



Tigard Police Department Media Release

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New Police Program in Washington County to Benefit Adults With Developmental Disabilities

The Westside Crime Prevention Coalition is pleased to introduce a new learning opportunity to Washington County adults with developmental disabilities. The *Safety Academy* is a free and unique police awareness and personal safety program. Attendees will learn about the role of the police officer and ways to enhance their personal safety both at home and while out in the community. Adults with developmental disabilities can be vulnerable to crime and exploitation. The goal of the program is to help these adults better navigate through their day-to-day activities while being better prepared to face challenges.

The Safety Academy is an avenue for both police officers and adults with developmental disabilities to interact in a positive, low-key environment, providing an opportunity to see beyond the badge. The program serves to foster communication and enhance the personal safety of each participant. All sessions are instructed by local law enforcement. Strict enrollment limits provide increased opportunity for better comprehension by attendees. Support persons are invited to accompany the attendees to help reinforce learning.

The Safety Academy began on April 6 and will continue for four consecutive Monday evenings at the Beaverton Police Department. The program covers a range of subject matter which supports what many adults with developmental disabilities may encounter. The curriculum is relevant and aimed to give attendees the knowledge and confidence to carry out their activities better aware of potential risks. Some of the topics presented include various elements of crime prevention including fraud, identity theft and protecting personal information; getting help and interacting with police; traffic and pedestrian laws and safety; using public transportation and ways to enhance safety when at home.

The Westside Crime Prevention Coalition (WCPC) is a partnership of four Washington County law enforcement agencies. Participating agencies include Beaverton, Hillsboro and Tigard Police Departments as well as the Washington County Sheriff's Office. The WCPC continually strives to offer support to our communities through education and other opportunities. The Safety Academy is just one way the group is succeeding.