



LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPLORING WORKS

Spending most of my career working with Law Enforcement Explorers I stumbled onto the successful formula to groom the future of law enforcement. I can't say it was an easy road because dealing with teenagers is never easy; but consistency, patience, advice, longevity and the occasional open hand (make a guess) places them on the road to success.

One of my Explorers from the early years made Detective in the New York City Police Department on August 31, 2016 and it was well deserved. Making Detective isn't the story here, but the speed at which he made detective is. Detective Ruben Cespedes was the average 12 year old kid from Crown Heights Brooklyn with propensity for being annoying. Coming to the 77 Precinct Brooklyn as a Junior Investigator (precursor to Explorer) he had the excellent opportunity to be mentored by great Police Officers and Explorer Advisors; Todd Taylor, Dion Harris and Erica Eason. Although I was not the official Explorer Advisor back then Ruben somehow became my shadow. When Todd, Dion and Eric left the precinct for other units I became the sole custodian of a bunch of youth with growing pains and now an Explorer, Ruben was still there. One thing I always said to my Explorers is "You may leave the Explorer Program, but I will never leave you"; this meant I will always be there to give advice and be a general annoyance until they reach their ultimate career goal, even if it is not law enforcement. This is true with Ruben and with numerous other Explorers I have been fortunate to mentor. As mentioned before it was not always a smooth road and Ruben was not an exception, but he overcame many adversities to be where he is today. When he left the Law Enforcement Exploring Program in August 2007 to join the military we kept in constant contact (except for basic training), it was general conversation and discussing his preparation to enter the NYPD. We always spoke a couple times a week even through his deployments in Korea and Afghanistan and I always encouraged him to take advantage of any training the military had to offer, because when he becomes a police officer that commitment to improve himself is a plus for advancement. All the Explorers I have personally mentored are told, "You can be one of the many and be average, or handle your business, stand out and think out of the box". When he left the military in December 2010 he started



the investigation to be and NYPD police officer which was a trying time for him; we who have been through that hiring process know it is stressful time. We spoke almost every day where my advice to him was just to stay out of trouble and they will call eventually for the academy, and in July 2012 he was in the NYPD Police Academy. In December 2012 I pinned the shield onto Police Officer Ruben Cespedes. Now three and a half years later he was promoted to Detective, which is unusual in NYPD for a person with less than five years on the job. How did he do it? He stood out and thought out of the box of traditional policing. He also said to me; the public speaking classes taught to the Explorers by Detective Todd Taylor and I were a great help. It was his unique way of policing that got him noticed but presenting his vision to NYPD Executives put him over the top. Kudos to you Detective Ruben Cespedes, he is one of many success stories who were a product of Law Enforcement Exploring.



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Law Enforcement Exploring was developed to give young adults ages fourteen to twenty an insight into law enforcement careers. Many of these youth go into law enforcement careers; if they don't, they have a great foundation and qualities any employer would relish in potential hires. Along with law enforcement training, dispute mediation, law, interview skills, military drills and community service, the youth have a solid background in leadership and management skills. Ultimately, these young women and men turn out to be great citizens and excellent professionals in whatever career they pursue. Another more recent necessity for the Law Enforcement Exploring program is the need to supply well molded candidates for law enforcement careers. Many of the distractions that youth have in today's society cause them to make bad choices and ineligible for law enforcement hiring. Exploring groom's youth to fit the law enforcement profile, with sensitivity to the public they will serve in the future. The Caribbean Law Enforcement Foundation Inc. is on the forefront of preparing youth here in the United States for law enforcement careers.

To see information about other Law Enforcement Explorer Programs nationwide, go to: <http://www.exploring.org/exploring-discover-future/law-enforcement-career-exploring>