

## **Indianapolis Police Department Officer David Kuchta-Drane**

To Whom It May Concern:

Jeanne and I would like to Place Officer David Kuchta-Drane in nomination for the ‘# Why We Serve’ grant. Officer Drane is our personal hero and well qualified to be a recipient of one of you grants. Here is our story and Officer Drane made a difference in our family.

Jeanne and I adopted a sibling group (all had the same mom and two fathers) of nine children from the age 18 months to 15 years in age. These children would have made the ‘all-inclusive’ 24 – 7 news cycle if it had been primetime 20 years ago. There were 10 children but the second oldest, Kyle, drown in the nearby river running away to get help for his brothers and sisters. Due to his death Indiana welfare stepped in and removed the children, terminated their parental rights, and placed all nine out adoption. We rose to the challenge and adopted all nine keeping them together because they were so fragile it was felt to be separated some of the nine would perish.

The abuse was tremendous, with the step father perpetrating the abuse while the mother stood by helpless or unwilling to step in and stop it. Anything you can think of happened to the older half of the group with the younger half experiencing the trauma of living in the experience. On top of the abuse, the genetics of the mother and the two fathers passed emotional and mental traits to the children where the abuse became a traumatic trigger for unleashing diagnoses that have haunted them for twenty years. We have 2 Borderline Personality Disorders, 3 Bipolar Disorders, 2 with Autism, 1 Dissociative Identity Disorder, and 1 without a diagnosis. It was a handful...

We had many visits from the police with out of control children, many hospitalizations, and several institutional placements. The most troubling of the children was Michael. He was threatening and violent with us and his siblings. In one instance we called the police and happen to have Officer Drane dispatched to our home and the experience was much different than previous police showing up.

Officer Drane is a trained CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) Officer, and later we discovered he was a licensed teacher with a special education background. Not only did he handle the situation with Michael (14 years old) in a therapeutic fashion that night, but he continued to stop in unannounced to check in on Michael. He ‘buddied’ with Michael showing concern and passion for his situation. I had one officer, before Officer Drane, suggest I should stop calling the cops and “take Mike out back and thrash him” to correct his behavior. So needless to say Officer Drane was breath of fresh air.

Office Drane joined the wrap team for Michael and attended the team meetings volunteering to work with Michael to help him out. Wrap teams are designed by community mental health centers to keep kids out of hospitalizations and in the home. Instead of taking Michael to a treatment center (hospital) the services were in our home ‘wrapped’ around him by the team.

At first the wrap team was leery of including a representative of law enforcement, but once they understood Officer Drane’s background and approach with Michael he became an important part of the

team. The years with Michael from 16 to 18 years in age were hard traumatic years for Jean and me, and Officer Drane was with us every step of the way. Without his assistance and personal interest we wouldn't have been able to maintain Michael in our home.

To wrap up, the need for Officer Drane to visit is over, but he does text and call to check in and ask how we and our Nine are doing. They are now all adults and for most of the Nine Officer Drane was an inspiration, one, Samantha, became an IMPD Explorer for 3 years and went on to become a Marine.

We just saw a news report where Officer Drane helped a needy black family by buying shoes for the four or five children. Their comment to the news was that was this was the first positive experience / interaction with a police officer. He was just doing his duty, it's how he lives his life. He's a different type of officer that we need in leadership so we can raise the bar on community policing.

Officer Drane works tirelessly helping the underserved, mentally challenged, and homeless. He'd like his grant to be awarded to Adult and Child Health with whom both Officer Drane and A&c serve the same clientele. Attached is the annual report for Adult and Child – like two peas in pod.

With Much Gratitude for Your Consideration,

Tom and Jeanne Gaunt