive approach to crime prevention vis-à-vis encouraging self-respect in students and modeling positive behavior. In addition to classroom activities and lectures, diverse selections of community outreach and crime prevention programs are utilized.

The Lawrence Police Department's SRO Program was created not only to address crime in the community's schools, but to engage the youth to recognize alternatives to delinquent behavior by providing mentorship at a very fundamental, yet essential level in the classroom.

The officers chosen to serve as SROs are selected by a police department internal interview board and serve as school resource officers on a temporary basis, generally a four-year assignment. SROs are selected not merely based upon their previous work performance but also for their strong moral character

and inimitable ability to engage the public. This ensures only self-motivated, purpose driven officers are selected to lead and mentor the community's students.

Once selected for a SRO assignment, the officer must attend both Basic and Advanced School Resource Officer School. The SRO also attends annual school-based training, to include, at a minimum, either one or both the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) annual conference and/or Kansas Association of School Resource Officers (KASRO) annual conference. Officers are also encouraged to attend additional training throughout the year, some of which has included various Internet safety and crimes against children courses and child abuse investigations. Additionally, all of the SROs have received hands-on Active Shooter training, hosted by the Lawrence Police Department.

Role of the School Resource Officer

The primary mission of the Lawrence Police Department SRO Unit is threefold: formal instruction, informal consultation and law enforcement. However, this role has expanded to meet the growing needs of the Lawrence community. Realizing the engagement of students in the classroom

is pivotal to the success of the program, the SRO's present a multitude of law enforcement topics, with curriculum designed to engage the students in open and informative discussion. Topics presented by the SROs include: Accident Investigation, Alcohol/Drugs and Driving, Constitutional Issues, Juvenile Justice System, Evidence and Crime-Scene Processing, Personal Safety, Organizational Structure of the Lawrence Police Department, Sexual Harassment, Traffic Law, Sexual Assault and Sex Laws, Internet Safety, Stranger Safety. (Note: Many of the classes listed are also taught by SROs at various community organizations/events and elementary schools, as well as at the SRO's assigned school.)

Community Based Summer Program (Police Camp)

Each summer, the SROs host a police camp for approximately 50-60 area youth, between the ages 8-12. The Lawrence Police Department's Police Camp is a program established to promote a positive interaction between the Lawrence Police Department and the children of Lawrence. The purpose is to build life skills, instill confidence and develop self-esteem. The curriculum includes a wide

range of activities that incorporate teamwork, physical fitness, and general police information. The SROs emphasize the importance of physical and mental fitness and teach good citizenship. The SROs strive to provide a positive learning experience for children during their summer break. The program is structured to be fun, informative and challenging.

The program is made possible through the volunteer efforts of many participating agencies. The \$20 fee per child provides for two Police Camp t-shirts and one Police Camp ball cap per child, as well as the cost of a pizza party at the conclusion of the camp on day three. The camp is restricted to only 60 participants, although demand is always much higher.

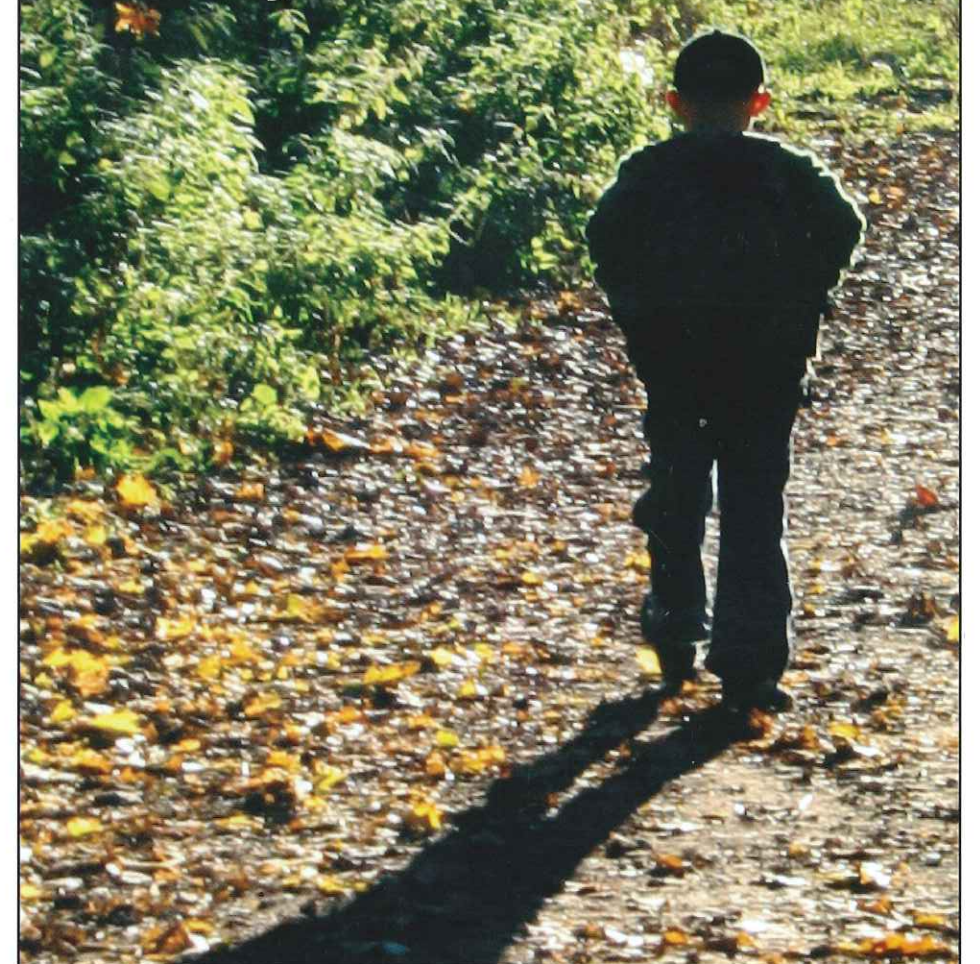
One of the greatest rewards for the SROs is when they encounter a past camp attendee at the junior high or high school level. The students always remember their participation in Police Camp as an informative and very rewarding experience. The camp has proven to be a valuable tool to introducing the community's children to their local police officers.

Community Based Initiative (Hawks, Cops & Kids)

Hawks, Cops and Kids is an innovative program sponsored by the University of Kansas Public Safety Office and Big Brother Big Sisters of Douglas County and partnered with local law enforcement. The annual event is held at Allen Fieldhouse and Anschutz Pavilion on the University of Kansas main campus and provides a forum for area youth (3rd through 8th grade) to engage law enforcement officers and University of Kansas athletes in an approachable and non-imposing manner. The event hosts hundreds of children, exposing them to leadership skills, athletics and various law enforcement topics. The SROs of the Lawrence Police Department volunteer as both group leaders and instructors for the event, teaching a wide range of topics such as internet safety, stranger safety and drug awareness.

The officers assigned to the Lawrence Police Department's SRO Unit during the recognition year were: Sergeant Dan Ward, Officer Willie Brown, Officer Matt Sarna, Officer Don Hicks, Officer Brian Kelly, Officer Kresten Spurling and Officer Eric Barkley.

Who will protect him when you're not around?



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