

THE BLACK SHIELD POLICE ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 27, 2018

The Black Shield Police Association
4097 East 131st Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44105
info@theblackshield.org
theblackshield.org
(216) 561-7777

Cleveland, Ohio - (December 27, 2018)

Dear Cleveland,

First, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for supporting The Black Shield Police Association this year; your generosity has allowed the Shield to expand its reach to more community members, families, children, schools and neighboring public safety departments.

In the spirit of the New Year, we want to be clear about our mission; The Black Shield Police Association aims to provide continuous support for officers serving within the Greater Cleveland area, focusing on the unique situations, needs, and problems faced by Black and minority officers. We have members of all races, all genders, all orientations - all of whom, aim to enhance the quality of public safety in Cleveland.

On Saturday, December 22nd, Patrol Officer Matthew Cicero of University Hospital Police Department in Geneva, Ohio posted various disturbing comments on the web page of the Black Shield Police Association. For context, The Shield had recently published a post about Cleveland Division of Police promotions, which featured many BSPA members. The photo highlights officers that are also members of various historically Black Greek fraternities from Divine 9. Patrol Officer Cicero compared a Black fraternity sign to a "White Power" sign, stating that the "*Fucking hypocrisy in CPD is unbelievable.*"

Not only were we appalled by his initial message, but he tagged The Black Shield on Facebook as a “racist” organization, multiple times. His comments were not only disturbing from one Peace Officer to another, it was also disturbing to many members of the public who came to the post to send congratulations and well-wishes to our members and all members of the Division of Police.

The Black Shield Police Association takes accusations of racism very seriously. The Black Shield Police Association was created in 1946 out of de facto segregation in public safety forces. The history of the Shield is one borne of necessity and the inability for Black officers to join mainstream police unions. Our predecessors continued said mission throughout the 1970s and 1980s pushing for greater representation of Black and minority officers alike - frequently on the front lines of gender parity, recruitment, promotions and inclusion in the Division.

Today, the membership of The Black Shield Police Association serves our community proudly; we collected and gave away books and toys to over 300 students at Adlai Stevenson and AJ Rickoff Elementary Schools on December 21st, 2018. We also collaborated with a variety of community groups to provide healthy food options, winter clothing, books and Christmas presents to over 15 families in the Buckeye-Shaker and Central neighborhoods.

The Black Shield does not tolerate any form of racial intimidation, gender or sexual orientation bias. We are a group aiming to serve as guardians of the City of Cleveland with integrity, strength, compassion and collaborative leadership. We hope to capitalize on these new partnerships in 2019 without unnecessary, baseless and ahistorical smears of racism.

Respectfully yours,

Sergeant Vincent Montague, Jr.

President | The Black Shield Police Association

