
**HOW  LOVE
OUR COPS**

**Building Resilience. Restoring Hope.
Thriving Together.**

**Annual Report
2020**

Mission

How2LoveYourCop encourages, equips and empowers law enforcement families to thrive relationally, emotionally, and spiritually.

We serve both active-duty families, and those families whose officer has been wounded in the line of duty.

Motto

Building Resilience. Restoring Hope. Thriving Together.

Building Resilience

Education is key to this law enforcement life. More than ever, we understand who our officers are, what makes them tick, and train for when things go sideways. We concentrate on giving all members of our families tools on what to expect, what is normal, and answers to the many questions and challenges that come with a law enforcement career.

Restoring Hope

Life happens, and over a 20- to 30-year career we may get discouraged. Sometimes it seems like the entire world is against police officers, and by extension their families. Saturation of a mad, bad, and sad career culture is overwhelming. Injury, death, and the emotional toll become real possibilities in our lives. We aim to encourage. We aim to be positive in the midst of trouble. We look for solutions, support, and new perspectives to allow hope to be restored.

Thriving Together

Because the law enforcement life is so different from the general population, the tendency is to pull away from those who don't get it. But isolation is the enemy. We strive to create community, offer support, and do this life together.

Dear Friends,

The year 2020 will go down in the books as one of the most perplexing in history. For How2LoveOurCops, it was a year of challenges for our team and as a police support organization. We stepped up, working tirelessly in our own homes and caring for families across the nation.

Since our successful Gala in mid-November 2019, our work has not stopped. The end of 2019 brought community events, holidays and celebration, and the unfortunate news that our beloved VOWS Retreat venue in Montana burned down.



January through early March we were spinning up to double what we had accomplished in 2019. We had plans for two Home Watch Spouse Conferences in Sacramento and Oklahoma City, a larger VOWS Retreat, and a Gala that would expand to at least 500, among other programs. Early in the year, a few of us traveled the country building into the lives and marriages of officers in Florida, Idaho, Virginia, and Missouri, as well as our continued work in California and Montana. We also met with spouses from three departments on how to start a

spouse group.

Then COVID hit. Because of shutdowns, we had to cancel travel plans, postponed the Home Watch Conferences and then cancelled them all together. Our Gala venue shut their doors, luckily returning our deposit. Our speaker, Frank Shankwitz, did the same with a sweet note, "Hopeful for 2021" included with the returned check. On the dates we had planned to host in-person conferences, we held Zoom meetings with our guest speakers. We received very positive feedback; spouses and officers left wanting more.

If COVID wasn't tough enough, the incidents that began in late May, and an underlying animosity towards law enforcement arose like never before. Rioting, marches, looting, and violence exhibited a widespread accusatory backlash and gave strength to a severe cancel culture. Safe places like families and churches suddenly turned as anti-police rhetoric and social media campaigns alienated many of our men and women in blue, as well as their families. Fear intruded into the lives of law enforcement families, forcing them to isolate, shut their doors, and abandon social media.

It was the same for our How2LoveOurCops Team, but we banded together with Warrior's Rest Foundation and responded via Zoom calls. We brought in mental health professionals, a sleep expert, gave tools for anxiety, held encouragement nights, talked about bullying on social media, and how to help our kids through all of it. Our list of listeners grew to over 500 in many states over the course of the summer. And then, police haters got ahold of our link, crashed a marriage training Zoom, drawing phallic symbols on our shared screens, and writing foul comments in the chat. We shut it down.



Our last Zoom call was with guest Frank Shankwitz (Make a Wish Foundation founder and our proposed Gala speaker). It was a very small number of wounded officers and spouses because we dared not share on social media, but his perspective and story was so good. We didn't know it then, but Frank would be gone in a matter of months (he died January 24, 2021).

While all of this was happening, the H2LOC team was on the phone, connecting with officers and spouses all over the country. At times we started at the crack of dawn, hanging up the last calls late at night. We connected with well over 100 families one-on-one in that time. Locally, members of H2LOC held a prayer night for about 20 spouses, with others Zooming in. Spouses stayed very late, sharing fears, tears, and hugs.



Out of the blue, we heard from California Senator Brian Dahle's office that he nominated H2LOC for Nonprofit of the Year. After a short process we received a proclamation in the mail.

With the extra time created by restrictions, we took to writing. Vice President Janine D'Agostini and her team wrote a handbook for spouse groups. I was able to move forward significantly on a book project called *Facing Evil*. The book is about Deputy Scott Brown (H2LOC Community Liaison Liz Brown's husband) on his critical incident and the journey of healing afterwards.

Throughout the year, we prayed for over 40 police departments in our #prayforthepatch campaign. We posted each patch on our Facebook page, with a public prayer. If we were in the area, we posted photos with them. Many of the departments thanked us publicly for our prayers.





Limited traveling began in July for some of our speakers, going to Nevada, Texas, Montana, Virginia and Arkansas. We also provided peer support for trainings put on by Concerns of Police Survivors. While this was going on, we were contacted by four more spouse groups for guidance on how to begin.

Summer turned to fall. Several of our team members began to home school as California implemented distance learning. Officers were on 12-hour mandatory shifts, working day after day after day on the protest lines. It was exhausting, and very discouraging as the “Defund Police” demand grew.

In October we were able to send a law enforcement couple to Oklahoma City to attend a Post Critical Incident Seminar. The result was a kickstart in the officer’s healing process, and some significant work done in their marriage.

As an event-centric organization, I was very frustrated that our goals to double our 2019 numbers were basically shattered. I struggled with knowing how to move forward with no relief on restrictions in sight. I began a 40-Day personal prayer challenge with hopes that I would gain clarity and renewed vision and vigor.



By the end of that challenge, the results far surpassed what I had hoped. God gave me new vision, rethinking everything in light of COVID. Our strategy was changed and defined. Most importantly, I deferred my leadership to God Himself. “Jesus is our new CEO,” I told our team. What does this look like? A consistent dependency and stewardship that seeks direction through prayer from the One who created How2LoveOurCops. He is the Owner; as the chief steward, I am to lead, accountable to His direction and plan. Although we are not a religious organization, our core team is driven to action by our inward faith in God. We are inspired to give our time, talents, and money to truly meet the needs of police families through education, encouragement and empowerment.

It was then the doors flew open. Many new opportunities, ideas, and exciting possibilities opened up. Some days I received multiple calls to be involved in projects. National trainings, programs, and event invitations came forward to show us what work we would do going forward.



In November, we held our first in-person event of the year. We asked Warrior's Rest Foundation to train us for peer support work. We now have 25 trained peer support members to call upon for phone and in-person work across the country. We invited The Wounded Blue, an organization that serves wounded officers, to join us. The following week, we formed an official partnership—we will help create programs, in hand resources and events for the spouses of wounded officers in addition to our VOWS Retreat.

Lastly, we recruited four spouses from Texas, North Carolina, Illinois, and Georgia to come together to create a State Liaison Program. This program will expand H2LOC into other areas of the United States, availing our programs and resources to family members everywhere. We want to connect with family members from other areas to get a better sense of how to better meet their needs. We began meeting in January 2021, adding a fifth spouse from Maine.

We are actively pursuing several of the opportunities that arose at the end of 2020. For 2021, we will launch a National Book Club, an educational podcast with Warrior's Rest Foundation, launch a Post Critical Incident Seminar in California, launch the State Liaison program, train a second group of peers for peer support, hold our VOWS Retreat, and a few other things. We will release the in-hand resources we created in 2020 as well. With these new opportunities, we are expanding our reach and our influence.

We've worked diligently to build How2LoveOurCops into a solid organization of high character, excellence, and deep impact. Yet, we're still just getting started! We thank you for your trust and support in our mission. Our team cannot do what we do without your encouragement, prayers and your generosity. Our budget is larger than ever in 2021, and so we depend on giving more than ever. Please consider making a generous one-time gift or monthly contribution so we can continue to help law enforcement families thrive relationally, emotionally, and spiritually, at a time when they need it most.

Gratefully yours,

Victoria M. Newman
Founder and President, How2LoveOurCops

Board of Directors

President: Victoria M. Newman, (Spouse of Retired California Highway Patrol Chief Brent Newman, married 32 years, and in law enforcement 31 years)

Vice President, Active Duty Division: Janine D'Agostini (Spouse of El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agostini, married 35 years, 36 years in law enforcement)

Secretary: Stephanie Thompson, (Spouse of Officer Bill Thompson of California Highway Patrol, 21 years married, 19 years in law enforcement)

Community Liaison: Elizabeth Brown (Spouse of Sacramento (CA) Sheriff Deputy Scott Brown, married 16 years and in law enforcement 18 years)

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Advisors

Tax Advisor: Richard Manies, (Brother of a Retired California Highway Patrolman)

Wounded Officer Advisor: Heidi Paulson (Spouse of Disability Retired Billings (MT) Police Department Officer Ladd Paulson, 34 years married, 15 years in law enforcement)