



# Connect with youth

By Matt Bostrom

## Values

- Provide safety through community policing
- Practice fiscal responsibility
- Collaborate with local law enforcement
- Encourage diversity
- Connect with youth
- Improve service through technology

Connecting with youth is an essential part of building relationships between law enforcement and the community. During work hours, I have had the opportunity to serve as Officer Friendly for kindergarten through third grade students. This is often a child's first contact with a police officer. I have been a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Officer for students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, as well as the Manager of the School Resource Officer program. I am dedicated to the fundamental principles that a great education and positive relationships last a life time.

I have been fortunate to teach in our public and private elementary schools and to build relationships with the secondary schools. Spending so much time with our youth and educators has given me a renewed hope for our future. However, I realize that true community relationships also need to be developed after normal work hours.

I have served as a coach for girls' soccer and softball, as well as boys' soccer, baseball, basketball, and football. I am particularly pleased to be the past president and member of the Hall of Fame for the Upper East Side (UES) football program. UES is an outreach effort to neighborhood boys and girls who enjoy athletics, but who may not have positive adult role models.

While I was president, UES coaches were carefully selected fathers and police officers. In addition, our focus was on the importance of academics, sportsmanship, and personal discipline. The objective was to teach the important life lessons of teamwork, sportsmanship, and fair play.

My desire to connect with youth is also an international one. When I was chair of the Board of Directors at Kids Home International (KHI), I developed a nonprofit strategic plan which can be viewed at <http://www.kidshomeinternational.org/>. KHI intends to reach out to homeless, orphaned, and exploited children through select programs that target under-served communities.

At this time, Kids Home International is focusing its efforts in Kenya to establish a safe and secure place for children with no families, and enabling

them to receive tender care and loving support during their stay. Every child deserves a chance: a chance to live, a chance to love, and to be loved, a chance to learn, and a chance to grow into a happy and productive adult. Unfortunately, too many



children are denied the chance to enjoy these basic human rights.

If elected Sheriff of Ramsey County, I will continue to find ways to connect with youth. Each opportunity, whether it is in my neighborhood or abroad, helps me to become a better husband, father, teacher, coach, and law enforcement officer. ■

