



## NEWS

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### **Chicago Crime Commission honors outstanding crime fighters**

#### **For Immediate Release**

**Chicago, IL – Wednesday, November 10, 2010** –The Chicago Crime Commission will hold its *Stars of Distinction, 2010 Awards Dinner* tonight to recognize outstanding individual and organizational contributions in fighting crime. Chicago Police Department Superintendent Jody Weis will be the keynote speaker at the event. Weis is expected to provide an update on his new efforts to combat gangs which include punishing an entire street gang when one of its members commits an act of violence.

The program will include five Criminal Justice Awards presented to individuals and the organizations they serve in recognition of their outstanding collaboration and investigative techniques. Additionally, the Chicago Crime Commission will present the third annual Mitch Mars Prosecutorial Excellence Award as well as the Paws of Distinction K-9 Unit Award.

“While every recipient of the *Stars of Distinction* award stands out for an exceptional contribution to law enforcement in Chicago, they all have one thing in common. Today, the Chicago metropolitan area is a better and safer place to live because of their efforts,” according to J.R. Davis, Chairman and President of the Chicago Crime Commission.

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“The *Stars of Distinction, 2010 Awards Dinner* is a chance to recognize our society’s real heroes who toil, mostly out of the spotlight, performing dangerous and often unenviable tasks. It is an opportunity for us to thank them and celebrate their outstanding achievements with their family, friends, and colleagues,” Davis added.

Recipients of the *Stars of Distinction Awards* include:

**Criminal Justice Award One** The Chicago Crime Commission Stars of Distinction Criminal Justice Award is presented to the following individuals in recognition of their outstanding collaboration and investigative techniques leading to the dismantling of the top ranking leadership in a street gang that had a stronghold on several Chicago neighborhoods. Federal Bureau of Investigation - Special Agents Beth Kreppein, James McDonald, Christopher Weismantel; Chicago Police Department - Sergeants Patrick Gillespie, Matthew Little, Officers Michael Fryer, Homero Ramirez; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives - Special Agents Terry Jackson, Joseph Ruzevich, Ronald Zitek; United States Attorney’s Office - Deputy Chief Andrew Porter, Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nancy DePodesta, Tinos Diamantatos, Michelle Nasser; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement - Special Agents Shane Jumper, Jason Medica, and Dan Nagy.

In September of 2004 Operation Pesadilla (nightmare in Spanish) was initiated by the Chicago Division of the FBI’s Joint Task Force on Gangs II, which is a partnership between the FBI and the Chicago Police Department. The investigation’s focus was the rampant street violence and drug trafficking by the Latin Kings street gang in Chicago’s Little Village neighborhood. The evidence from the FBI/CPD investigations provided the framework for a Racketeer Influenced & Corrupt Organization (RICO) case against the Latin Kings. The RICO indictment was predicated on charges of murder, attempted murder, witness tampering, narcotics conspiracy and extortion. In October 2009 18 ranking members of the Latin Kings were indicted for RICO conspiracy and other federal crimes. Included in the indictments was the Latin King’s national leader – the “Corona” – Augustin Zambrano. In August of 2010 five additional members of the Little Village Latin Kings were arrested by the task force, and to date, 58 members of the Latin Kings have been charged.

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**Criminal Justice Award Two** The Chicago Crime Commission Stars of Distinction Criminal Justice Award is presented to the following individuals in recognition of their outstanding collaboration and investigative techniques leading to the crackdown on an organized Romanian fraud operation. Federal Bureau of Investigation - Special Agent Michael Blessing; Chicago Police Department - Detectives Patrick McCafferty, Edward McMahon, Janice Scott; United States Attorney's Office - Assistant U.S. Attorneys Steven Dollear, Brian Hayes; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agent Kenneth Popovits.

When it comes to White Collar Crime, internet auction fraud is by far the most reported offense - with non-delivered merchandise and/or payments, check fraud, credit/debit card fraud, computer fraud, confidence fraud and financial institutions fraud making up the majority of the complaints. The Romanian organized crime ring appears to be the most active group perpetrating this type of crime. The total loss to at least 3,000 victims was approximately \$10 million. An investigation launched by representatives of the Chicago Field Office of the FBI, the Chicago Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Attorney's Office, and the Chicago Police Department targeted an International Organized Crime Group based in Romania with support operations in Chicago and several other major US cities. To date, 32 members of the Chicago organization have been charged. Of the 32, 24 have been convicted, and seven remain fugitives. Charges included wire fraud, interstate transportation of stolen property, money laundering, and aggravated identity theft. The top two targets received sentences of fifteen years and twenty seven years. The investigation continues into targets in Romania and into locating and arresting the remaining fugitives.

**Criminal Justice Award Three** The Chicago Crime Commission Stars of Distinction Criminal Justice Award is presented to Investigator Diane DiSalvo for her tireless efforts, deep commitment and outstanding performance in combating crimes against children.

In 2004, in an effort to provide guidance to parents on internet safety and offer a place to report criminal acts such as child pornography, sexual solicitation of a child or to report a missing child, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office created an Internet Crimes Against Children Unit (ICAC). Investigator Diane DiSalvo was assigned to the unit and was instrumental in its design and development. DiSalvo has spent the past ten years of her career working in specialized units focused on crimes against children.

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She has lead every ICAC investigation including every Possession of Child Pornography case, Indecent Solicitation of a Minor case and Person to Person referrals. A case that supports the need for such an internet focused crime unit arose in November of 2007. DiSalvo was asked to investigate a complaint received by the Skokie Police Department's Niles West High School liaison regarding a female minor who alleged to have received numerous sexually obscene e-mails from an unknown individual. Investigator DiSalvo was able to trace the e-mail through the IP address and track down the person sending the e-mails. Upon further investigation DiSalvo uncovered this person had created an online persona as "Josh", a 17 year old boy from Naperville for the purpose of engaging in cyber sex with minor females. At "Josh's" direction over 100 child pornographic images were produced. DiSalvo presented the investigation to the Chicago FBI Innocent Images Unit for federal prosecution. "Josh" was charged and plead to two counts of dissemination of child pornography, and on March 29, 2010 was sentenced to 15 years in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Due to Investigator DiSalvo's hard work, investigative skills and determination, the ICAC Unit has seen numerous investigative tips proceed through to criminal prosecution and conviction.

**Criminal Justice Award Four** The Chicago Crime Commission Stars of Distinction Criminal Justice Award is presented to the following individuals in recognition of their outstanding collaboration and investigative techniques leading to the exposure and dismantling of a highly-organized and often violent drug-trafficking street gang in "Operation Bird Cage." Drug Enforcement Administration - Special Agents Carlos Johnson, Leon Lacey; Chicago Police Department - Sergeants Matthew Cline, Dennis O'Conner, Officers Kevin Ardito, Raymond Caballero, Daniel DeLopez, John Dolan, Thomas Harris, Keith Karczewski, Jorge Lopez, Vernon Mitchell, Robert Palenik, James Triantafillo, Kenneth Urbon, Joseph Wagner, Edmund Zablocki; Cook County State's Attorney's Office - Investigator Guillermo Perez; Willowbrook Police Department - Officer Paul Oggerino

In August of 2009, the DEA, the Chicago Police Department's *Gang Investigation Unit*, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and the Willowbrook Police Department joined forces and launched an intensive ten-month long investigation into a criminal organization that sold heroin in a west side community of Chicago as well as to gang leaders in the 11<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> districts. The gang was also responsible for numerous violent crimes including homicide, home invasion and robbery.

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The focus of this investigation was on the activities of the *New Breed* street gang, with the target being its leader – Dana Bostic (nickname “Bird”). The investigation, dubbed “Operation Bird Cage,” began with several agencies making covert purchases of heroin in order to gain intelligence and identify members of Bostic’s narcotics conspiracy. Through surveillance, wire taps, and searches and seizures, officers were able to recover approximately \$250,000 in drug proceeds from a duffle bag, 23 bundles of drugs hidden in the gas tank of a Dodge pick-up, and 8 kilograms of heroin hidden inside a vehicle drive shaft. Agents and Officers were able to identify Bostic’s heroin source of supply, Eddie Valentino, and subsequently identified Valentino’s source of supply, Erik Guevara. The investigation culminated on July 27, 2010, when DEA agents and the Chicago Police arrested Bostic, his top *New Breeds* lieutenants, gang members/drug distributors and his sources of supply, Valentino & Guevara. DEA and CPD also executed seven federal search warrants at residences throughout the Chicagoland area at the time of the arrests, during which officers and agents seized 13 guns, more than \$100,000 in cash and a half ounce of heroin.

**Criminal Justice Award Five** The Chicago Crime Commission Stars of Distinction Criminal Justice Award is presented to the following individuals in recognition of their effective intelligence gathering techniques within the Cook County Jail System and outstanding collaboration with law enforcement agencies leading to successful criminal investigations involving street gangs. Cook County Sheriff’s Department - Criminal Intelligence Unit Director Thomas Kinsella and Superintendent Juan Diaz.

The Cook County Jail is the largest single site county jail in the United States, housing approximately 9,800 men and women. Every day, the jail takes in another 400 people while releasing an almost equal number back onto the streets. It’s estimated that over 90% of those incarcerated are members of criminal street gangs, and these are the inmates that become the focus of the Cook County Sheriff’s Criminal Intelligence Unit or CIU. The CIU, formed in 2008 is based at the Cook County Jail and is made up of officers from arms of the Sheriff’s Police, as well as Chicago Police, Illinois Dept. of Corrections and the US Marshal’s Service. Its primary functions include intelligence gathering, evaluation of actionable intelligence and dissemination of information to local, state and federal law agencies. Investigators work with inmates who have pending criminal cases and are willing to exchange information regarding gang activity for leniency from the courts.

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CIU investigators have testified in both state and federal courts as experts in gang crime investigations and have identified various criminal street gangs to help determine what factions of street gangs individuals belong to. The agency developed hierarchy charts depicting the structure of over 160 criminal gangs operating in the Chicago and suburban area and identifying the leaders and influential members of these criminal organizations. CIU has also created a booklet entitled “Gang Graffiti & Symbols” which provides officers insight into gang communications and shows what gangs are active and which gangs are in conflict in a particular area. The Criminal Intelligence Unit and its investigators have made significant contributions to the crime fighting efforts of numerous law enforcement agencies throughout Cook County and work tirelessly to collect critical information that assists in the deployment of officers who combat criminal gang activity.

**The Mitch Mars Prosecutor Excellence Award** This award is named after the late assistant U.S. Attorney who is credited with convicting some of Chicago’s most notorious organized crime figures in the Operation Family Secrets trial. This year it is presented to the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office Complex Drug Prosecutions Unit - Assistant State’s Attorneys Andrew Bryant, Dan Fahlgren, Kevin Hughes, William Lavelle, Dan Maloney, Kate Moreland, Paul Sabin, Bronwyn Sears, Deborah Shutter, and Jennifer Walker in recognition of their dedication and commitment in their relentless fight against drug-trafficking organizations.

Their tireless work with federal and local law agencies to provide legal and investigative assistance have resulted in the seizure of significant amounts of heroin and cocaine that would have flooded our communities and increased the number of deaths due to drug use and the violence that often accompanies it. “Operation Copperhead” was a six-month long investigation that resulted in the arrest of 12 individuals in October 2009 and the recovery of a total 51 kilograms of cocaine in two seizures – the largest in Cook County’s history. “Operation Dial-a-Rock” was an eight-month long investigation that began in late 2009 and targeted a cocaine distribution network operating out of the northwest suburbs of Cook County. The effort resulted in the arrest of 31 defendants and the seizure of 1500 grams of cocaine, 19 vehicles, and \$50,000. Further investigation resulted in the arrest of two individuals that were later charged with first degree murder in the death of a Hoffman Estates teen in 2008. “Operation Fall of Rome” was an initiative that involved Brandell Sutton, AKA “Money Rome” – a high-ranking member of the Conservative Vice Lords street gang involved in the sale of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin and BZP.

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Undercover officers were able to conduct 35 purchases of drugs and intercepted 28,000 phone calls through state wiretaps leading to the arrests of 26 adults and 2 juveniles who were charged with Criminal Drug Conspiracy. The ASA's from the Unit have been instrumental in the recovery of 82 pounds of Khat (an amphetamine-like stimulant which is moderately addictive) from luggage at O'Hare Airport with an estimated street value is \$36,000, and in a separate investigation, recovered 142 kilograms of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$17,750,000.

**The Chicago Crime Commission Stars of Distinction Paws of Distinction Award** is presented to Illinois State Police Trooper Christopher Owen and his canine partner, Xocko, in recognition of their outstanding dedication and successful seizures and convictions that have prevented dangerous drugs from reaching the streets.

Trooper Christopher Owen and his canine partner, Xocko, have been involved in the seizure of more than \$4 million in United States currency, nearly 6,500 pounds of cannabis, over 25,000 grams of cocaine, 13 illegal weapons and several vehicles containing concealed compartments. When you add in additional narcotic seizures and arrests for possession of crack cocaine, heroin, hashish and methamphetamine, Trooper Owen has been responsible for 300 criminal arrests during the past three years. Trooper Owen has enjoyed a nearly perfect conviction rate which is directly attributed to his thorough knowledge of case law, as well as his incredible interviewing ability and testimony skills. As a leader in the statewide canine program, Christopher shares his knowledge and expertise with other officers and participates in joint criminal patrol details. He has the ability to look beyond the traffic stop for indicators of criminal activity and will walk a fellow officer through a situation from probable cause to criminal arrest. Trooper Owen has regularly performed canine demonstrations and featured Xocko as a community ambassador for law enforcement. He has dedicated significant amounts of time to training canine teams at the ISP Academy and was selected as the 2008 ISP Trooper of the Year, recognizing him for his commitment to Integrity, Service and Pride.

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