



Richard Parsons

2007 Communications Bureau

Employee of the Year

Richard Parsons began his career with the Tampa Police Department Communications Bureau on August 4, 2003. He quickly rose through the ranks to become a Communications Training Officer in May 2006. Mr. Parsons has built a very successful working relationship with his peers, supervisors and departmental personnel. He actively looks for ways to improve his performance, such as voluntary requests to attend training. He returns from this training, providing instruction to his peers on the most up-to-date information on courses such as Advanced Law Enforcement Dispatch. Mr. Parsons identified academic deficiencies in probationary employees in his care, and provided proper guidance to correct areas in need of improvement in a way that was readily accepted by the trainee.

On Friday, May 11, 2007, Officers J. Armao, L. Burrell, and J. Aleman went out on an attempt to pick up a wanted subject at 711 N. Castle Ct. Suddenly at 0631 hours, Richard heard the transmission that all dispatchers dread when Officer Armao came on saying he had been shot. Richard Parsons took immediate action, requesting the location, sending backup, and calling for an ambulance. Every available unit was sent to the area, suspect information obtained, and supervisors notified. Within minutes, the Tactical Response Team was requested because the suspect had barricaded himself with children inside the home. Richard not only coordinated the effort on the radio channel, but he also worked in unison with his co-workers. Richard kept his supervisors abreast of all updates while remaining calm and composed at all times, projecting confidence and reassurance to the patrol officers on scene, despite the debilitating gravity of the situation.

In the early morning hours of July 12th, 2007, Mr. Parsons dispatched patrol units and Air Service to a disturbance. There was a report of a tow truck driver who had been assaulted by a couple of suspects. When Air Service came on scene, they activated the video downlink and saw a white pickup leaving. Air Service asked the arriving units to check and see if it was involved. It was, so Air Service followed it and directed units that way. While they were orbiting and waiting for units to arrive at the service station where the white pickup had stopped, Richard was monitoring the downlink from his position. Officer Mark McCann, who was up with Air Service that night describes Richard's performance as follows. *"Dispatcher Richard Parsons observed a second pickup truck (80's-model whi/red Chevy) on the downlink picture, realized it matched the description of a second vehicle being relayed to him by the call-taker, and directed additional units to intercept it. We just flew circles and pointed the camera, don't think we made a single radio call from the time we arrived over the service station. I've found this to be pretty typical of Richard. He always seems to be a step ahead, makes our job easier."*

Mr. Parsons is keenly aware of the activity of officers on the street, whether it they be patrol or undercover assignments. He is able to anticipate the needs of the officers based on their location, type of call or even the tone of their voice. When training probationary employees, Mr. Parsons would provide detailed explanation of officer activity, instructing them on what to look for, as well as listen for, as even the tone of an officer's transmission can provide subtle clues to their needs. Mr. Parsons uses all available resource materials to research information and gather data, even before it is needed. He is able to apply previous experience to the task at hand and reaches logical conclusions. Mr. Parsons uses calming techniques when dealing with difficult callers, never losing composure and providing reassurance throughout the call. He employs a logical line of questioning to gather all pertinent information prior to sending a call for service for dispatch.

Lieutenant J. Terrell acknowledged Mr. Parsons' performance as follows, *"Those of you on the other end of our radios always seem to make a difficult situation more bearable. Somehow, you always make sense of the excited chatter, units speaking over each other, and the common confusion that results."* Mr. Parsons often projects the calm voice of control during peak radio activity. He is skilled at using tone and inflection to provide reassurance to officers as well as the public.

Dispatchers are well aware that they may experience dreadful situations, where sometimes the outcomes are tragic. They hope they will not be the one sitting on that radio channel when it happens. From behind the scenes, the dispatcher is responsible for the methodical organization of events and maintaining that voice of reason, no matter how distressing the situation. Richard is able to make a complex and unpredictable situation more bearable. For his attentiveness to duty, professionalism and unwaivering resolve he was the first dispatcher to be twice named the Communications Bureau Employee of the Month consecutively. Further, he was recognized as the Tampa Police Department Employee of the Month in August 2007. Richard Parsons continues to raise the bar for all Communications Technicians and is a valued member of the department. As a Communications Training Officer, he instilled his work ethic on the next generation of Tampa Police Department Dispatchers.