

Law enforcement has played a major role in my life. My father is a Sergeant in the Bluefield West Virginia Police Department. He has been a police officer for 25 years and after this year he hopes to retire and open his own private investigation business. Family time at my house involves us sitting in the living room watching *America's Most Wanted*, and of course *COPS*; your not so typical family TV shows. But this is how I have grown up and I cannot imagine my life with out police officers and law enforcement playing such a major role. I respect my father and his job. He truly loves his job and that is something most people cannot say. Police officers have to be dedicated because it definitely is not a job for the money. Police officers are not paid near enough money for putting their life on the line everyday. Sometimes my dad is out all night long and does not come home until I wake up in the morning for school, but I have never once heard him complain

My father now works for the Drug and Violent Crime Task Force, which is a high-risk job. He has to change his appearance often and he goes by different names with different people. Our address and phone number cannot be listed in the phone book and it is hard for us to even go out to dinner with him, for the fear of someone seeing him. It makes family time hard, but when he does come home it is wonderful. Police officers give up so much, including family time, because of the dedication to their job and dedication to the people and the community they are protecting.

My dad's career has affected my life personally. When I was a freshman, I had to transfer to a new school in Bluefield, Virginia because it was no longer safe for me to attend the school I was going to. Kids that I went to school with, whose family members my Dad had encounters with, found out who my Dad was and was threatening me at school. It made me feel uncomfortable and I feared one day that they would hurt me just because of my dad's career. So I transferred to Graham High School, a much smaller school in Virginia, where my Dad has not had any encounters with these students' families. It is also the school my dad went to which makes it real special to me. My parents also decided to transfer my little brother and sister to Virginia schools as well. We all are doing much better at our new schools.

My sophomore year, I was accepted into CADRE, a club at my school. CADRE stands for Commonwealth Alliance of Drug Resistance Education. I had to write an essay, much like this one, explaining why I wanted to join the club. Of course I explained how law enforcement and drug education has played a major role in my life. CADRE does a lot of community service. Each month we meet with local police officers from the Tazewell County Sheriffs Department and the Bluefield Virginia Police Department. We discuss ways to keep young kids off drugs and to help them realize the importance of staying in school. In the fall we light luminaries for Red Ribbon Week in remembrance of those killed by alcohol related incidents. Throughout the year we collect money and a week before Christmas we participate in the local "Shop With A Cop." "Shop With A Cop" has made me realize how well I have it after seeing those children light up when you tell them they can buy a toy. It always shows the selflessness young children have in themselves. The world would be a much better place if people had the heart and

conscience of young children. "Shop With A Cop" also lets the public see the "softer" side of a policeman.

Police officers are unidentified heroes. Although they may not wear a cape and fly like Superman, they do wear the badge of honor. It doesn't matter where police officers are from, they are the men and women all around the world that work together to help keep our world safe. Police officers wake up each and every morning and are able to feel that they are making a difference. I feel police officers are the Guardian Angels that God has sent to watch over our local cities and help children grow up with less violence and crimes in their lives. I will always have respect for police officers and law enforcement, especially the hero and my Guardian Angel that lives right here with me, my dad.