



Westlake Police Department

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

Contact Us



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Letter from the Chief

The 2023 Westlake Police Department Annual Report has been prepared to provide you with some insight into the services provided. The Westlake Police Department is made up of over 100 individuals working together to provide excellent service to the people that live, work, and visit the City of Westlake. Sworn Police Officers, a Digital Forensics Examiner, Property and Evidence Specialist, Communications Dispatchers, Corrections Officers, Community Service Officers, Auxiliary Police Officers, Animal Control, and School Guards all contribute to a daily effort to advance our Mission and to achieve the Goals of the Westlake Police Department.

Social media and cell phone related crimes, illegal narcotics and associated crimes, and mental health crises remained a challenge for the Westlake Police Department in 2023. Community policing programs, including the Crime Prevention Unit, were utilized as a measure to address these issues. Continuing training was conducted to better prepare personnel for these challenges, and proactive enforcement efforts were implemented to deter, detect, and apprehend criminals and minimize violent crimes in the City of Westlake.

Chief Kevin Bielozer

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Department Goals and Mission

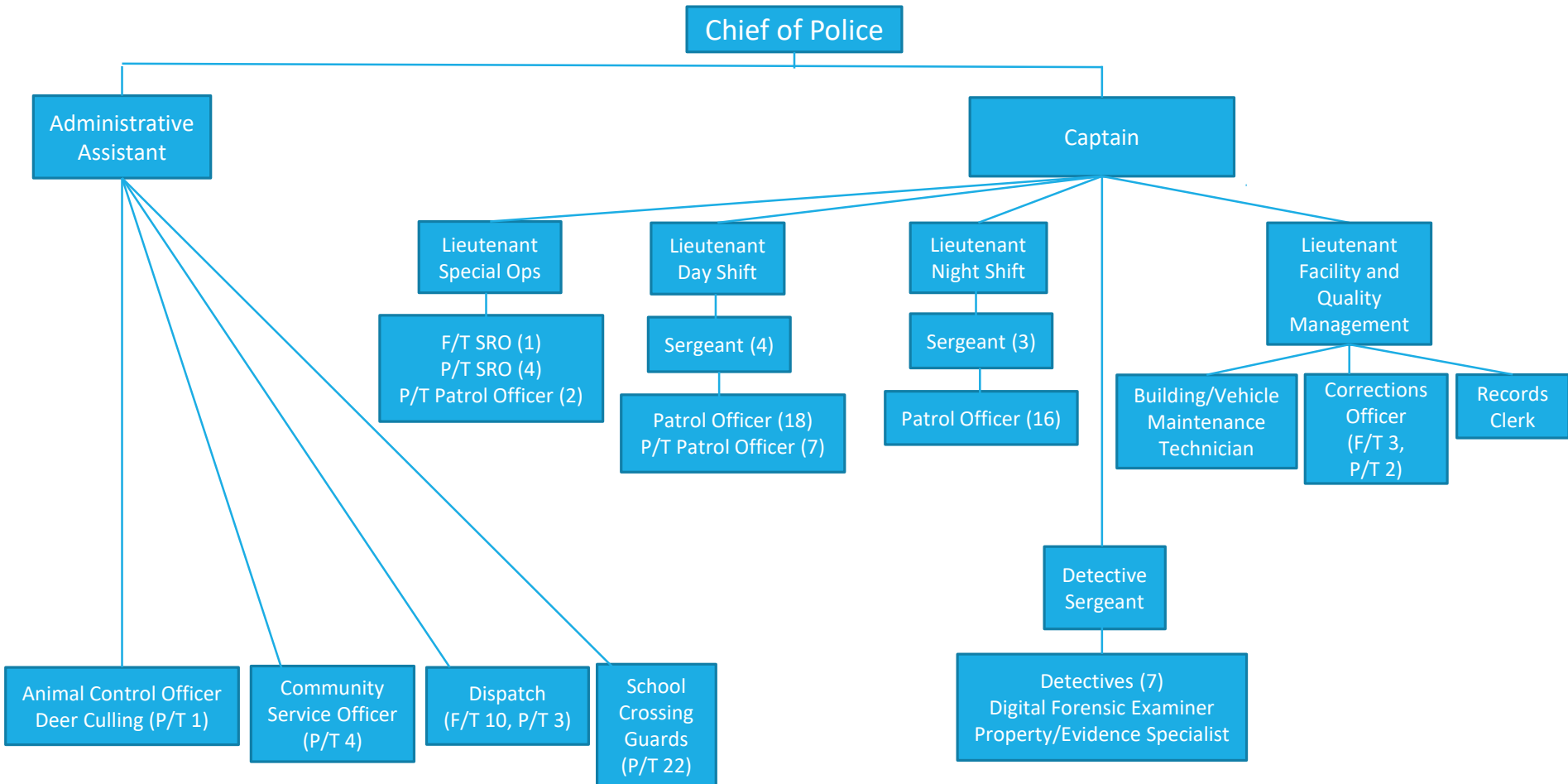
GOALS

- Preserve life and restore peace within the City of Westlake
- Reduce crime in the City of Westlake
- Improve professionalism of police services provided
- Create a sense of safety for those who live, work and visit the City of Westlake

MISSION

Make Westlake Safer Today.

Organizational Chart



Professional Development

In 2023, various WPD personnel attended the following training:

Active Assailant

Active Shooter Response

Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement

BAC Datamaster

Building Searches

Crisis Intervention

Defensive Tactics

Digital Forensic Analysis

Domestic Violence

Drone Forensics

Drugs and Narcotics Investigation

Field Training Officer

Firearms Instructor

Force Science De-Escalation

High Threat Close Quarters Battle

Hostage Negotiation

Human Trafficking

Interview and Interrogation

Less Lethal Instructor

Mexican Cartels and Gangs Summit

Ohio Crime Prevention

Public Records

Search and Seizure

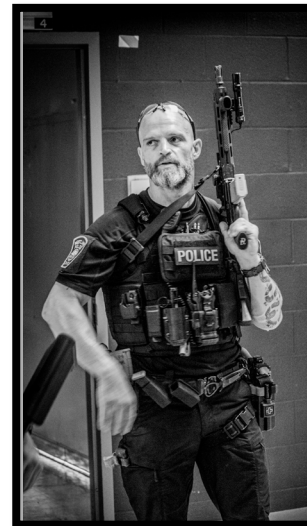
Supervisor Training and Education

Notable Training

In 2023, the Westlake Police Department's active shooter training was presented in cooperation with WEB SWAT. Over 100 officers and fireman were trained on best response practices. The training event challenged officers and supervisors to prioritize resources, evaluate what's important, and continuously improve. All with one singular focus: Stop the Killing and Save Lives!



Ptl. J.P. Toth responding as the first arriving officer. Photo credit - H6



Ptl. Mike Thompson participating in a training debrief. Photo credit - H6

Arrests

In 2023, there were 2,248 arrests (total charges) filed, including physical arrests, direct indictments, and citations issued. The following chart shows the number of persons booked into the WPD Jail per year.

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1,222	537	592	639	2,248

Average length of stay = 18.3 hours



Calls For Service

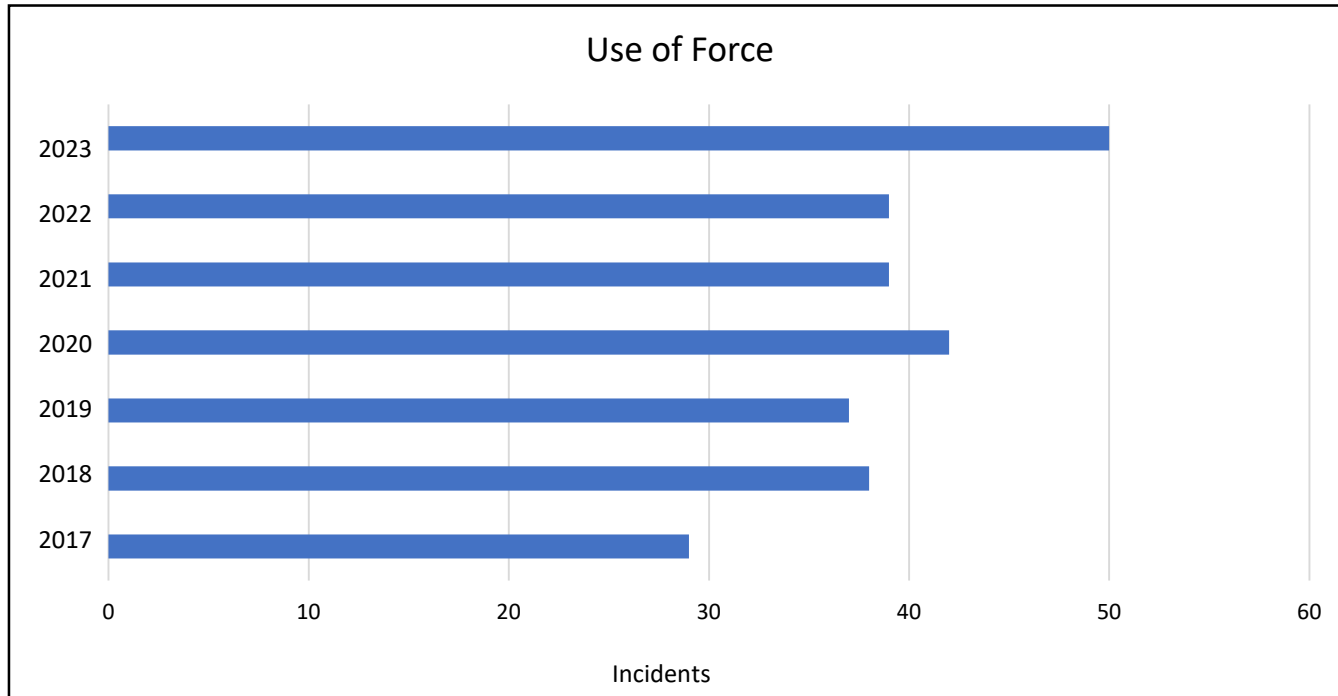
Calls For Service				
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
37,448	29,142	31,135	32,312	32,290

Total Incident Reports Taken– 1,909

UCR Part I Offenses	
Homicide	0
Rape	3
Robbery	7
Aggravated Assault	21
Burglary	44
Theft/Larceny	352
Motor Vehicle Theft	33
Arson	2

Use of Force

Use of Force is the application of physical techniques or tactics, chemical agents or weapons to another person. Police Officers may use force only in compliance with law and policy. Each Use of Force is reviewed for compliance with law and policy.



Use of Force (continued)

Each time an officer uses force, the incident is reviewed for compliance with law and policy. Additionally, quarterly and annual reviews of use of force reports are examined for relevant trends and the potential identification of training and equipment needs or policy changes.

In 2023, officers used force on 50 occasions.

0 – Number of violations of Use of Force law/policy in 2023

0 – Number of citizen complaints made regarding Use of Force, officer exonerated both times

1 – Number of serious injuries (fatality) incurred by the suspects/subjects

2 – Number of minor injuries (scrape/K9 bite) by suspects/subjects

5 – Number of officers injured during Use of Force incident

0 – Number of times officers presented a Taser to obtain compliance

2 – Number of times a suspect was Tasered

Use of Force (continued)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Use of Force Incidents	37	42	39	39	50
Physical Arrests per Use of Force	33:1	13:1	65:1	71:1	45:1
Use of Force Incidents per Suspects Injured	7.4:1	10.5:1	19:1	13:1	16.6:3
Persons Arrested per Use of Force Suspect Injury	244:1	134:1	853:1	1387:1	749:1
Policy Violations per Use of Force	0 Violations	0 Violations	0 Violations	0 Violations	0 Violations

Vehicle Pursuits

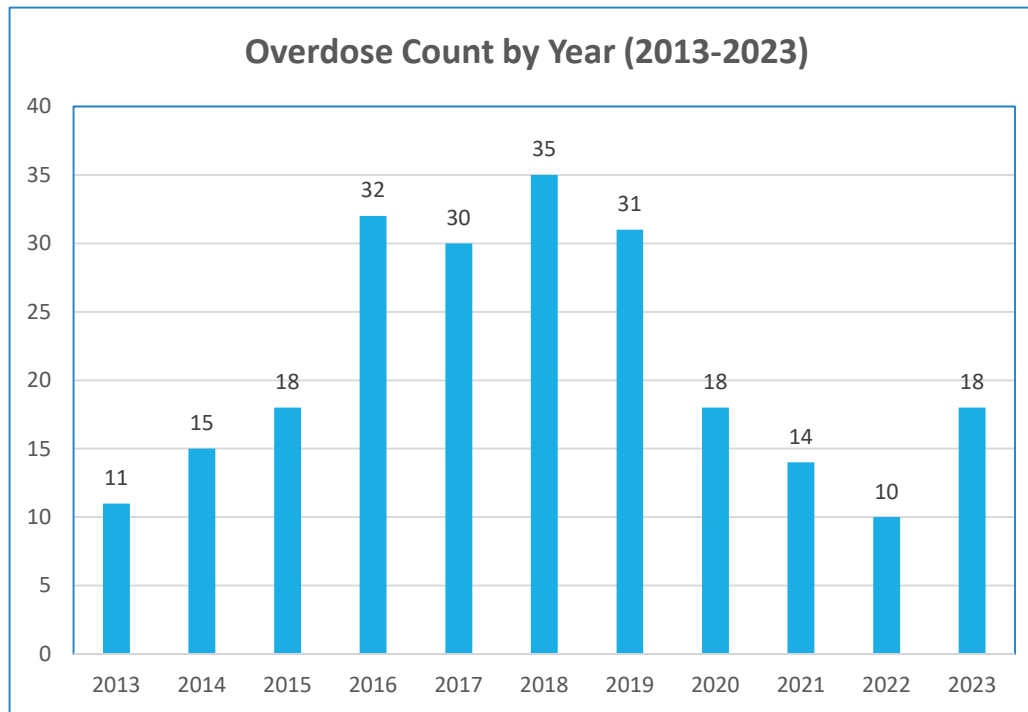
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	12	17	26	20	50
Stop Sticks Used	0	1	1	0	11
Occurred on Interstate	9	9	16	6	33

Domestic Violence

The Westlake Police Department responds immediately to all reports of Domestic Violence incidents. Domestic Violence incidents can occur anywhere (home, business, public place, motor vehicle, etc.) and may be reported in-progress or after the fact. Some incident reports result in either arrest or the attainment of an arrest warrant; some incidents require a prosecutor to review and determine charges; and some incidents are found not to be acts or threats of violence.

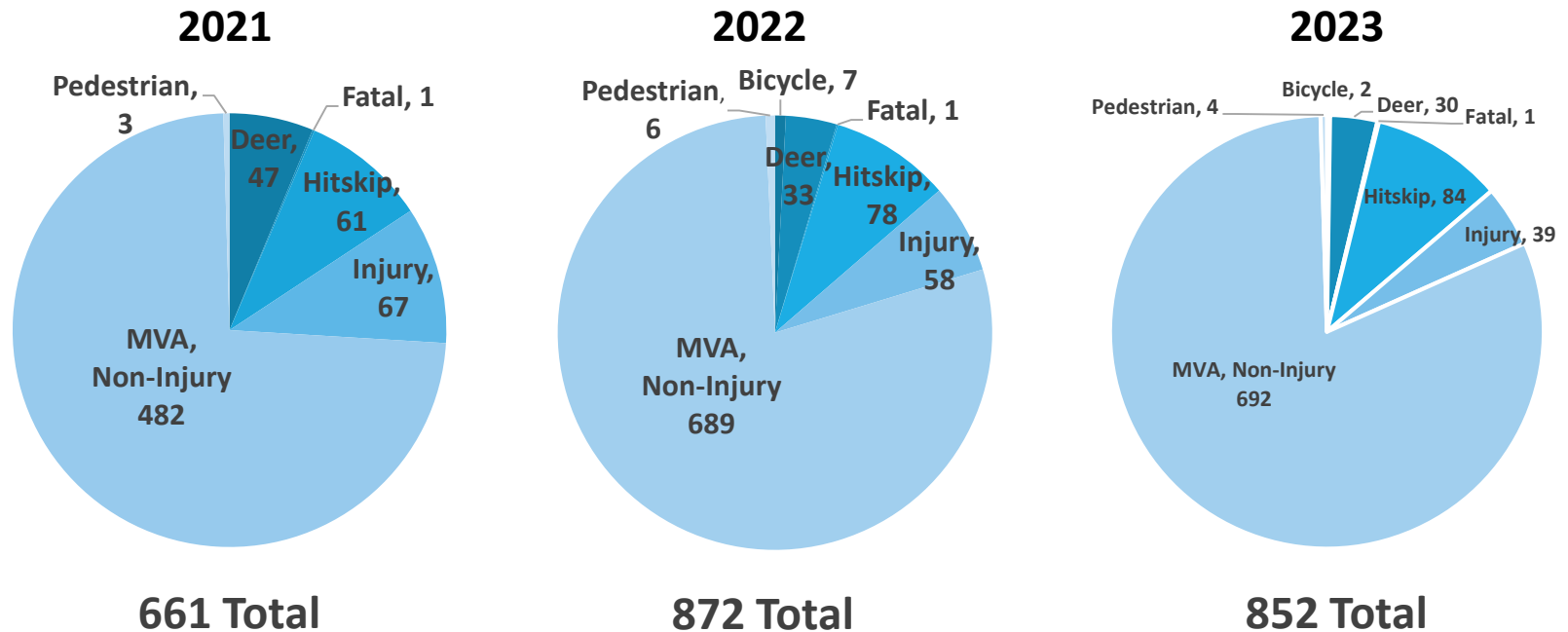
Number of Domestic Violence Calls for Service Per Year				
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
152	231	209	169	183

Drug and Alcohol Overdoses



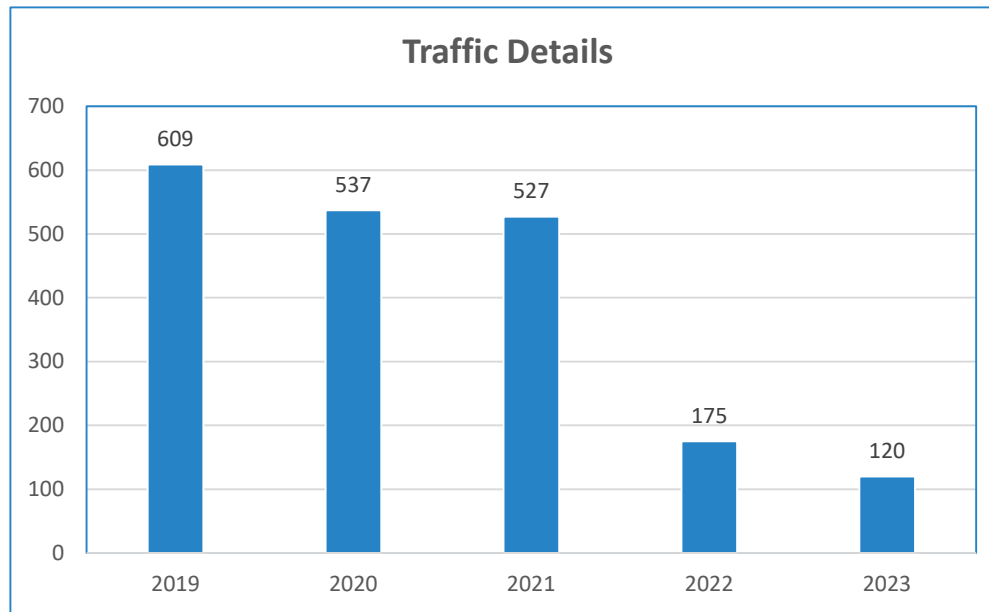
MVAs

The following charts provide insight into the type of motor vehicle accidents investigated.



Traffic Details

Traffic details are conducted in response to data analysis and citizen complaints. When patrol time permits, an officer is assigned to a particular location in order to deter or apprehend traffic violators.



Notable Cases

In 2023, the auto theft trend since 2021 continued in Westlake with almost 25 auto thefts, as a result of keys left inside vehicles and doors left unlocked. Detectives Kalo, Riley, and Boots processed nearly all of these vehicles and collected evidence in hopes that the lab results would result in leads. Security video surveillance was collected of suspects using victims' credit cards throughout Northeast Ohio. Using advanced technological tools, detectives were able to identify several suspects. In July of 2023, four simultaneous search warrants were conducted by WPD in Cleveland, Maple Heights, and Willoughby. This culminated with a 224-count indictment with 8 criminals being arrested and over 28 different police agencies participating.

On September 5th, 2023 at approximately 7:00am, WPD received a call from a resident on Marview Dr. stating they saw movement on their Ring cameras at 2am. They described a masked man carrying a gun peeking into the back windows of their home. While officers investigated this initial call, they were approached by residents of the Marview Apartments who reported their apartments being burglarized. It was quickly learned that the incidents were related and the suspect images were posted to social media to get the public's assistance with identifying a suspect. An anonymous tip led officers to the suspect who resided at Marview Apartments. A traffic stop was conducted and the suspect was arrested without incident in North Olmsted. A search warrant on the suspects apartment was conducted where officers and detectives recovered nearly all of the stolen property.

Notable Cases (continued)

On March 6th, 2023 at 6:53pm, WPD officers were dispatched to Bradley Beverage for a report of an aggravated robbery. The suspect pointed a gun at the worker and demanded all of the money from the cash register, and made off with an undisclosed amount of money. Detectives responded to the area and were provided with cooperation from neighboring businesses to review their security cameras. Det. Riley identified a suspect vehicle and tracked its travels throughout the city. The vehicle was not displaying a license plate at the time of the robbery, but was previously captured in Avon bearing an Ohio temporary plate. Avon PD provided the temporary license plate number and the suspect was identified and arrested without incident. A search warrant was conducted on the suspect's Brunswick home and evidence was collected.

On June 20th, 2023 at 1:56am, officers were dispatched to IR-90 westbound near Columbia Rd. for a report of a construction worker that was struck by a vehicle. The suspect vehicle never slowed down or stopped, fleeing the scene westbound. The victim was transported by Westlake Fire Department with very serious, but non-life-threatening injuries to St. John Medical Center before being flown by Life Flight to Metro Hospital. Officers responded and collected several pieces of the vehicle debris from the scene. The following morning, Detective Boots began his investigation to develop a suspect. ODOT cameras were utilized to search for a suspect vehicle along with pieces of the vehicle's debris. Avon PD Det. Sgt. Hortobagyi assisted WPD with video footage of the suspect vehicle exiting IR-90 as well as a license plate. The suspect was later arrested in Avon Lake without incident.

Auxiliary Police Unit

The City of Westlake maintains a first rate Auxiliary Police Unit that is well-equipped and well-trained. The 13 members of the Auxiliary Police Unit are a diverse group of individuals with a steadfast commitment to service. The Unit assists police officers by attending to less-urgent issues that would otherwise keep police officers from the important job of law enforcement.

In 2023, the auxiliaries volunteered a total of 2,330-hours to the City.

Auxiliary Art Hohman retired from the Unit after 24-years of service.



Crisis Intervention Team

Crisis Intervention Training is a program developed in a number of U.S. states to help law enforcement officers react appropriately to situations involving mental illness or developmental disability. The goal of CIT training is to provide law enforcement officers with the knowledge and techniques to approach individuals they believe to have a mental illness, and to de-escalate crises. By integrating CIT training with prior law enforcement training, officers are better able to connect persons with mental illness to treatment instead of inappropriate incarceration.

The Westlake Police Department has fourteen (10) Officers, two (2) Dispatchers and two (2) Jailers trained in Crisis Intervention. CIT Officers hand out “CIT Packets” which contains information about services and resources throughout the area that the individual can contact to receive help.

2020 – 45 CIT Packets given out

2021 – 51 CIT Packets given out

2022 – 46 CIT Packets given out

2023 – 29 CIT Packets given out

Digital Forensics Lab

The Westlake Digital Forensics Lab processes evidence from cell phones, computers and various other electronic devices.

Through a cooperative effort with the Westshore Enforcement Bureau and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Mike O'Malley, the Westlake Digital Forensics Lab was the first in Ohio to obtain the Graykey software capable of obtaining data from locked Apple iPhones. This has led to the Westlake Police Department assisting more than sixty different local, state, and federal agencies in criminal investigations involving cell phone evidence.

In total, 215 cases were handled and closed in the Westlake Digital Forensics Lab in 2023. A total of 29 agencies were assisted. Some of the types of cases investigated were Sex Crimes, Drug Trafficking, Fraud, Overdose, Theft, Homicide, and Robbery.

Westlake Police Department staff partnered with the Lorain County Community College to develop a series of law enforcement forensics focused programs that use real case-work generated from the Westlake Police Department's lab, at an affordable rate.

Digital Forensics Expert Richard Johnson was recognized by the United States Secret Service as the #1 ranked examiner in the Cleveland Field Office. Nationwide he was recognized as the #28th ranked examiner in the country.

Drone Program

The Westlake Police Department Drone Program consists of seven (7) UAS Pilots. The Drone Program was involved in 121 operations, both within the jurisdictional boundaries as well as mutual aid requests including:

- Search Warrants

- Accident Investigation

- Locating missing persons

- Area searches for suspicious persons

- Mutual Aid assistance

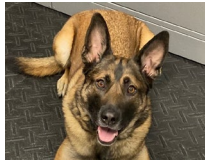
- Special Details (Crocker Park Tree Lighting, Independence Day)

- Community Relations

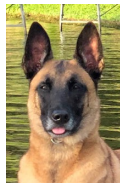
- Investigations/Intelligence

- Crime Prevention Details in both business/residential environments

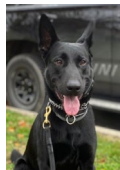
K-9 Unit



CASH



TIMMY



VINCE

The Westlake Police Department's K-9 Unit consists of three K-9s: Cash, Timmy, and Vince.

In 2023, the unit was deployed 120 times for Community Relations activities, including increased presence in schools and high density areas, such as Crocker Park.

The 36 Enforcement related activities included mutual aid requests for other agencies, area searches, and force protection. Force protection, while low in number, is significant for reducing the need for officer involved use of force and encouraging surrender of dangerous suspects, reducing the risk of injury to both officers and suspects.

The K-9 Unit had over 1300-hours of training in 2023.

K-9 Unit (continued)



The Westlake Police Department added a Therapy/Search & Rescue K-9 to the Unit named “M.L.E.” (pronounced Emily).

MLE is a 2-year old, American Black Labrador Retriever born in Arkansas. MLE was purchased and trained by American K9s in Cincinnati, Ohio, who name their dogs after American heroes. MLE was named after the Master Trainer’s father, a retired Army Colonel, who was her “American Hero”.

MLE loves people, playing with other dogs, and playing fetch. She’s your typical dog!

In 2023, MLE was deployed 53 times for Community Relations activities, including safety talks, school visits, and support/therapy uses including schools and nursing homes.



Property and Evidence

The Westlake Property Room operates using National Standards and Practices from the International Association for Property and Evidence, Inc. Professional Standards.

The Property Room personnel ensure incoming property/evidence is packaged correctly and preserved from contamination, its protected from theft or loss, the “chain of custody” is maintained, the accurate documentation of releases and dispositions, and provide adequate security for the Property Room and its contents.

In 2023, there were:

3,628 – Items Stored in Location

2,345 – Items Submitted Into Property

2,315 – Items Collected

467 – Items Sent to the Lab for Analysis

282 – Items Returned to Owner

739 – Items Destroyed

School Resource Officer

With the cooperation of the Westlake City School District, the Westlake Police Department has continued to expand its School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. WPD currently has six (6) SROs who provide an increased safety presence and teach about the dangers of drug, prescription drug, alcohol and tobacco use. Further, general lessons about crime, cybercrime, and police operations are provided to students.

The WPD SRO Team works together with a singular focus of making students safer while in school.

In 2023, the Westlake Council of PTAs honored the WPD School Resource Officers at their annual Founders' Day Celebration. All of the dedicated officers received proclamations from the Ohio House of Representatives as well as Achievement Awards from the Westlake PTA.



Community Policing Activities

Block parties, Parades

Child Safety Seat Checks

Civilian Fingerprinting

Coffee With A Cop

Community Policing Academy

Cyber Bullying Presentations

Howl At The Moon

Lending Library

Meals on Wheels



Operation Medicine Cabinet

Ride Along Program

Safe Kids

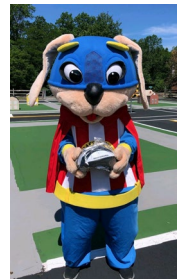
Safety Pup

Safety Talks for businesses & schools

Self-Defense Training at businesses

Shop With A Cop

Touch-a-Truck



Community Police Academy

The goal of the Community Police Academy is to increase the understanding between the community and the police department that serves it, in the hopes of building a strong and mutually beneficial relationship for the future of our community.

The Community Police Academy is held once a week for twelve consecutive weeks and is free to qualifying applicants from the community. Students participate in role playing, ride-alongs, and many hands-on activities including driving a police car on a closed course, range time with department issued handguns, and building searches. Students also learn about Jail operations, Drones, SWAT, Narcotics Investigations, OVIs, K-9, Human Trafficking, Death Investigation, Accident Investigations, and Crime Scene Investigations. In the Fall of 2023, the Community Police Academy had 24 students.



Safety Town

Safety Town is one of the City's longest running programs offered through the Westlake Police Department, celebrating over 50-years. The goal of Safety Town is to offer pre-kindergarteners basic safety instruction on the following topics: pedestrian, bicycle, car/seatbelts, 911, gun, strangers, fire, school bus, swim, internet, and animal safety.



Westshore Cadets Post #18

The Public Safety Cadets was founded in 2018 and is a national non-profit organization managed by active and retired law enforcement officers, dispatchers, business leaders dedicated to preparing young adults, ages 14-20yo, for careers and leadership in the public safety profession.



The City of Westlake and Bay Village established the Westshore Explorers, now called the Westshore Cadets, in 2015. The Cadets meet bi-monthly to train on various law enforcement related procedures and tactics, such as proper handling of firearms, first aid, traffic stops and crime scene investigations. The Cadets utilize their training when they compete in the annual Competition.



2023 WPD Awards

Each year, members of the Westlake Police Department nominate candidates and vote for one officer and one employee to be recognized for their exceptional service.

Officer of the Year

Officer Michael Thompson



Employee of the Year

Digital Forensics Examiner Richard Johnson



The American Police Hall of Fame National Award Program's Lifesaving Award was presented to Officer Steven Paulick, Officer Richard Dudas, and Officer Victoria Kirby.



Retirements, Promotions, & New Hires

Retirements

Officer Mark Arcuri – 30-years of service
Officer Thomas Cummings – 31-years of service
Officer Marcel Sorgi – 26-years of service
Officer Steven Paulick – 30-years of service
Secretary Della Kubera – 20-years of service



Promotions

Officer Eric Alten was promoted to Sergeant on November 16th.



New Hires

Full-time Patrol Officers: Andrew Chenevey, John Hannewald, Victoria Kirby, Daniel Levy, Charles McArthur, Adam Reyes, and Joshua Roberts

Full-time Dispatcher: Gina Curry

Part-time Community Service Officer: Steve Paulick

