FROM THE **CHAIRMAN**

Dear Friends,

The Police Foundation of Kansas City, Missouri, was formed by citizens in 2010 to reduce crime in our community. The Foundation does so by generating funds for Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department (KCPD) initiatives not fully supported by existing public funding.

The factors that contribute to violent crime in our cities were further exposed by the pandemic that began in 2020. Kansas City was no exception. Yet, thanks to the partnership between the Police Foundation and KCPD, we moved forward in our commitment to leveraging technology to enhance public safety.

Community support for KCPD was evident in 2020 as board member Ed Elder and community leader Jeanette Prenger led the Foundation’s first-ever community partnership campaign, “Investing in a Safer Kansas City.” Nearly 200 sponsors invested through the Police Foundation to support technology to help our KCPD work on solutions to violent crime, getting our city off the FBI’s list of 10 Most Violent Cities and making our neighborhoods and workplaces safer for all our citizens.

In addition to the community-partnership campaign, more than $3 million was donated by generous foundations, businesses, and individuals to purchase body-worn cameras for the KCPD. Public funds have not been available for body-worn cameras despite strong support by citizens and KCPD for their use. Thanks to a lead gift by the DeBruce Foundation, donors in our community, in a strong show of public/private partnership, filled a major need.

The Foundation’s funding of cameras, license plate readers, gun-shot detection systems and other technology is helping KCPD solve crimes at a rate greater than it has in a long time. I invite you to read more about department’s significant progress in this area in our first newsletter, *A Call For Service*.

We have the highest expectations of our Police Department, a job that takes a physical and emotional toll on each officer and her/his family. Community support of the Police Foundation of Kansas City is a visible way to thank every officer serving us and for making our safety a priority. The Foundation’s vision is to make Kansas City one of the safest cities in America. I am grateful to our donors who share in this vision.

Frank D. Uryasz
Chairman, Police Foundation of Kansas City
When the community demanded increased accountability from its law enforcement, the Police Foundation of Kansas City stepped up to help.

For many years, KCPD has requested funding to purchase body-worn cameras and video storage in their annual budget allocation from city government. As civil unrest erupted in Kansas City and throughout the country following the Memorial Day 2020 death of George Floyd after his encounter with Minneapolis police, the demands from the community for body-worn cameras for KCPD grew much louder.

Local philanthropists listened, and the Police Foundation was able to engage community donors to meet the need for this equipment. KCPD Chief Richard Smith announced at the June 3, 2020, Unity March on the Country Club Plaza that private donors would fund the purchase of body-worn cameras.

“We have been listening to the community’s call for change,” Chief Smith said at the event. “The community has repeatedly asked for body cameras. I am pleased to announce that concerned members of our community have generously donated to allow us to begin to purchase these cameras.”

Although the funding for body worn cameras was not yet available, department leaders have been planning their implementation for several years. As KCPD’s in-car recording systems – or dash cams – reached the end of their lives, the Fiscal Division issued a request for qualifications to manufacturers of both dash cam and body-worn camera systems. They wanted a dash cam system that would seamlessly integrate with a future body-worn camera system. Through the competitive bid process, KCPD selected Turn Key Mobile, which offered Panasonic products. The replacement of the dash cam system was funded by previous allocations from the Public Safety Sales Tax, but there was not enough for body-worn cameras.

The Police Foundation was able to raise $3 million to cover the cost of the body-worn cameras and storage. With those funds, the Department was able to purchase 815 body-worn cameras, enough for all patrol officers on varying shifts.
The Department also was able to use that funding as leverage to win an $800,000 federal grant to purchase additional body-worn cameras for investigative personnel.

KCPD will have all patrol officers outfitted with the body-worn cameras by the end of March 2021. The nine months from funding announcement to complete implementation is a remarkably fast roll-out for a body-worn camera program, compared to other large law enforcement agencies nationwide.

The quick turn-around time does not mean, however, that any corners were cut. Major Paul Luster, KCPD's body-worn camera project leader, convened a group of stakeholders from all areas of the city to assist in the equipment selection and policy development of the body-worn cameras. This group included municipal, state, and federal prosecutors, philanthropists and community stakeholders. KCPD also consulted best practices and policies for body-worn cameras from other law enforcement agencies.

As far as KCPD is aware, this innovative public-private partnership is the first of its kind in the nation that is now underway thanks to the Police Foundation of Kansas City.

“The KCPD has long recognized the value of body cameras in policing to ensure accountability and has been working to implement them,” Chief Smith said. “We are so pleased that members of our community have stepped up and generously agreed to meet the needs of our city. We hope this will increase community trust and transparency.”

### BODY WORN CAMERA SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED BY THE FOLLOWING:

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*The Police Foundation extends special thanks to Leo Morton and The DeBruce Foundation for their leadership and vision for the Body Worn Camera Project.*
We are grateful for you – our incredible partners – who stepped up as a Community Partner with the Police Foundation of Kansas City. With special gratitude to Community Partnership Campaign Co-Chairs Ed Elder and Jeanette Prenger.

YOU HELPED MAKE KANSAS CITY SAFER.

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Waterford Property Company
Carolyn Watley
Westport Regional Business League
Ted and Molly Wiedeman Charity Fund
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“KANSAS CITY, MO. — KANSAS CITY POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING A HOMICIDE NEAR 42ND STREET AND PROSPECT AVENUE. POLICE WERE CALLED TO THE AREA JUST BEFORE MIDNIGHT.”
KSHB 03/30/2020

“KANSAS CITY POLICE HAVE IDENTIFIED A CHILD KILLED IN A TRIPLE SHOOTING THERE AS A 1-YEAR-OLD BOY, MAKING HIM THE CITY’S YOUNGEST HOMICIDE VICTIM THIS YEAR.”
USNEWS.COM 9/22/2020
Too often, headlines like these have illustrated that Kansas City, Missouri was, tragically, part of a national trend that saw a large increase in homicides in 2020.

Yet, the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department (KCPD) worked diligently to identify violent criminals and to get justice for those who were killed – with technology resources provided by the Police Foundation of Kansas City.

Based on the FBI’s Uniform Crime Rate (UCR) standard, the KCPD homicide clearance rate for 2020 was 73%. That’s up significantly from 2019, when it was 55%. Compare this with the St. Louis clearance rate of 36% (as of September 2020) and the national average of 61%. And not only has the clearance rate increased, but the time from violent crime incident to clearance has remarkably decreased. The median number of days from incident to clearance in 2017 was 68 days. This same calibration for 2020 dropped to 11 days. That means instead of it taking 68 days for our community to have a homicide suspect still in our neighborhoods, KCPD has reduced this median to 11 days. That is a difference of 57 days that these criminals are no longer able to threaten the safety of our neighborhoods. The timing of this reduction also coincides with the initiation of the Police Foundation funded High Crime Area Project.

Why is the Kansas City clearance rate better than the national average? Technology and foresight.

Since being named KCMO Chief of Police, Rick Smith has prioritized violent crime reduction and with the support of the Police Foundation of Kansas City, technology has assisted the KCPD in attaining a higher clearance rate annually. Requesting technology equipment and investing in training KCPD to use the equipment and software has offered great efficiencies. “The police department would not be as effective as it is without the technology and equipment provisions that the Police Foundation provides.” says Smith.

Yet, the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department needs more equipment and more software because crime continues to rise.

“The Police Foundation's equipment and technology investment is supporting the Department and emerging technologies hold incredible promise for future capabilities to prevent and effectively intervene against violent and serious crime and the networks that perpetrate such crime,” says Tye Grant, President/CEO, Police Foundation of Kansas City.

Kansas City’s homicide increase is devastating in our community. Fathers, brothers, sons, mothers, sisters and daughters lost their lives to senseless violence, inflicting untold trauma on families.

With your continued support, the Police Foundation will seek to provide support for unbudgeted but vitally needed technology resources for the KCPD as they fight violent crime on our behalf.

For more information:
www.PoliceFoundationKC.org
The Police Foundation of Kansas City, Missouri, formed by citizens, focuses on engaging communities and assisting in reducing crime. We do so by generating funds for Kansas City, Missouri Police Department initiatives not fully supported by existing public funding. A 501c3.