

Beit T'Shuvah Holds Gala



Photo by Ben Shani Creative

Beit T'Shuvah, the residential addiction recovery center serving all faiths, held its 32nd annual gala on Jan. 28. The event raised over \$1.8 million for residents and scholarship recipients. Pictured (from left): Lynn Bider, Lisi Teller, Annette Shapiro, Lynn Shapiro, Janice Kamenir-Reznik and Sergio Rizzo-Fontanesi Ph.D.



Photo courtesy of the Beverly Hills Police Department

Participants of the Beverly Hills Police Department Citizens Police Academy receive firearms training.

BHPD CITIZEN ACADEMY, from page 1 with on-duty officers as well as in-depth presentations from forensic investigators, K-9 handlers and many other experts. Participants will also hear a breakdown of a high-profile case from the detectives involved in solving it, BHPD Sgt. Jeff Newman told the Courier.

"We tell our students, this is the closest you're ever going to get unless you actually go to the police academy," Newman said.

The aim of the program is to build trust between the department and the community by educating people about the realities of police work, said Newman. He added that many participants walk away with a better understanding of the challenges law enforcement faces, and how broad a modern officer's skillset has to be.

Former Beverly Hills Unified School District Board of Education President Alissa Roston said she took part in the academy to gain "a deeper understanding of our city's law enforcement practices."

"We were put in real-life scenarios that our police force deals with every day," Roston said. "The opportunity to ride along with an officer was truly eye-opening."

The academy takes place at the police department and it will be broken into 11 3-hour sessions that begin at 6 p.m.

"I think the rest of my classmates would agree, it flew by," academy graduate and Beverly Hills Health and Safety Commissioner Cathy Baker told the Courier. "Everything that's being covered is so darn interesting that you don't get bored."

Firearms training and helping officers conduct speed limit enforcement with a radar gun were some of the highlights of the academy for her. But she was hesitant to disclose too many details about the curriculum and potentially spoil the experience for

future participants. She encouraged them to keep an open mind.

"I liked going in without too many expectations," Baker said.

She took part in the program last fall, and said it was an opportunity to meet other civic-minded people in addition to a learning experience. She added that some of the people in her class were young people interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement.

The academy is held twice each year and accepts a maximum of 20 students. Although some 35 people had already applied as of press time, there is still time to get in because participants are chosen via lottery.

As many as 70 people applied for the last BHPD Citizen Police Academy, and Newman said it's an honor to have so many people show interest in law enforcement. He added that space and logistic restrictions prevent the department from hosting the program more frequently, and making classes larger could take away from the individual experience of each participant.

"We really get a chance to know these people on an individual basis by first name," Newman said. "You build more of a class environment, as if you were in the police academy."

This spring's students will receive matching shirts to wear during the academy. The first class in March is mandatory, but instructors are otherwise flexible with students who wind up with a scheduling conflict.

Those who complete the academy will be honored at a ceremony at the end of the eight-week program and also receive a challenge coin. Those students who attend every session will receive special recognition in the form of an oversized challenge coin given to "distinguished graduates." ●

SHOOTING, from page 4

When security guards knocked on his door that morning, they heard someone yell "I'm going to shoot through the door," police said. Preliminary investigation suggests several rounds may have been fired inside the hotel room.

Officers arrived shortly before 10 a.m. When they got to the room the man barricaded himself inside, police said. A crisis negotiator was summoned, and helped convince the armed person to come out

peacefully. At about 11:45 a.m., authorities announced via social media that a person had been detained, and there was no further danger to the community.

The man in the room was later arrested and identified as Joseph Leonardi, 41, of Woodland Hills. He was described as a convicted felon, and was booked on suspicion of negligent discharge of a firearm and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

No injuries were reported. ●



COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT FUNDING

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS | Due February 29, 2024

The City of Beverly Hills is now accepting applications for Community Assistance Grant Funding (CAGF) for FY 2024-25 through February 29, 2024.

Providers of services that are vital to the health and welfare of the local and regional community are invited to apply. The City will be accepting applications for cultural grants again this year.

A fully completed application must be received no later than Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.



To obtain an application and for the complete application criteria, please visit www.beverlyhills.org/cagf or call 310-288-2220.