

Destination Zero Submission
Capt. Ann Young, LAPD

In June of 2013, Captain Ann Young, the current Commanding Officer of Central Traffic Division, was given archived photographs of the 5th and Wall traffic collision by a retiring supervisor. Reflecting on the photographs and realizing that the 25 year anniversary was approaching, Captain Young recognized an opportunity to have a profound impact on an ongoing officer safety problem. Chief Beck has long maintained a strong commitment to officer wellness and has included that in the Department's annual goals. Seatbelt usage for on duty police officers has been a cause for concern and compliance with Department policy had room for improvement. In fact, at a recent staff meeting the use of seatbelts was set as a specific goal and efforts to improve awareness were under consideration.

Captain Young took the initiative to gather a committee to produce a training/awareness video that would cause viewers to draw a real connection with benefits and consequences of officers wearing or not wearing seatbelts. The theme was to develop a deeper, more compelling reason to wear seatbelts and appeal to the real life and death decisions that officers make on a daily basis. This project involved many facets, from logistics to the tactful contact with the families of officers who were killed in the line of duty on that fateful day.

Under the leadership of Captain Young, the committee members took the time from their busy schedules to convene and develop contacts and materials required to recreate an accurate and moving depiction of the events that led to this tragedy. Contacting various community members and resources was a formidable task.

The committee members worked hard to develop a script, locate actors and actresses, determine sites, and conduct interviews on camera, including a closing message filmed in the field at the location of the collision with the Chief of Police. The staff at the Department's Video Online Technology Unit worked relentlessly to ensure the production was complete before the 25 year anniversary date.

The final video was viewed by the families of the involved officers and senior staff on December 10, 2013, and drew great praise from all who attended. In an effort to promote officer wellness, the Chief of Police mandated that the video be viewed by all Department personnel.

The foresight and vision displayed by the involved personnel undoubtedly had an impact on Department employees who viewed the video and has, and will continue to, remind us all to drive safely and buckle up. If this video causes one officer to remember to buckle up and another tragedy is averted, then all the work involved was well worth the effort.