



# Kronenwetter Police Department

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## LETTER OF RECOGNITION

Officer: Officer Luis Lopes Serrao

Type of Incident: Possession with Intent to Deliver, KP12-293

Submitted By: Lieutenant Terry McHugh

### SYNOPSIS OF EVENT

On Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at approximately 10:49 pm, Officer Lopes heard dispatch broadcast an attempt to locate on a vehicle that was reported to be driving erratically. After locating the vehicle, he observed traffic violations and conducted a traffic stop. As Officer Lopes approached the vehicle, he observed a young male in the back seat who was passed out. Furthermore, he noted that both the driver and the front seat occupant appeared to be under the influence of a drug or other intoxicant.

Due to his concerns for the well being of the subject in the back seat, Officer Lopes attempted to wake up the unresponsive male but was unable to do so. Consequently, he called for EMS and the young man was transported to a local hospital, where he was subsequently placed on life support due to a drug overdose. Officer Lopes ended up arresting the driver for OWI (drug related) and the passenger for possession of marijuana and paraphernalia. Ultimately, with the assistance of the Marathon County Special Investigations Unit, additional charges were brought, including a felony charge of possession with intent for the individual responsible for supplying some of the drugs used in the overdose.

This case was extremely complex, as it crossed several jurisdictional lines, and it involved a tremendous amount of follow up and coordination from Officer Lopes. I find that Officer Lopes' actions were outstanding for many reasons. First, Officer Lopes was working second shift on the night of the incident and was supposed to be done with work at 11:00 pm. When the ATL was dispatched, there was no reporting party following the vehicle and with it being so close to the end of his shift, Officer Lopes could have easily decided not to make any effort to locate this vehicle.

Ethics is often described as "doing the right thing when nobody else is looking" and that night, nobody else *was* looking. Without a caller actively following the vehicle who is willing to make a formal statement, these ATL's are essentially information only and absolutely nobody would have known if Officer Lopes decided to head home in his take home squad car. Instead, he made what turned out to be a life saving decision.

Fortunately, the young man who overdosed was eventually taken off life support and survived. I later spoke to this young man's parents and his mother told me that the doctor who took care of her son told her that, in his professional opinion, her son would have died had it not been for police intervention. As it turned out, the "friends" who the subject were with that night later stated that at the time of the traffic stop, they were headed to their apartment to sleep for the night: They clearly had no plans to take their friend to a hospital or call an ambulance.

Needless to say, the parents of this young man were very thankful that Officer Lopes made the decision that he did. I find his decisions and actions on the night of the incident to be extraordinary: Not only did he save a human life, but through his investigation, he removed an impaired driver from the road and his traffic stop was the springboard for a larger investigation that held several parties criminally responsible. The actions of Officer Lopes reflect great credit upon himself, the Kronenwetter Police Department, and law enforcement as a whole.

*Daniel L. Joling*  
Chief of Police

