



June 12, 2010

BEHIND THE BADGE



NEWS FLASH

RPD Holds Honorary Officer Recognition Ceremony

On Friday, June 11, eight-year-old William Bunn stood before a crowd of family, friends, and RPD personnel as Chief Dolan formally installed him as an honorary RPD officer.

William, who is battling a severe illness, has dreamed of being a police officer since he was very young. Master Officer G.A. Witherspoon of the Downtown District's Community Policing Unit was introduced to William after giving a talk about safety at William's elementary school, and when Witherspoon learned about William's dream, he decided to do everything within his power to make it come true.

Witherspoon contacted Chief Dolan, who agreed to make William an honorary RPD officer. The two decided to hold a special ceremony to mark the occasion, and enlisted the help of Chief's Of-



Eight-year-old William Bunn pauses for a photo with members of the RPD Honor Guard after being formally installed as the RPD's first honorary police officer.



fice Administrative Assistant Joanne Calzaretta to plan the event. Witherspoon put together a custom-tailored RPD uniform for William to wear for the occasion, complete with a hat, name tag, and his very own police whistle.

Witherspoon escorted William and his family from their home to the ceremony, and a crowd of RPD personnel greeted the group as they arrived at North Haven Church. The ceremony began with a posting of the colors by RPD Honor Guard members, and Detective D. Montague sang the national anthem. Chief Dolan then read a Chief's Citation declaring William's official appointment as an honorary officer.

"This citation serves as official notice that William Bunn is hereby appointed as an honorary Police Officer for the Raleigh Police Department," said Chief Dolan. "This appointment is made based upon a thorough and careful review of Honorary Officer Bunn's credentials and his expressed interest submitted in a letter to the chief's office in May of this year.

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MO Witherspoon escorts William from his home to the ceremony.

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'Dear Mr. Policeman, I've wanted to be a policeman since I was five years old. One year I even dressed up as one for Halloween. I think it is cool because you have real handcuffs and stuff, and you catch the bad guys. It makes me feel safe. I think it is cool that you guys can ride to the jail and check it out. I hope someday I can meet you and have my very own badge. Thank you, From William Bunn.'

Raleigh police officers exhibit bravery every day, and without question the courage you have demonstrated exceeds our expectations. This citation officially recognizes your strength of character and unique ability to serve as a role model for other officers to follow."

Chief Dolan then presented William with his personal badge, which was engraved with William's name and the date of the ceremony, and William's mother pinned the badge on his uniform shirt. Pastor James Seymour of North Haven Church gave the benediction, and those in attendance gathered over refreshments afterwards to give their best wishes to William.

"For William to wake up every day and put a smile on his face despite his illness takes an amazing amount of strength and spirit," said Witherspoon. "Today, the Raleigh Police Department recognized William for his courage, and this event truly encompasses what we stand for as a department."

For more of William's story, visit his CaringBridge site: www.caringbridge.org/visit/williambunn.

By Dawn Myers



William's parents, Mark and Amy, and MO Witherspoon look on as Chief Dolan welcomes William to the RPD family.



William and the officers salute one another at the conclusion of the ceremony.