

## Accomplishments and Events

### Public Safety



*Students Jennifer Bush and Myra Henrique visit with School Resource Officer Hassan Aden, one of two Police Officers who are assigned full time to the City's two middle schools. The SRO program has received national attention as a way to prevent violence in schools.*

## Traffic Enforcement

The City recorded one traffic fatality in 1997, the fewest of any city or county in Virginia. Still, 827 traffic accidents involved injuries. Renewing a commitment to safer streets, the Police Department launched two traffic enforcement initiatives in FY 1998:

- In November 1997, the Red Light Traffic Camera Program began photo enforcement at three high-accident intersections. A camera rotating among the three intersections photographs vehicles that run red lights. A \$50 fine notice is then mailed to owners of the offending vehicles. In the first six months, the City issued more than 8,000 fine notices. Since Fairfax City and Alexandria began camera enforcement programs, Arlington and Montgomery counties have started similar projects to reduce red light violations.
- A mobile radar trailer and sign board activated by the Police Department helped in identifying areas plagued by speeders. This portable "smart trailer" collects traffic data and displays the speed of passing vehicles so that drivers know when they are exceeding the posted speed limit.

## School Resource Officers

The Police Department expanded its community policing efforts by sending two officers "back to school" in the fall of 1997. A School Resource Officer (SRO) was placed in each of the two middle schools, with Officer Hassan Aden at George Washington Middle School and Officer Greg Shields at Francis C. Hammond Middle School. In their first year, both officers strengthened relations between police and the schools by addressing safety concerns and by mediating conflicts between students. While incidents of violence in schools elsewhere in the nation captured headlines, Alexandria's new SRO program received national recognition as a way to prevent violence. As the SRO program entered its second year, Officer Stafford Farmer-Lee replaced newly promoted Sergeant Shields at Hammond.



*Flight Nurse William McGinnis introduces Maury School student Vanessa Cathey to the instrument panel of a MedStar helicopter. The "show and tell" was part of an educational effort aimed at reminding children to wear a safety helmet when riding their bicycles.*

## **Crime Prevention**

Serious crime, which includes all homicides, rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries, larcenies and auto thefts, declined to a 28-year low in 1997. The 7.6% decline followed 1996's drop of 3.7% . Violent crimes (homicides, rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults) fell 4.7% to the lowest point in 30 years and have dropped 17.9% in the last ten years. In 1997, burglaries decreased 13.3% to the fewest number of break-ins since 1963. Robberies were down 16.0% to the lowest point since 1967. Aided by undercover efforts of the Grand Larceny Auto Task Force, auto thefts fell 14% in 1997 following a reduction of 19.9% in 1996.

## **Arrests**

Arrests for serious crime increased slightly to 1,120 in 1997, up just 0.1%. Adult arrests for all crimes, including drug offenses, decreased 1.0% to 7,128. Juvenile arrests dropped 12.1% in 1997 to 761, with 9.3% fewer juvenile drug arrests than the prior year. It was the first year since 1994 that juvenile drug arrests declined. Adult drug arrests decreased as well, down 7.4% in 1997. There were 8.2% fewer DWI arrests in 1997, with only one juvenile among the 416 people charged with driving under the influence.

## **Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA)**

In FY 1998, this Office on Women program served 404 survivors of sexual assault, a 25% increase over FY 1997. The increase can be attributed to increased outreach and awareness efforts. With funding from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Office on Women was able to hire a Hispanic outreach prevention specialist in August 1997 to expand services to Spanish-speaking victims of sexual assault.

## **Fire Fatalities and Property Loss**

One fire fatality occurred in the City in FY 1998, compared to none the previous year and two in FY 1996. Property losses for the year declined 22% to \$2.1 million.

## **Emergency Calls**

The Fire Department responded to 15,707 emergency calls in FY 1998, an increase of 1.8%. Of these, 5,080 were fire calls and 10,627 were for emergency medical service. Medivac helicopters transported 46 patients to trauma centers, compared to 28 last year. The Fire Department also responded to 177 hazardous materials incidents. A new waterfront safety program makes use of two inflatable boats that can be quickly transported to the Potomac River for water rescue.