FOLLOW UP

Public safety surviving families often feel isolated by the department within a short time following the funeral. Below are some ideas to help your survivors feel a part of “the family” for which their officer gave his or her life:

- When plaques/memorabilia are given to the surviving spouse, make the same available to the surviving parents.
- Invite the surviving family to agency activities. They need that continued contact.
- Remember to give duplicate memorabilia to those children from a former marriage. Even though they did not live with the officer-parent, they are still that officer’s children.
- Keep in touch with the family through monthly phone calls the first year, dwindling off to quarterly contact.
- Close co-workers of the deceased officer should drop by the home on a regular basis. When visiting, don’t be afraid to use the deceased officer’s name or ask, “How are you doing since Jim’s death?” if something needs to be done around their home, get it done.
- Always observe the officer’s death date with a short note to the family and/or flowers on the grave.
- **All** holidays are traumatic events for the family the first year. Show your support during these times.
- Remembrance books may be presented to the family. They can include anecdotes, pictures and newspaper articles of incidences the fallen officer worked. These remembrance books become treasures, especially if the children were too young to remember their parent when he or she was killed.
- Don’t make idle promises to the surviving family. It hurts children more to be promised a day with co-workers and be stood up rather than never to have been invited at all. Set a definite time, plan and date – **and follow through!**

Maintain contact for as long as the family wants support. The family will let you know when they are ready to move on with their lives without assistance from the department.