



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth - Police Department

2030 North Arlington Avenue, Duluth, MN 55811
218-730-5400 | www.duluthmn.gov | Mike Tusken, Chief of Police



For more information contact Ingrid Hornibrook, Public Information Officer 218-730-5491

DATE: 12/12/2018

SUBJECT: Jessica McCarthy Hired as DPD Opioid Technician

BY: Ingrid Hornibrook

NATURE OF INCIDENT: New Hire

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

[DULUTH, MN] - The Duluth Police Department is proud to announce the department's first-ever Opioid Technician, Jessica McCarthy. The entire country has been affected by the drug epidemic we're experiencing today, and Duluth is not unique. What makes our region unique, however, is the disproportionate share of overdoses and deaths caused by opioid-involved drug overdoses. In St. Louis County, heroin and opioid drug overdose deaths have increased 1250% between 2000 and 2016.

Efforts to reduce the effect opioid abuse has on our region have been successful in bringing to justice individuals and groups who supply heroin and other narcotics from major distribution hubs. The Duluth Police Department's heroin related drug arrests have increased two and a half times, more dealers are being sent to jail than ever before, and drug confiscations have doubled in the past year. This is all thanks to the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crimes Task Force (LSDVCTF), which is commanded by the Duluth Police Department.

In order to improve the efficacy of policing efforts by the LSDVCTF to reduce opioid related damage, however, a broader, more holistic approach is needed. The strategic goal of the LSDVCTF is to not only apprehend opioid related offenses but to save the lives of those who have become addicted and to educate the community about the dangers of opioid use and the downward spiral of addiction. The Opioid Technician position will complement the work of the LSDVCTF by:

- Responding to overdose victims for follow-up with referrals to services
- Providing chemical dependency assessment referrals
- Developing and coordinating outreach and training

Jessica previously worked as a career specialist with SOAR Career Solutions primarily with people who have criminal backgrounds, chemical dependency, mental health diagnosis, and people experiencing homelessness. Previous to that she worked with at-risk youth.

"I have been sober going on 8 years" Jessica said, "I speak about that at community events focusing on education about addiction and recovery regularly. This position and program is an excellent opportunity to reflect the human aspect of addiction and drug use into policing. Hopefully this will work to change the stigma surrounding addiction and shine light on the fact that people overdosing in our community are in need of systems changes, not to be stigmatized as less-than citizens. I am grateful for this opportunity to help others struggling with addiction in the same way I was helped."

Police Chief Tusken said, "the mission of this department is to provide a safe Duluth for all by strengthening relationships and serving in a respectful, caring, and selfless manner. We are proud to have Jessica in this new position. The experience she brings to the department and the task force is an important complement to the innovative work our team is doing to end the cycle of drug addiction. To manage the opioid crisis effectively, we must address education/prevention, enforcement and treatment equally. Ms. McCarthy will allow us to have a dedicated resource who can meet people where they are at and together explore treatment options to return them to health. I see her work as enhancing our response in the areas of education and treatment which will help us become a healthier community."

Mayor Larson said, "I am thrilled to see our Duluth Police Department (DPD) addressing the difficult work it does in creative ways that mean better outcomes for the community it serves. The opioid epidemic this city, region, and country is facing is serious, which is why it has been a top priority for our work to ensure that every Duluthian receives the utmost dignity, respect, and quality of life. I am proud that we are a community that owns its problems, works together to identify solutions, and I am proud that DPD, and this community, has a new resource to ensure that folks get the services they need. We know we cannot arrest our way out of this problem, and this is a big step to supporting those in want and need of treatment and recovery services."

McCarthy began employment with the Duluth Police Department on December 11th, 2018.

###



Jessica McCarthy - Opioid Technician