



NEWS RELEASE

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Ventura Police Department to host Coffee with a Cop and join the national movement to raise awareness about mental health

Ventura, Calif. — During National Mental Health Awareness Month, the public is invited to join the Ventura Police Department (VPD) for Coffee with a Cop at Starbucks, located at 4710 Telephone Road. This free event will be held on May 19, 2022, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

The Coffee with a Cop event offers a friendly, informal environment to discuss community concerns, strengthen relationships, and learn about the department's Wellness Program, including time to meet Asher, the VPD's new comfort therapy dog.

"With the extreme emotional demands and regular exposure to trauma many first responders endure, we hope we can play a role in changing the culture and fighting the stigma associated with mental health," said Police Chief Darin Schindler. "The theme for the 2022 Mental Health Awareness Month is "Together for Mental Health," a message that VPD will continue to amplify."

Most contacts with law enforcement happen during emergency or emotional situations. Those situations are not always the most effective times for relationship building and some community members may feel that officers are unapproachable or inaccessible on the street. Coffee with a Cop seeks to break down barriers and allows for a relaxed, one-on-one interaction with the officers who patrol Ventura's neighborhoods.

This year, VPD has partnered with the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), or NAMI, Ventura County to increase awareness and raise funds. Those unable to attend Coffee with a Cop can support "Team Ventura PD" and donate online at www.CityofVentura.ca.gov/MentalHealthAwarenessMonth

For additional information, contact Emily Graves, Community Outreach Specialist with the Ventura Police Department, at egraves@cityofventura.ca.gov.

Background on NAMI Ventura County:

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI Ventura County works to provide emotional support, education, and resources for families affected by mental illness. Their services include crisis outreach, support services, awareness, and advocacy.

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