

Westchester B.L.U.E. Foundation



CO-Chairman

Westchester County Police Officer Joseph Kraus

Westchester B.L.U.E. Foundation; a non-profit, charitable organization, formed for the purpose of assisting police officers and their families in coping with the many stresses experienced during a career in law enforcement, specifically those who are dealing with PTSD and Cumulative Stress Disorder. The Westchester B.L.U.E. Foundation has also been a wonderful tool for departments as a whole, as they regularly conduct Crisis Intervention Stress Management and Group Crisis Intervention when an agency has experienced a traumatic loss or situation.

Officer Joseph Kraus is the Co-Founder and CO-Chairman of The Board of Directors of the Westchester BLUE Foundation, Officer Kraus joined the City of Mount Vernon Police Department in July 2000. After serving two years in Patrol, he was assigned to the Emergency Services Unit, where he stayed till he transferred to the Westchester County Department of Public Safety. He proudly serves as one of the senior members of that department's Motorcycle Unit in the patrol Division.

In February 2004, a good friend and colleague, PO Thomas Fantry, was diagnosed with a fatal brain tumor. PO Kraus, at the time, was the second vice president of Mount Vernon Police Department's PBA, and was tasked with attempting help heal the department after the death of PO Fantry. PO Fantry was PO Kraus's academy classmate and was an upcoming and stronger member of the department. His passing left a hole in the department which was felt by everyone. PO Fantry left behind a wife and two twin boys. This was no easy task for PO Kraus. He put together a fundraising benefit in hopes of celebrating PO Fantry's life. It happened to be a very successful 10-13 fundraiser. It helped raise money for his medical bills, as well as supporting his two sons. It also helped start the healing process for his colleagues in the department after such a loss. PO Kraus and his long-time friend, colleague and brother, Mount Vernon Police Department Detective Mathew Frank, started realizing that alongside the monetary value of the fundraiser, there was emotional benefit to it, as well.

The Foundation has provided training in awareness of stress management, substance abuse, suicide prevention and counseling to various departments throughout Westchester as well as, recruits in the academy, and supervisors during their training. To date, the B.L.U.E Foundation has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for officers in need of financial support, as well as helped countless officers dealing with emotional, martial, and substance abuse among many other stresses they experience on a daily basis. The number one goal of the B.L.U.E Foundation is to provide an outlet for the men and women that answer the calls of their communities on a daily basis and make sure they know someone is always here to lean a hand and shoulder for them no matter the circumstance.