

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 9, 2019



Contact:

Diana L. Klink
Office: 757.514.4104
Mobile: 757.359.1845

Tim Kelley
Office: 757.514.4103
Mobile: 757.871.3039

2019 SUFFOLK YOUTH PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY REGISTRATION UNDERWAY

SUFFOLK, VA (January 9, 2019) Sponsored by the Suffolk Police Department and Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department, the Suffolk Youth Public Safety Academy is designed to build confidence and focus on the duties of public safety personnel in the hopes of establishing respect and trust between at-risk children and professionals. The Academy emphasizes mentoring, education, team building, respect, discipline, leadership, as well as community responsibility.

The Academy provides an educational experience that includes hands-on activities based on actual public safety duties. The friendly but structured atmosphere offers positive interaction with public safety personnel that develops an appreciation for their duties. Potential candidates must be between 13 and 17 years old.

The Academy has strict rules which all students are expected to follow. Class size is limited which enables mentors to work with the students on a one-to-one basis when necessary to address discipline issues. Students must abide by established rules to include dress code, maintain passing grades, and conducting themselves in a professional and mature manner. Students who cannot abide by

the rules may be expelled from the Academy. Many of the students come with anger management problems, repeated runaway issues, minor criminal infractions, and minor suspensions from school. The goal of the mentors is to help students seek positive ways to handle their problems.

Classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday after school until 7 p.m. starting on Thursday, February 21, 2019 through the second week of May. Classes are held at Suffolk Fire & Rescue Station 6 located at 300 Kings Fork Road.

There are two mandatory Saturday field trips with the dates to be determined. Guardians are responsible for transportation to and from Station 6 on the Saturday events. Classes include a snack, meal, transportation to and from Station 6. Students are required to identify, design and participate in a community service project. Attendance to all classes/trips is mandatory. A Parent/Student Orientation session will be held on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 6 p.m. at Suffolk Fire & Rescue Station 6. A Graduation Ceremony will be held in Suffolk City Council Chamber on Tuesday, May 14, 2019 for students who successfully complete the course.

The Academy averages between 40 to 50 applicants with class size limited to 18 students. Applicants are screened and chosen by the mentors. A background check is completed by a Police Detective on all applicants. Applicants chosen will be notified by mail if they are accepted.

Mentors present at classes include a Fire Marshal and Fire Trainer, School Resource Officer and Supervisor, Family Service Detective and Western Community Service Board (WTCSB) Counselor. Instructors include Police Officers, Detectives, Fire Fighters, Forensic Unit, Commonwealth's Attorneys, ABC Agents, WTCSB counselors, etc. Classes include but are not limited to: Fire Safety, Positive Encounters with Public Safety, Police SWAT, Use of Fire Extinguishers, Gangs, Ladder Techniques, Fire Hoses, Forensics, Computer

Safety, Arson Investigation, Police/Fire Ride Along, Team Building, Active School Shooter Safety, Community Service Project, Police Marine Patrol, Use of Ropes, etc.

There have been many success stories from students who successfully graduated from the program. One student came to the Academy with extreme anger management problems. He was routinely suspended at school for talking back to teachers and had discipline issues at home. The mentors regularly worked with this student to show him better options for handling his anger. At the end of the Academy this e-mail was received from the student's mother; "I just wanted to update you on how my son has been doing. Since the Academy has ended, we haven't had any problems out of him whatsoever. He has even made honor roll!!!! I cannot express the wonderful impact that the Academy has given him. I will forever be grateful for the time and efforts placed into his life. Thank you greatly."

There is no cost to participants. Applications are available from all Suffolk Police School Resource Officers, Suffolk Fire & Rescue Station 6 located at 300 Kings Fork Road, and Suffolk Police Headquarters located at 111 Henley Place. Applications also may be obtained by contacting Fire Investigator Pam King at 757-514-4542, or Detective Joyce Williams at 757-514-7942. Applications must be returned to Detective Williams at Suffolk Police Headquarters, any School Resource Officer, or Fire Investigator King at Station 6 no later than Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 5 p.m.

###