



## Law Enforcement and the Autism/ID/DD Community

“Learning from each other, navigating together”

Officer Laurie Reyes  
Montgomery County Department of Police  
Montgomery County, Maryland



## Officer Laurie Reyes

1997-Started with Montgomery County Police as a patrol officer in the Wheaton District.

2004- Autism/IDD (Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities Outreach Officer

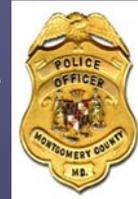
Project Lifesaver Coordinator



## The Montgomery County Police Autism, Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities (ID,DD) Outreach Program

Began in an effort to address the growing calls for those who were the focus of critically missing persons calls due to wandering/elopement but has since grown to provide outreach and support in response to more than just calls for elopement but general calls for service.

Montgomery County Autism/ID/DD Outreach Program.



EDUCATION  
OUTREACH  
FOLLOW UP  
EMPOWERMENT  
RESPONSE

# Officer Training

Montgomery County Department of Police



All Incoming Recruits  
CIT Officers  
ESU Officers  
Use of Self Advocates



This curriculum is developed and instructed, in house, by officers that have first hand experience in search and rescue as well as the dynamics of having positive/effective interactions with the Autism/ID/DD communities.

# Community Events

Education and Understanding  
Through Exposure...



**Autism/ID/DD Night Out**  
A Safety Fair for Individuals with Autism and their Families/Caretakers  
brought to you by:  
Montgomery County Police Autism/ID/DD Outreach Unit



**Friday, May 19th, 2017**  
6:00pm-9:00pm  
Montgomery County Public Service Training Academy  
8751 Snouffer School Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20879

- ✓ Resources and Tools to Help Keep your Children Safe
- ✓ Meet K-9 Units, Handlers, and Search & Rescue Officers
- ✓ Pictures with Police Officers
- ✓ Equipment Prevention: Project Lifesaver & Safety Tips
- ✓ Fun for Everyone: Food, Face Painting, Tattoos & Moon Bounce
- ✓ Tour Emergency Vehicles
- ✓ Meet Fire Rescue Personnel
- ✓ Special Olympics, Therapeutic Horseback Riding, Swim Lesson Information
- ✓ Agriculture Farm Therapy and info from the Madison House Foundation
- ✓ Mini-Athletic Search and Rescue
- ✓ Fire Rescue Boats
- ✓ Service Dogs by Warren Retrievers
- ✓ Officers from each district attending

Each family will receive a Safety Kit, Safety T-Shirt, and more!  
**RSVP FOR FREE:**  
[ACT.AutismSpeaks.org/AutismNightOutMD](http://ACT.AutismSpeaks.org/AutismNightOutMD)  
Questions? Please contact Laurie Reyes@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov

**Spectacular Kids Night!**  
Help us promote autism awareness & support families of children with special needs

**Thursday, June 25, 2015**  
4:00 pm - 10:00 pm



2009 Century Blvd.  
Germantown, MD

20% off your meal



Join "The Village" on Facebook  
A support group for families of children with special needs  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/thevillageconnection/>



## Media Outreach Builds Awareness

### Local

(TV, Radio, Department  
Media Section)

### National

(TV, print, radio)

### Social Media

(Facebook, Twitter,  
Department website)

Caregiver/ Self Advocate  
Participation

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AS OUTREACH

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (RIDE ON/METRO  
SYSTEMS)

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

LOCAL HOSPITALS/NATIONAL HOSPITALS

NURSING HOMES/GROUP HOMES/ASSISTED LIVING  
FACILITIES

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



# EMPOWERMENT



The program recognizes individuals, community members, caregivers and officers who are making a difference.



## EMPOWERMENT!!

Meeting the Vice President as part of the White House Champion's of Change Awards

## Officer "Education" through exposure...



Autism Night Out  
Montgomery County Police Department

ARMAND HUGON  
www.ArmandHugon.com

Learning from each other...

Introductions / Interactions

## EDUCATION

I am pleased and proud to say that we just began a new block of instruction with our graduating students.

The program uses officers experiences as well as the Be Safe curriculum to give the students an extensive overview of how to **be safe** in the community and have positive interactions with law enforcement.



## Wandering/Elopement Concerns...

The Montgomery County Department of Police averages **2-4 searches a week** for critically missing individuals.

Most of those searches are for individuals affected by **Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities or Alzheimer's/Dementia.**

We locate many missing persons before caregivers realize they are missing.

### MCPD Wandering Prevention Safety Kit/Safety Shirts

These shirts are **ONLY** designed for those that **Can Not** Speak for themselves **and** are at immediate risk!



## Neighbor Letter

## Safety Tip Sheet

[www.mymcpnews.com](http://www.mymcpnews.com)

Caregivers share only the info they feel comfortable sharing...



**PLEASE HELP US KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR OUR CHILD WHO HAS AUTISM**

We have a child who has Autism. Our child's name is \_\_\_\_\_  
He/she is \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

We watch our child very carefully, but sometimes he/she unpredictably wanders away.

If you see our child and he/she is alone please call \_\_\_\_\_  
We are probably already looking for him/her.

If you can not reach me at the number above  
Please also call 911 and tell them that you have found our child.

\_\_\_\_\_ does not speak very well. Our child does not appreciate danger.  
He/she might approach a dog or walk into the street without looking. He/she might walk  
in your house if a door is open.

\_\_\_\_\_ will become lost very easily and not know he/she is lost. If you  
ask our child a question he will likely not answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ may seem to be deaf. However, our child can hear. But he/she  
does not appreciate or act upon things that he hears or sees.

Thank You, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Address)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Phone)



Montgomery County Department of Police

### Autism/ID/Alzheimer's Wandering Prevention Safety Tips

#### INSTALL AN ALARM OF SOME TYPE

Many times, caregivers are not aware that the loved one has left the home, especially during the evening hours when "sundowning" (waking at all hours of the night) is common. An alarm is also important during the day when caregivers may be distracted. If you can not afford a professionally installed alarm, magnetic door alarms are a good option as well. They are inexpensive and readily available. The alarm is attached with strong tape or a screw to either side of a door frame. When the connections are separated (door opening) it gives off a high beeping alarm. They can be set to chime during hours when a door may be opened more frequently.

#### DON'T HESITATE TO CALL 911. DON'T WAIT

In some instances, families will search for their missing loved ones alone and feel as if they can't call 911 for assistance. If you are searching beyond your yard, call 911. If the loved one is located soon after you call, just call back and let us know. Waiting to call 911 could lead to tragic results. Have a "song" prepared with pertinent information to relay to 911 call takers and responding officers. If your Autistic loved one will go into bodies of water, please notify the 911 operator.

#### IDENTIFICATION

Make sure that the loved one has some type of identification on them at all times. Writing contact information in permanent ink on as much clothing as possible is a good, cheap idea. However, an ID bracelet is the best option, the rubber or silicone types are the best option. MCPD encourages families of individuals with Autism to have the wearer show the bracelet to officers in the community when feasible. This act creates an encounter with law enforcement when the wearer is not under stress. It can reinforce the idea that law enforcement are here to assist when needed. It also makes the officer aware of those with Autism that live in the area they work. The familiarization is so important for both the wearer and the officer.

#### INFORMING

We encourage informing neighbors of the situation, if you feel comfortable doing so. We understand that some caregivers might not feel comfortable telling neighbors know that there is an issue. However, a tragedy may be prevented by making them aware of the potential dangers of your loved one wandering alone. You can provide the neighbors with a contact person's cell phone or request they call 911 in the event they think the loved one is in need of assistance.

#### CONSIDER SWIM LESSONS

For caregivers of children with Autism, teaching your child to swim early could absolutely save their life!

Officer Laurie Reyes  
[Laurie\\_Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Laurie_Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
Officer Tara Wimmer  
[Tara.Wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Tara.Wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov)

## HOME/Vehicle Safety Window

### MCPD SUPPORTS AUTISM AWARENESS

An awesome person with Autism  
might be a passenger in this car.  
In the event of an emergency check the  
glove box for additional information.



Prepare a **911 script**

What info may be helpful in the event of an elopement?

Include a Google Map of your area and mark off possible destinations of travel as well as bodies of **WATER!**

WHY TRACKING TECHNOLOGY IS THE LAST STEP IN SAFETY?

GPS Tracking

vs.

RF Tracking



## Ways To Ensure Positive Interactions with Police and First Responders

“Officer can I show you my ID Bracelet?”  
“Can I tell you a little about me?”

### ID BRACELETS...

#### WEIGHING SAFETY VS INDEPENDENCE

Why should I have my child get used to showing an officer their ID bracelet?

There may be “BUMPS”  
on the road to  
Independence, our job is  
to make the bumps navigable.

Make it a habit to introduce your loved one to police officers/ fire rescue personnel, we can all learn from each other.

Ask if it's ok to take a picture with the officer

## KEY SAFETY SKILLS

1. **FOLLOW** the law to be safe
2. **STAY** where you are when you meet the police
3. **KEEP** your hands to yourself (don't touch their stuff).
4. **WHEN** the police tell you to do something, do it.
5. **TELL** the police about your disability.
6. **TELL** where you are when you call 911
7. **DONT** run from the police

“Officer can I show you my ID Bracelet?”  
“Can I tell you a little about me?”

ID BRACELETS...

ID CARDS

Don't hesitate to say hello,  
ask to introduce yourself  
to officers in the community.

### “Self Disclosure”

You can help the Police by explaining a little  
about yourself as soon as you can after  
we meet

How it helps the POLICE help YOU

How it may help somebody else?

Autism Legislation  
Local/National  
ICD-9 House Bill  
Coverage for “wandering safety  
tools”

NIH / IACC  
Avante’s Law  
Ethan’s Law

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Lifesaver](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Lifesaver)

Questions or concerns?

Please contact:

Officer Laurie Reyes

Officer Tara Wimmer

[Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov)

[Tara.Wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Tara.Wimmer@montgomerycountymd.gov)