



CITY OF PEEKSKILL

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa
Mayor

Peekskill Youth Police Academy Giving City the Chance to Experience the World of Police Work.

*Building On Last Year's Success, The Program Will Put Kids In the
Role of Patrol And Give Them A Chance To Experience The Realities
Of Law Enforcement.*

Media Invited To See Program At Work. Numerous Opportunities Available Over
Coming Week. Graduation Ceremony Set for August 6, 2004.

For Immediate Release

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PEEKSKILL, NY— There are a lot of cop shows on television. But the average citizen—especially the average young person—has few opportunities to experience the realities of law enforcement life.

In the latest of its community outreach programs, the Peekskill Police Department is building a bridge to young people with its Peekskill Youth Police Academy program. Last year's pilot program proved so successful that the Peekskill Police Department decided to make the Youth Police Academy an ongoing part of its operations.

840 Main Street, Peekskill, NY 10566 (914) 734-4105

Each summer, a maximum of 18 youths aged 12-15 will get a chance to experience what the life of a police officer is like.

“It’s vital that we give our youths a chance to experience the responsibilities and realities of the world of law enforcement,” says Mayor John Testa. “This program does that. Even more important, it demonstrates the creativity, commitment and initiative of our Police Department, whose members created this program themselves,” he says.

Over the course of 10 working days from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., the youths will get a chance to learn the realities of such sometimes mundane and frequently dangerous tasks as traffic stops, arrest procedures, building searches, detective investigative techniques and crime scene investigations. There are also extensive classroom sessions at the Peekskill Neighborhood Center at 4 Nelson Avenue.

“We take 10 days to really just stretch out a day in the life of a police officer,” says Sgt. Cathy Johansen, unit supervisor of the Peekskill Police Department’s Community Policing Division. “We show them everything a police officer might experience while he’s on patrol—what he would have to know and how he feels going through it,” she says. “We put them through simulated situations where they actually become the police officers themselves.”

All the slots available in the program are usually filled long before it starts. Participants must fill out a detailed application, get at least two references and have a good record at the time they enroll. The program is open to both young men and young women. Four graduates of last year’s Youth Police Academy are assisting in the training this year.

Sgt. Johansen and Officer Andre Wright, both members of Peekskill's Community Policing Division, teamed up with retired Uriah Hill School Principal and former director of the National Corps of Cadets James Taylor to create the first Youth Police Academy in the summer of 2003. This year's program is being run entirely through the Community Policing Division. Its cost to the City is minimal thanks to the generous donations of several area businesses, Johansen says.

Local businesses have donated everything from T-shirts and caps to lunch and snack food, she says. Donations from local businesses and support from other units of the City government, local non-profits and businesses are all a crucial component of the program's success, Johansen says. Peekskill City Hall, the Peekskill Fire Department, Peekskill City Court, the Peekskill Department of Parks and Recreation and the Peekskill Youth Bureau have all donated their time and resources.

Other sponsors include the Peekskill Rotary Club, which donated money for supplies and sponsored a luncheon, Wheelabrator, Dominoes, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Hugo's Restaurant, Kelly's on the Green, Anthony's Pizzeria, Burger King and McDonalds.

Program activities that will take place include Building Searches/Defensive Tactics on Wednesday, Aug. 4, Detective Investigations Demonstrations on Thursday, Aug. 5, and Arrest Procedures/Court Processes/District Attorney Roles on Friday, Aug. 6. The media are also invited as well to the graduation on Friday the 6th in the Common Council chambers at 12:30pm.

For more information, contact Sgt. Cathy Johansen at 914-737-8000.

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