

2024

WATSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT



WATSONVILLEPD.COM



TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF OF POLICE	2
OUR FOUNDATION	2
COMMITMENT TO SERVICE AND SAFETY	2
LEADING THE WAY	3
SUCCESS AND GROWTH	4
HONORING YEARS OF DEDICATION & NEW OFFICERS ON DUTY	4
LET’S LOOK AT THE NUMBERS	4
2024 HIGHLIGHTS	5-6
BEYOND THE CALL	7-8
NOTABLE INCIDENTS	8-13
OPERATIONS	14
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS	14-18
COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS	18-21
NOW HIRING & CONNECT WITH US	22



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR
CHIEF OF POLICE

I am pleased to present the Watsonville Police Department's end-of-year report, highlighting some of the incredible work of our dedicated staff and their accomplishments. The women and men of our department are truly remarkable people who remain committed to serving our community. We are truly blessed to work in a City that values and supports its police department.

This year, we have embraced technological advancements to enhance public safety. Our newly established Drone Unit has undergone extensive certified training, allowing us to deploy drones rapidly in high-risk situations.

At the same time, like many departments across the country, we continue to face challenges in recruitment and retention. Hiring dedicated individuals who are committed to serving Watsonville remains a top priority. Our recruitment team, in collaboration with Human Resources, is working diligently to attract and retain quality Officers to strengthen our ranks.

Despite these challenges, we are seeing positive trends in public safety. Crime statistics continue to decline, and in 2024, we had zero homicide investigations—an achievement that speaks to the strength of our community partnerships and proactive policing efforts. This progress is the result of a collaborative effort between law enforcement, community members, nonprofits, educators, and other City departments.

Together, we are making Watsonville a safer place for everyone.

Jorge Zamora
Chief of Police

WATSONVILLE POLICE

OUR FOUNDATION

OUR WHY

Impacting our community in positive ways every day through strong relationships and problem-solving

OUR MISSION

Committing ourselves to public safety through engagement, education, enforcement, and professional development

OUR CORE VALUES

Character, Competency, Compassion, Communication

COMMITMENT TO SERVICE & SAFETY

- 62 sworn Police Officers
- 1 part-time Sworn Police Officer
- 22 full-time Professional Staff
- 2 part-time Professional Staff
- 4 Interns

COMMAND STAFF

Chief of Police
Jorge Zamora



Assistant Chief of Police
David Rodriguez



Police Captain
Michael McKinley



Police Captain
Donny Thul



Police Captain
Radovan "Mish" Radich



Police Captain
Brian Fulgoni

SUCCESS AND GROWTH
2024 PROMOTIONS



David Rodriguez
Assistant Chief of Police



Radovan "Mish" Radich
Police Captain



Brian Fulgoni
Police Captain



Lourdes Gombos
Police Sergeant



Ashly Olmeda
Police Service Specialist



Stephanie Banderas
Evidence Technician II

HONORING YEARS OF DEDICATION

2024 RETIREMENTS



Thomas Sims
Assistant Chief
of Police
7 years of service



Lee Katich
Officer
28 years of service



Alex Magaña
Officer
7 years of service



Naim Figueroa
Officer
16 years of service

NEW OFFICERS ON DUTY



Officer Moises Lopez, Officer Justin Lemus, Officer Danny Victory, Officer Fernando Avalos, Officer Hector Lopez, Officer Saul Rodriguez, and K-9 Oso

LET'S LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

53,021 Population
6.6 square miles of patrol area

24/7 Response

47,102 calls for service
4,531 police reports filed
626 online reports received
12,011 items processed as evidence
117 firearms seized

Flock Safety Cameras helped in 57 cases,
resulting in 29 arrests

2024 Crime Rate: 26.5



Property Crime:
2% down compared to 2023



Violent Crime:
4% down compared to 2023
0 Homicide Investigations





2024 HIGHLIGHTS



DRONE UNIT TAKES FLIGHT

Our department launched its Drone Unit in mid-2024, providing Officers with an advanced tool to enhance public safety and better address community concerns.

Aside from using the drones for the first time during our 4th of July illegal fireworks enforcement efforts, the drones have proven to be an asset to our agency, providing crucial aerial support during active incidents and investigations.

The Drone Unit consists of seven FAA-licensed drone operators and one Drone Unit Sergeant. The team operates a fleet of four drones, ready to support our Officers.

BUILDING A SAFER COMMUNITY

In a community-driven effort to prevent crime, our Community Services Division worked to relaunch the department's Neighborhood Watch Program.

The program empowers neighbors to work together and report suspicious activity to the police, reducing crime opportunities. Sessions are offered in English, Spanish, or bilingual formats. After completing four monthly sessions, neighborhoods earn a "Neighborhood Watch" sign to symbolize their dedication to keeping Watsonville safe.

In 2024, two neighborhoods completed the program, with 97 residents learning essential personal and property protection skills, gang awareness, and identity theft prevention.





BALLISTIC VESTS DONATED FOR WPD POLICE DOGS

WPD's hard-working police dogs received ballistic vests, gearing them up to continue fighting crime while on patrol.

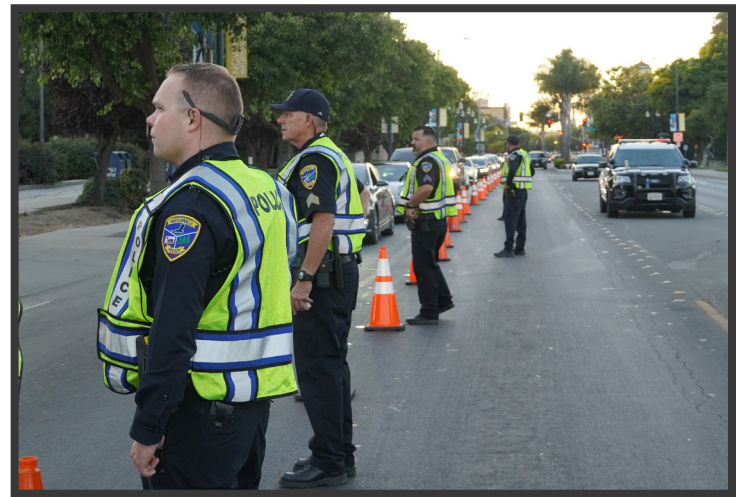
The organization "Brady's K9 Fund" generously donated the vests to K-9 Cruze and K-9 Canelo at the start of the year to support four-legged Officers working tirelessly to keep communities safe.

Brady's K9 Fund was founded by an 8-year-old boy, Brady, who felt K-9 Officers deserve body armor, just like their human partners.

DRIVING TOWARDS SAFETY

Two significant grants from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) totaling nearly \$200,000 to increase traffic safety and promote safe travel for all were awarded to our department in 2024.

A \$77,000 grant supported traffic enforcement and education programs to help reduce serious injuries and deaths on our roads. The funding allowed for DUI checkpoints, distracted driving operations, and targeted enforcement of dangerous driving behaviors, such as speeding and red-light running. Additionally, a \$121,972 grant helped with our Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program, which promotes safe walking and biking practices in partnership with Ecology Action.



These grants reinforce our commitment to building safer streets and protecting all who share our roads.



POLICING WITH PURPOSE

For the second consecutive year, our department participated in the Autism Awareness Campaign by selling vibrant puzzle-themed merchandise. In 2024, we successfully raised nearly \$4,000 for the San Andreas Regional Center. This organization plays an important

role in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families across Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara counties.

During the summer, our 14th Annual Watsonville Police Activities League (PAL) Golf Tournament brought the community together and raised approximately \$10,000. These funds will help PAL continue its mission of empowering local youth by providing them with essential tools and opportunities to thrive. Each year, PAL supports hundreds of kids through after-school programs, summer camps, field trips, and more.

The Watsonville Police Pink Patch Project once again made an impact by raising \$15,574 for the Katz Cancer Resource Center. Since the project's inception in 2017, we've raised nearly \$125,000 thanks to the incredible collaboration of sponsors, volunteers, and our community.

BEYOND THE CALL

This section of our annual report highlights some of the exceptional efforts of our Officers and Professional Staff in serving and protecting our community. Their courage, professionalism, and selflessness were recognized at our awards ceremony in October 2024.

LIFE-SAVING MEDAL



Corporal Antonio Mendoza and Officer Marcos Rios earned the Life-Saving Medal for their heroic actions.

Both Officers responded to a 9-1-1 call about an unresponsive patient who had collapsed. As soon as arriving at the scene, Corporal Mendoza and Officer Rios took turns conducting CPR, working alongside emergency medical personnel. After approximately 25 minutes of continuous efforts, the patient regained a pulse and was transported to the hospital.

Thanks to their quick action, the patient survived and is alive today.

Their professionalism, teamwork, and dedication were crucial in saving a life, exemplifying the highest standards of service to the community.

MEDAL OF MERIT

Detectives Juan Castillo, Dominic Mercurio, Robert Strong, Detective-Sergeant Brian Fulgoni, and Officer Lacey Kane were awarded the Medal of Merit for their extraordinary efforts during a homicide investigation.

After responding to a fatal shooting on Rodriguez Street that claimed the life of a 16-year-old boy, the team worked tirelessly for 22 consecutive hours. They conducted interviews, canvassed the neighborhood, executed search warrants, reviewed surveillance footage, and collaborated with the District Attorney's Office, leading to the arrest of a 16-year-old suspect.

Their professionalism and dedication to justice and community safety, exemplify the highest standards of service, making them truly deserving of this honor.



POLICE SERVICE AWARD

The Police Service Award was presented to Records Supervisor Hilda Figueroa and Property and Evidence Supervisor Griselda Medina for their exceptional dedication and service to the Watsonville Police Department.

Figueroa went above and beyond by working extra hours to assist Patrol Officers during a major citywide network crash. She coordinated to secure an off-site location, ensuring uninterrupted access to vital systems. Her leadership, problem-solving, and commitment to the team were instrumental during this challenging time.

Medina was recognized for her outstanding volunteer work supporting Watsonville Police Department programs. From serving on the Watsonville Police Assistance Fund Board to advising the Cadet Program and supporting our Summer Youth Academies, she has dedicated countless hours to strengthening the department's connection with the community and youth.



NOTABLE INCIDENTS



January

HIGH-RISK STOP LEADS TO ARRESTS AND FIREARM SEIZURE

A report of an armed man inside a vehicle led Officers to conduct a high-risk stop near Main Street and Ohlone Parkway.

Officers located the car and discovered a 9mm handgun hidden under the front passenger seat. The driver, a 20-year-old, was arrested for possessing a concealed firearm and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. A 15-year-old passenger, who was on probation was booked into Juvenile Hall on multiple firearm-related charges.

February

MULTI-AGENCY OPERATION ENDS WITH MULTIPLE ARRESTS

A joint operation resulted in the arrest of three individuals with local gang ties and the recovery of two firearms and ammunition.

The primary suspect, a 29-year-old known gang member and convicted felon, tried to flee and resisted arrest at Seacliff State Beach. Officers found a loaded gun in his pocket. The suspect was booked into the Santa Cruz County Jail on multiple charges, including felony firearm possession, providing a gun to a minor, resisting arrest, and gang participation.

After his arrest, Officers served search warrants at two locations, resulting in the arrest of an 18-year-old for illegal firearm possession and a 20-year-old gang member with outstanding warrants.



This operation involved the Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team, Santa Cruz Auto Theft Reduction and Enforcement Task Force, California Highway Patrol, and Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

March

ATTEMPTED MURDER SUSPECT TAKEN INTO CUSTODY

An 18-year-old gang member was taken into custody on attempted murder charges.

The investigation stemmed from a shooting the prior month on Riverside Drive, which left a victim recovering from a gunshot wound to the chest.

Detectives served multiple search warrants related to the case before arresting the suspect and booking him on charges of attempted murder and gang enhancements.



April

TWO ARRESTED IN BB GUN SHOOTING

Watsonville Police Officers arrested two 19-year-old suspects in connection with a BB gun shooting that left two people injured.

Officers responded to Rodriguez Street and found the victims. Thanks to witness information, Officers quickly located the suspect's car minutes later on Main Street.

A BB gun and a ski mask were found inside the vehicle. Both suspects were arrested and booked into the Santa Cruz County Jail. They were also suspected of shooting out windows at several downtown businesses.



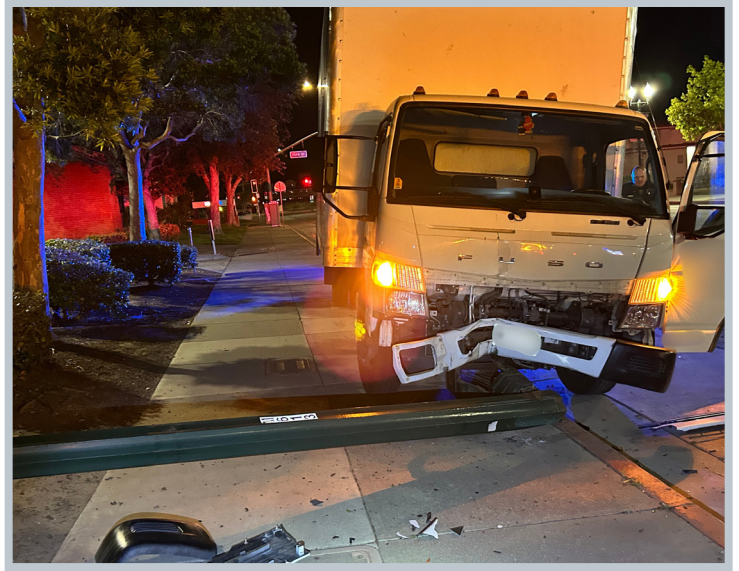
May

DELIVERY DRIVER ESCAPES ARMED ROBBERY

A delivery driver made a bold move to escape an armed robber.

The 41-year-old driver was at a gas station when the suspect forced him into his truck and then got into the passenger seat.

About a mile into the drive, the victim intentionally crashed into a light pole. Officers arrived within minutes and arrested the suspect. Thankfully, no one was injured. The victim later stated that he feared for his life because the suspect had taken out what appeared to be a knife.



May

INVESTIGATION INTO DISPENSARY BURGLARY INVOLVING MULTIPLE SUSPECTS

At least a dozen suspects burglarized a Watsonville cannabis dispensary after ramming a stolen SUV into the dispensary's door.

Within minutes, they stole thousands of dollars in cannabis products and a safe from another nearby business.

The first Officer on the scene set up a perimeter, but the suspects fled in multiple vehicles. With information from Watsonville Officers, the California Highway Patrol pursued the SUV to Hayward, but the suspects got away. After a multi-agency operation, several arrests were made in connection to the burglary.



June

TRAFFIC STOP RESULTS IN ARREST OF CONVICTED FELON

During a traffic stop at Ester Way and Bronte Avenue, Officers arrested a 44-year-old convicted felon who had fentanyl and drug paraphernalia.

Officers pulled the driver over for a vehicle code violation and discovered he was on probation. With the help of one of our narcotics K-9, Officers searched the vehicle and found several fentanyl pills.

The suspect was taken into custody on multiple drug-related charges.



June

DRONE UNIT ASSISTS IN ARREST OF BURGLARY SUSPECT

Our newly acquired drones captured the moment a burglar made off with thousands of dollars of marijuana from a local marijuana cultivation and processing plant.

An Officer, who is also a Drone Unit Operator, responded to a burglary alarm on the 1000 block of W. Beach Street and quickly deployed a drone, capturing footage of the suspect taking bundles of marijuana and stashing them nearby.

With help from K-9 Cruze, Officers found the 40-year-old Watsonville resident hiding and recovered more than \$20,000 worth of stolen marijuana. The suspect was arrested on burglary charges.



July

WPD LARGEST ILLEGAL FIREWORKS BUST

Our Officers made the largest illegal fireworks bust in our department's history and on the Central Coast in 2024.

More than two tons of dangerous fireworks were seized, and two suspects were arrested.

The investigation began after Officers received information about illegal fireworks sales in the City. A search warrant led them to a location in Monterey County, where thousands of pounds of illegal fireworks were found. More fireworks were also found at one of the suspect's homes in Watsonville.



July

YOUTH SPORTS COACH ARRESTED FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

A Watsonville youth sports coach was arrested following accusations of sexual abuse of a boy under the age of 13.

The 24-year-old suspect was booked into jail on charges of human sex trafficking of a minor, contacting a minor with intent to commit certain felonies, and lewd or lascivious acts with a child under 14.

The sexual abuse is believed to have happened in 2022 when the suspect was a volunteer coach for the track & field team at a local middle school. However, it wasn't until early July of 2024 that the abuse was reported to our department.



August

OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING

An officer-involved shooting unfolded in front of our police department when an armed suspect charged toward one of our Officers.

The 25-year-old suspect had called our dispatch center to report that he was armed with a knife and that he intended to hurt his three-year-old stepdaughter. When the first Officer arrived at the scene, the man ignored multiple commands to drop the knife he was holding and charged at the Officer, who, in return, opened fire, striking him. The Officer was not injured.

While recovering in the hospital, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office identified the 25-year-old as the primary suspect in the murder of his girlfriend.



September

ARREST MADE AFTER STANDOFF WITH ARMED SUSPECT

A tense standoff ended with the arrest of an armed 37-year-old Watsonville man accused of slashing several tires in a neighborhood on Herman Avenue.

Our Drone Unit and the Santa Cruz Police Department's Drone Team provided aerial support while Crisis Negotiators worked to de-escalate the situation and convince the man to drop his knife. About three hours into negotiations, the suspect threw the knife and struck one of our Officers in the leg. The suspect was then tased and taken into custody.



Officers recovered a 13-inch knife, nearly two grams of methamphetamine and documented \$2,500 in vehicle damage caused by the suspect.

October

STOLEN VEHICLE RECOVERY AND BURGLARY ARRESTS

From stealing a victim's car to breaking into their home while the victim was out of town, three suspects were booked into county jail on several charges.

The car had been reported stolen and was spotted by Officers outside the victim's house. While Officers were recovering the car, they noticed suspicious activity inside the residence and signs of a break-in.

With help from the Santa Cruz Police K-9 unit, Officers entered the home and found the three suspects. All were booked on burglary charges, with one facing charges for possessing a stolen vehicle and two outstanding felony warrants.



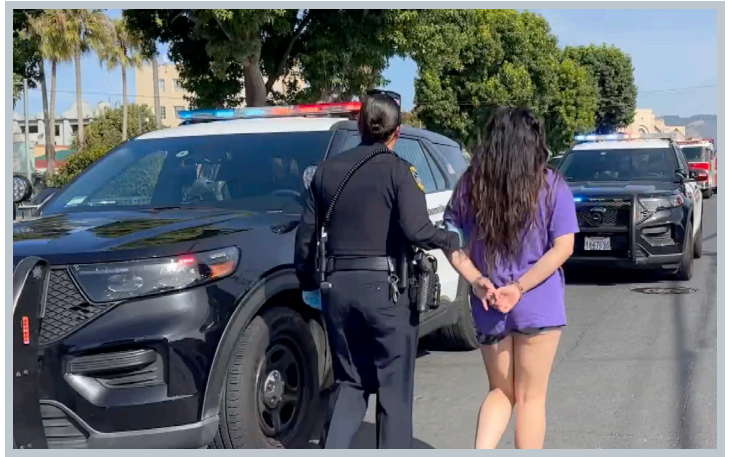
November

STABBING INVESTIGATION

During broad daylight, Officers responded to a stabbing in the 100 block of 2nd Street, where they found a 24-year-old man suffering from multiple stab wounds.

As Officers investigated the scene of the crime, they found the suspect, an 18-year-old woman, hiding in the backseat of a parked car. She was arrested on charges of domestic violence and assault with a deadly weapon.

The victim recovered from his injuries.



November

PROACTIVE POLICING & TEAMWORK

In a matter of days, nearly a dozen guns and dangerous drugs were taken off our streets and out of the hands of dangerous people.

In one of the cases, a gang member and convicted felon was arrested after being found asleep at the wheel while under the influence of drugs. Officers found three firearms, including high-capacity magazines and illegal modifications. The suspect was arrested for DUI, felon in possession of a firearm, and possession of high-capacity magazines.

Days later, Patrol Officers, Detectives, and our Drone Unit worked with the Santa Cruz County Auto Theft Reduction and Enforcement Task Force to recover a



stolen truck. A search warrant ended with the recovery of firearms, ammunition, methamphetamine, and other contraband. Three suspects were arrested for robbery, conspiracy, criminal threats, and possession of a stolen vehicle.

December

INVESTIGATION INTO FORMER MUSIC TEACHER

Watsonville Police Detectives launched an investigation into a former music teacher who was already behind bars for multiple crimes against children. Detectives were contacted after a new victim from Watsonville came forward with allegations of abuse.

The investigation revealed that the suspect, who previously visited a music class in a Watsonville school, inappropriately touched a 15-year-old student.

The case was forwarded to the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, which charged the suspect with two counts of lewd and lascivious acts with a child under 14.



FIELD OPERATIONS DIVISION

The Field Operations Division is the heart of the Watsonville Police Department, with its patrol teams providing 24/7 protection and support to more than 53,000 residents. As the most visible team in the department, these Officers are a familiar sight, regularly patrolling neighborhoods and responding to calls for help.

The division is made up of six patrol teams that work during day, swing, and graveyard shifts. Officers are assigned to five specific areas, called “beats,” to make sure every part of the community gets the attention it needs.

In 2024, our Patrol Officers responded to 47,102 calls for service. They made 1,599 arrests, filed 4,543 cases, and hosted 87 ride-alongs, giving community members a chance to see their work up close.



SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

TRAFFIC UNIT

The Traffic Unit's primary responsibility is to enforce traffic laws, ensuring the safety of drivers and pedestrians on the streets of Watsonville. In addition to enforcing traffic laws, the unit actively investigates vehicle collisions within the City.

In 2024, Officers and the Traffic Unit investigated 459 traffic collisions, three of which were fatal. They also reviewed 101 hit-and-run collisions, made 170 DUI arrests, and held two DUI checkpoints.



K-9 UNIT

In October 2024, the Watsonville Police K-9 Unit welcomed its newest member, K-9 Oso. The two-year-old German Shepherd joined K-9 Cruze and K-9 Canelo, further enhancing the unit's capabilities. Each K-9 is trained for patrol functions and paired with its handlers: K-9 Officers Angel Hernandez, Jay Garcia, and Ruben Zendejas.



Since its establishment in 1986, the Watsonville Police K-9 Unit has been integral to our law enforcement operations. Our K-9s undergo training in critical skills such as suspect apprehension, narcotics detection, evidence recovery, handler protection, and searching buildings and open areas.

Beyond their operational duties, the K-9s also serve as liaisons to the community, fostering connections through participation in local events, and demonstrations at schools and community organizations.

DETECTIVE BUREAU

The Detective Bureau consists of a Detective-Sergeant and a team of detectives who have specialized expertise in investigating a wide range of cases, including sexual assaults, crimes against persons, gang-related offenses, property crimes, and major crimes.

While they manage essential behind-the-scenes tasks such as generating search warrants and handling case documentation, their work extends beyond paperwork as they conduct in-depth field investigations.

In 2024, the Detective Bureau reviewed and investigated 690 cases, executed 128 search warrants and court orders.



CRISIS NEGOTIATION TEAM

The Crisis Negotiations Team is committed to safely resolving high-risk situations through communication and de-escalation. These incidents include hostage situations, barricaded individuals, suicidal cases, and acts of terrorism.

Our specially trained negotiators are available around-the-clock, 365 days a year, ready to respond to any crisis situation.



SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM

Our Special Response Team (SRT) consists of highly trained Officers from our department dedicated to protecting the lives of community members and law enforcement during high-risk incidents.

SRT members undergo rigorous monthly training and remain on-call 24/7 to handle critical situations such as executing high-risk search warrants, resolving standoffs with barricaded suspects, conducting hostage rescues, and any additional needs that surpass the response capabilities of our Patrol Officers.

In 2024, the team was deployed four times, and conducted ten active shooter presentations for the community and local businesses to increase public awareness and safety.



CRISIS ASSESSMENT RESPONSE & ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The Crisis Assessment Response & Engagement Team (CARE), established in 2016, provides compassionate and coordinated response to individuals and families facing mental health challenges.

A Santa Cruz County Mental Health Clinician partners directly with a Watsonville Police Officer to respond to calls involving individuals in crisis. This collaborative approach allows the Officer to address safety concerns while the clinician focuses on the person's clinical needs, ensuring they receive the most appropriate and comprehensive care.

In 2024, CARE provided services to 443 individuals.



SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

In 2024, we welcomed a new School Resource Officer (SRO) to enhance campus safety and foster strong relationships with students, parents, and staff.

The SRO is a vital link between the Pájaro Valley Unified School District and the Watsonville Police Department, promoting collaboration and trust within our schools.

While primarily assigned to Pájaro Valley High School, Officer Saul Rodriguez is available to respond to incidents at any Pájaro Valley Unified School District school within the City of Watsonville.



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AUTO THEFT REDUCTION & ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

Established in 1998, the Santa Cruz County Auto Theft Task Force serves the region under the supervision of the California Highway Patrol and the operation of the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office.

This multi-agency team includes Officers, Deputies, and Investigators from local jurisdictions, including the Watsonville Police Department. The task force focuses on recovering stolen vehicles, investigating auto theft operations, and educating local autobody shop owners on recognizing and preventing criminal activity.



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ANTI-CRIME TEAM

The Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team is a collaborative effort involving personnel and resources from multiple law enforcement agencies across the County, including the Watsonville Police Department.

Operating under the supervision of the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, the team is dedicated to preventing and reducing violent crime, combating narcotics trafficking, and apprehending suspects involved in these criminal activities.



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION

The Professional Standards Division (PSD) is a key component of our department, managing various important responsibilities that support its operations.

While PSD focused heavily on recruitment efforts in 2024, the division also oversees training programs, pre-employment background investigations, and promotional processes. PSD also ensures accountability by investigating internal and citizen complaints about alleged misconduct.

Additionally, the division reviews policies and procedures to maintain high standards. They ensure all Officers and Professional Staff are suitably uniformed, equipped, and supported to carry out their duties effectively and professionally.



OFFICERS' TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, our department welcomed seven new Police Officers and one new Police Dog. Our Officers and Professional Staff also attend a variety of specialized training and professional development courses throughout the year. We also trained and equipped all of our uniformed personnel with brand-new Taser 10's, a less-than-lethal device that has been proven to save lives and prevent serious injuries during dangerous and volatile situations nationwide.

Specialized training course topics included: Countywide Active Shooter Response, Gracie Survival Tactics, WYSM & Echelon Front's "Extreme Ownership in the 21st Century and Supervisory Leadership in the 21st Century, Crowd Management Tactics, Advanced Investigative



Training, Property and Evidence Management, Public Records Act and Professionalizing Law Enforcement-Community Engagement Training—and much more. These are just a few of the many training opportunities available to enhance skills and professional development of our department members.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

We are dedicated to building meaningful connections with our community through outreach programs that cultivate trust and positive relationships.

Led by the Community Services Division, our outreach efforts are essential in fostering a safer, stronger, and united community.



CADET PROGRAM

The program offers young individuals a unique opportunity to explore a career in law enforcement, providing hands-on experience through rotations across various divisions. Cadets gain valuable insight into different aspects of police work while also playing a key role in community events, serving as liaisons between the police department and local youth. Additionally, Cadets participate in competitions that challenge their skills and further develop their leadership and teamwork abilities.

In 2024, we welcomed 10 new Cadets who, alongside our current Cadets, dedicated nearly 4,000 hours to the program. Their commitment included volunteering, training, meetings, and supporting operations. Together, they contributed to over 50 events, enhancing their involvement and making a lasting impact within the community.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

CONTINUED

POLICE YOUTH ACADEMY

The Police Youth Academy is a weeklong summer program that provides local teens with valuable insights into law enforcement, specialized assignments, community policing, and various career opportunities. In 2024, 36 teens between the ages of 14 and 18 completed the academy, supported by our Officers, Staff, and the generous contributions of local businesses and community members.

Launched in 2022, the program was designed to offer a safe space for prosocial, educational, and recreational activities. It emphasizes teamwork, promotes positive self-esteem, and provides an opportunity for participants to build lasting, positive relationships within their community.



POLICE ACTIVITIES LEAGUE (PAL)

The Watsonville Police Activities League (PAL) provides essential resources for local youth through various educational, athletic, and recreational activities. The program's core focus is to build strong bonds between Police Officers, recreational leaders, youth, and their families, helping foster positive relationships and serving as an essential youth crime prevention initiative.

PAL offers a wide range of programs, including boxing, soccer, leadership and team-building opportunities, and frequent field trips that enrich the participants' experiences. It also provides a safe, supportive place for kids to go after school, where they can engage in activities that help them grow personally and socially.

In 2024, PAL served 217 youth, creating lasting connections and providing opportunities for growth, teamwork, and leadership.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

CONTINUED

CAMINOS HACIA EL ÉXITO

Caminos Hacia el Éxito, launched in 2012, is a diversion program for Watsonville youth who commit first-time misdemeanor offenses.

To keep their cases from being forwarded to the Santa Cruz County Probation Department, participants agree to meet specific requirements, which include completing community service, attending counseling sessions, participating in prosocial activities, attending management meetings, and engaging in a parenting component.

In 2024, 16 out of 18 youth participants completed the three-month program, showcasing their dedication to personal growth and positive change.



POST-INCIDENT TEAM

The Post-Incident Team (PIT) is a dedicated group of Officers, Professional Staff, and Volunteers who work together to keep residents well-informed after significant incidents in our community.

PIT is focused on supporting residents through door-to-door visits, addressing concerns, clarifying misinformation, providing essential information about community resources and City services, and providing reassurance.

In 2024, the team was deployed once, visiting 43 homes to offer valuable assistance and ensure residents had the information they needed.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS CONTINUED

AGUA CON LA CHOTA

Since its inception in 2017, Agua con la Chota has provided local farmworkers with a safe and welcoming space to connect with Officers and access important information and guidance.

The program was created in collaboration with community-based organizations. It aims to break down barriers and build trust between law enforcement and the community.

Through several scheduled gatherings at local agricultural fields, farmworkers have the chance to engage with Officers on topics such as immigration, local laws, and state regulations. In October 2024, we held three sessions, reaching dozens of farmworkers.



GUEST SPEAKER PROGRAM

Our Guest Speaker Program facilitates requests for Police Officer presentations at various community events, including Neighborhood Watch meetings, club gatherings, school visits, and police department tours.

Presentation topics include crime prevention, personal safety, workplace violence, domestic violence, police services, the K-9 program, and drug and gang prevention.

In 2024, the program engaged with nearly 4,000 community members during 36 presentations.



NOW HIRING

Our department is actively hiring and looking for dedicated individuals who want to serve and protect our community. We have openings for both entry-level and experienced Police Officers.

Joining the Watsonville Police Department means becoming part of a team that values community engagement and professional growth. We offer a variety of special assignments and advancement opportunities, such as Detective, K-9 Unit, Motor Officer, School Resource Officer, Corporal/Field Training Officer, Special Response Unit, and Crime Scene Investigation, to name a few.

If you're ready to make a positive impact and grow your law enforcement career, apply today at watsonvillepd.com.

WATSONVILLE POLICE

We take extreme pride in our transparency and ongoing engagement with our community. Our Communications Team works hard to provide timely and accurate information about incidents, crime trends, department activities, and community programs.

One of our department's primary strategies for connecting with our community is through the use of several social media platforms.

CONNECT WITH US



**Like, Follow, Subscribe,
Download & Register**

Non-Emergency Police Dispatch: 831-471-1151

Crime Tip Line: 831-768-3544

Records: 831-768-3370

Investigations: 831-768-3350

Police Chief's Office: 831-768-3300



MY90



WPD APP



WATSONVILLE POLICE

THIS ANNUAL REPORT WAS WRITTEN, EDITED, AND DESIGNED BY:

Erika Vazquez, Police Media & Communications Specialist

Michelle Pulido, Public Information Officer

Suryel Vasquez, Multimedia & Communications Analyst

Radovan "Mish" Radich, Police Captain