



## CITY OF BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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### **Editorial: "Police, People Help Keep Burnsville Safe"** **Eric Gieseke, Burnsville Police Chief**

This week, our Department – along with the Dakota County Attorney's Office, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and a number of our partnering law enforcement agencies – met with a group of our residents and neighbors in Burnsville's North River Hills area to discuss crime. As most of you know, this area has witnessed an unusual number of high-profile incidents in the past six months.

Understandably so, these crimes have had an impact on the entire community. However, it has been specifically trying for the residents in this northeast section of Burnsville. For some, it has made them feel less secure. When people don't feel safe in their community, it can be very unsettling – and quite frankly – very scary. I know this at both a personal and professional level.

Growing up in Brooklyn Park, I woke up on more than one occasion in the middle of the night to a commotion outside of my bedroom window. Typically, the sounds were followed by a parade of red flashing police lights in front of my neighbor's (and best friend's) house. Quite regularly, this would be followed by the officers physically escorting my friend's father out of the house – after he had brutally beaten her mother.

While these scenes were terrifying to me at such a young age, I took comfort in knowing that the police officers were there to help and to stop the violence. I was in awe of these officers who ran toward the calls for help, while the rest of us literally ran away.

Despite those events of my childhood, my family maintained its deep roots in our community. We grew up, grew strong and broadened our perspective on life. I learned at an early age that terrible things can happen to very kind and gentle people without any significant explanations as to why. There is no doubt that those early memories drew me to a law enforcement career.

Nearly 25 years ago, my first call as a police officer brought me to Tamarack Lane in North River Hills. That area became my primary patrol area of choice for several years, and I have had a special connection to it and the people there ever since. To me, it is not much different from the neighborhood I grew up in. In fact, it is not much different from almost any suburban neighborhood spanning the metropolitan area. It is a great and stable place to live, filled with dedicated and committed residents, yet occasionally tested and challenged by reckless individuals who can create fear.

Today, as Police Chief, I am still in awe of the Burnsville Police Officers who run toward the calls for help to protect our community each and every day. I have the utmost confidence and pride in these men and women who never back down, and never run away.

That is the message I want to leave with our residents, families, friends, neighbors and businesses. The incidents we have experienced over the past six months are certainly not the standard – they are an anomaly. Our 75 sworn officers and 18 civilian employees have been, and will continue to work hard to ensure that Burnsville remains a safe community. We are doing everything we can to help prevent crimes from happening – and putting criminals to justice when they do.

However, we don't do this alone. As a law enforcement agency, we work in partnership with other law enforcement professionals and members of the criminal justice system. We also work with you. We rely on the 60,000+ eyes and ears of our community to report crimes and suspicious activities as they occur. If you "See Something, Say Something," and dial 9-1-1.

Our community is not merely defined by any one reckless individual or any single event. We are, however, defined by our culture and history, our vision for the future and our joint commitment as a community to keep Burnsville safe.

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