



Office of the Sheriff

MONROE COUNTY
"ONE TEAM"



Sheriff Todd K. Baxter

Undersheriff Corey K. Brown

130 SOUTH PLYMOUTH AVENUE, ROCHESTER, NY 14614

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR: Amy Young
Monroe County Sheriff's Office
130 S. Plymouth Ave.
Rochester, NY 14614
(585) 441-2605
MCSOCommunications@monroecounty.gov

MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF TODD K. BAXTER ANNOUNCES IMPLEMENTATION OF ROCHESTER THREAT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ROCTAC)

Re: Community-Wide Threat Assessment and Management Advisory Team

Rochester, NY (February 28, 2019) - Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter, in collaboration with Monroe County, Monroe County District Attorney's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Secret Service, New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, New York State Police, Fairport Police Department, Roberts Wesleyan College, University of Rochester, Fairport Central School District, Villa of Hope, Willow Domestic Violence Center, Veterans Outreach Center, and a host of law enforcement agencies, school districts, colleges and universities, human resources and mental health professionals, houses of worship, and community outreach partners, announced the implementation of the Rochester Threat Advisory Committee (ROCTAC). ROCTAC is a threat assessment and management advisory team created to close threat management gaps created by systems siloes and fragmented responses. It provides a central point of information coordination.

Inspired by the tragic loss of seven-year-old Hunter Resch of Greece, ROCTAC is comprised of select representatives from Participating Member Agencies (PMA) to include, but not limited to, the aforementioned partners. ROCTAC acts as a central clearinghouse for information flow specific to situations known as Threat Cases (TC). Threat Cases are defined as situations, above normal occurrences, where the risk of violence is assessed to be imminent and/or a cluster of risk factors and warning behaviors are present, commonly associated with elevated risks for targeted violence.

"The need for a community-wide threat analysis strategy that encourages government and private entities to coordinate and cooperate in identifying and stopping persons on the pathway toward violence, from committing such acts, is long overdue," said Sheriff Todd K. Baxter. "I was the Greece Police Chief on February 12, 2010, when a beautiful little boy with a bright future, Hunter Resch, was murdered at the hands of his father. A number of people knew Mr. Resch was having difficulties prior to Hunter's murder. Mr. Resch was known to law enforcement and struggling with



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employment. He began a suicide note four days prior to his son's murder. Tidbits of known information that became part of the investigation afterwards led me to believe we, as a community, held the pieces of a complex puzzle, that if put together, may have allowed us to intervene in Mr. Resch's life, ultimately preventing Hunter's death. We must breakdown the siloes in our community that have been operating separately for years and come together as one team, with one mission, to help prevent and mitigate potential threat situations before they occur. There may never be a way to accurately measure the tragedies that are averted in our community and lives saved, but we know with the creation of this team of experts, it is one more step toward prevention. If we can prevent even one tragedy from occurring because of our team approach to intervention, it is time well spent. I will never forget Hunter and the all the possibilities of a fulfilling and productive life that lied ahead of him."

"Our hope is that this task force can get help for people with mental illness and prevent a tragedy from happening to another family like ours," added Sue Watt, Hunter Resch's mother. "Our tragedy not only affected our family, but the entire community as well."

In Spring 2018, based upon initiatives by the Roberts Wesleyan College Justice & Security Institute, various PMA sat down at the table for the first time as a group and ROCTAC began to take shape. We vowed to keep the community apprised of its progress. Today, we are proud to announce the implementation and strategies of this threat assessment and management team, in the hopes of saving lives.

"ROCTAC is an important step forward in making prevention a reality," said Mark Concordia, Roberts Wesleyan College Justice and Security Institute Founder and Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) Certified Threat Manager. "Preventing attacks in our educational environments, commerce, houses of worship, and on the most vulnerable members of our community begins with creating a culture of shared responsibility. Real safety through prevention can only be accomplished through balancing caretaking and support for individuals who pose threats of targeted violence, as well as those who are threatened. ROCTAC helps foster this restorative philosophy throughout our community."

ROCTAC has been operational for about one month and has reviewed three cases that have already shown proven results, including the manner(s) in which the presenting agencies have gained new information for their cases and options to help resolve situations. In one case, ROCTAC discussed an individual who had exhibited public anti-social behavior with a high probability of violence. In that case, a plan was made in which the District Attorney's Office would solicit his/her participation in being assessed for Mental Health Court regarding the individual's previously existing charges. Willow Domestic Violence Center will be available to provide services to the individual's spouse or loved one(s) in the event a referral is made, along with the Monroe County Office of Mental Health (OMH). It was also suggested that the school district that the individual's children attend be made aware of risk factors affecting the children and potentially serve as tripwire indicators, should any tripwire indicators be observed. The result: several lines of direct communication were made in the process of providing at least four avenues of intervention in which each resource is aware of the others involvement.

The ROCTAC Advisory Group (AG) meets at least twice a month. Executive management from PMA will meet quarterly to assess and strategize how to improve the threat advisory team.



"The health, safety and wellness to any community and/or organization is the priority," said Fairport Central School District Superintendent Brett Provenzano. "ROCTAC is a collaborative effort to mobilize community resources, streamline communication, build systematic capacity and respond proactively to possible threats in our community. Ultimately, ROCTAC promotes restorative measures that support healthy, safe and productive environments."

ROCTAC will serve as a resource for the community in an effort to improve targeted violence threat response protocols by providing multi-disciplinary expert advice and seamless sharing of threat information across systems. The team will balance the safety needs of the public with the health and wellness needs of the individual at risk. ROCTAC is not about arrests, which may be an option, however the ultimate goal is to create restorative measures.

"Roberts Wesleyan College supports the Rochester Threat Advisory Council (ROCTAC) and its efforts to raise awareness for preventative strategies to protect our communities, and help and support those who need it most before a tragedy occurs," said Roberts Wesleyan College President Deana L. Porterfield. "Roberts launched the Justice & Security Institute in 2016 to make a positive difference in the community by providing leadership in fostering dialogue, research, and training in areas of Homeland Security, social justice and restorative justice. By providing consulting and training on many social issues, including behavioral threat assessment, ROCTAC will be a valuable resource for the Rochester community to learn and discuss these complicated issues, and to significantly strengthen our practices for public safety."

How It Works:

- **Any Participating Member Agency may bring a case for presentment to the team**
- **The Advisory Group will hear the initial presentment and make recommendations to the presenting Participating Member Agency**
- **All responsibilities associated with case ownership shall remain with the Presenting Agency**
- **Suggested intervention and case management strategies, along with resources offered by the Advisory Group, are not considered binding on the Presenting Member Agency**
- **Goal: to increase communication and cooperation, share prospective, resources and strategies, and to reduce gaps caused by systems delays, siloes, and agencies stretched too thin**

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