

Citizens get inside look at real-life police work

BY REID COPLOFF

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People might watch a police show on television and think it represents reality, said Scranton Police Chief David Elliott.

That's why, for the third year, the department is conducting a Citizen's Police Academy, Chief Elliott said — to show interested residents what police do from start to finish, the type of things that don't fit into an hourlong show.

"I just think it's good to give everybody a view of what we do on a daily basis," he said.

On Wednesday, Chief Elliott and Lt. Leonard Namiotka kicked off the free class with an hour-and-a-half overview for the 19 city residents attending.

Over the course of 11 weeks, a number of city officers, along with outside speakers, will teach the class about everything from evidence collection and gangs to court-system proceedings and juvenile law.

Anne Marie Gowarty, of

West Scranton, said she decided to sign up for the class because of crime she saw in her neighborhood, to learn what she could do to help police.

Peg Paris, of West Scranton, also said she took the class to learn how to help police.

"Being born and raised in the city, you hate to see anything but the best for the city," she said. "If there's any way we can be liaisons between the police and the community, why not?"

At the end of the class, Chief Elliott said, the participants get a certificate and, if they choose to, can go on a ride-along with officers. The experience, though, doesn't mean they'll be walking a beat anytime soon. "It does not entitle you to do any kind of enforcement," Chief Elliott said.

The class, held at the University of Scranton, is funded by a state grant, Chief Elliott said.

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