

Officer Dennis Sullivan



Hitting for the Cycle

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From time to time, the Record will profile the staff of the Georgetown Police Department in order to introduce its members to the community. Here is the latest in that series. This week's profile features Patrolman Dennis Sullivan.

Although he's nearly a 20-year veteran of the Georgetown Police Department, there are days when Officer Dennis Sullivan believes Georgetown isn't an entirely safe community.

It's not that the people protecting Georgetown aren't doing an adequate job, Sullivan says. It's simply that as the town has grown significantly over the last 20 years, the Police Department has stayed the same size. It's a problem that Sullivan says needs to be addressed.

"We have the same amount of cops now as we did when I came here," says Sullivan, who joined the Georgetown Police Department as a reserve officer in 1986 and was hired full-time in 1995. "We just don't have the coverage. In some ways, it's an unsafe town to live in because we just don't have the manpower."

Frustrating as that may be, Sullivan says he thoroughly enjoys working in Georgetown, where he and his wife Anne Marie moved in 1995 and have raised their 9-year-old son Timothy. Having been born and raised in Peabody, Sullivan says he loves the quiet, rural nature of Georgetown. He says the best part of his job, however, is knowing that he's helping people in his own community all the time.

"Every day you go home and you know you've done something to help society," says Sullivan. "That's probably my favorite part of the job."

Sullivan became Georgetown's motorcycle officer several years ago after expressing to Police Chief James Mulligan that he had an interest in that position. He completed an extensive one-week training course to become an officially certified motorcycle officer and these days he can often be seen patrolling Georgetown's streets on the department's Harley Davidson.

While Sullivan says he surely enjoys his job, he says he never loses sight of the dangerous nature of police work.

"You just never know what you're going to come up on next," says Sullivan, who was recently given a "Hero Award" by the Greater Georgetown Rotary Club. "When you hear that radio in that cruiser, you just don't know what's coming up. You're always seeing bad things, but personally, you get immune to it a little bit. Something else inside just takes over. You know you've just got a job to do."

Meanwhile, Mulligan says he simply couldn't ask for a more complete police officer than Sullivan in the entire department. He applauded Sullivan for having perfect attendance for the last two years, which not only shows his dedication to the force but also relieves significant strain on the police budget. An officer who shows up for every shift means that the department doesn't have to pay overtime to another officer covering for him.

"As a police officer, that's the kind of officer you want," says Mulligan. "How many people go two years without a single day off? Not one day."

"He's great with the public and he's even great with suspects," Mulligan continues. "You can't mistreat people just because they broke the law. You have to be positive and reaffirming and he does those things."

For Mulligan, it's all just part of the job.

"(Police work) has fascinated me ever since I was a kid," says Sullivan. "You never know what's going to happen next. No two days are ever the same."