

PROUD TU SERVE

THE NEWSLETTER OF TEMPLE UNIVERSITY'S DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Chief's Corner

It was an honor and a privilege to stand before Temple police officers, dispatchers, security officers and administration as we came together to recognize the outstanding dedication and unwavering commitment of the men and women who serve and protect the Temple community at our annual Awards Ceremony. The day was one of celebration of service, of excellence, and of the profound impact each of you has on our campus and beyond. We are truly grateful to the families of everyone in Temple Public Safety. Your support, understanding, and sacrifices often go unnoticed, but none of the work we do here would be possible without your support and love. Our security officers, dispatchers and police officers embody the core value of service. They ensure the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors, and your work is an essential part of the vibrant and thriving environment that Temple University is known for. Together, as one team, we are building a safer future for Temple University, and I am proud to stand with all of you as we continue that journey.

-Jennifer Griffin, Chief of Police and Vice President for Public Safety



Chief Griffin with Police Officer of the Year Christopher Peralta.

TUDPS's Newly Hired 2025 Employees

The Awards Ceremony began by recognizing employees who were hired in our department in 2025: Deputy Police Chief Guy Sava; Captains James Hennigan and Terry King; Detective Thomas Boyd; Police Officers Nicholas DiBerardo, Christopher Feder, Connor Fennell, Ian Proctor, Kevin Santana, William Tull, Daniel White and Cheyne Geverd; Dispatchers Thomas Leakan and Herukhuti Dorman; and Payroll Coordinator Dylanie O'Gorman. Welcome to all!



Temple University Public Safety's Awards Ceremony was held March 4, 2026. Award-recipients from the ceremony gathered here.

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Police Officer of the Year

Temple University Police Officer Christopher Peralta has gone above and beyond while investigating numerous crimes, leading to the apprehension and arrests of individuals suspected of serious offenses, such as robbery, burglary, and theft of motor vehicles. He also serves as a Field Training Officer, providing training and coaching to new officers who are either beginning their careers in law enforcement or joining Temple from other departments. Even when he is not actively training new officers, Officer Peralta constantly mentors others and serves as a steady presence during difficult situations. He has made meaningful connections to the community and often volunteers to take part in community outreach initiatives. His unwavering commitment to excellence and service sets a standard for all officers to follow. It is an honor to award Police Officer of the Year to Officer Christopher Peralta.



Security Officer of the Year

Professional security is often about attitude, commitment, dedication and the inner desire to get the job done and provide a positive outcome. Security Officer Gabrielle Degrandi has consistently proved exceptional dedication to these principles. Whether it is his unwavering vigilance during assignments, his swift and calm responses for aid, or his dedication to fostering a safe environment for all employees and visitors, Officer Degrandi goes beyond his duty. He does not just accept his assignments; he ensures our university community understands that we will help you. Officer Degrandi sets a standard for professionalism that inspires his peers, reminding us of all that is rooted in diligence and care. Officer Degrandi, thank you for your unwavering commitment, your courage, and your service. You are a valued asset to our team and our organization.



Dispatcher Officer of the Year

For 18 years, Dispatcher Natasha Rivera-Overton has been the steady, reassuring voice on the other end of the line at our police department, a voice of calm in moments of chaos, and a constant source of strength for both our officers and our community. Her positive attitude is contagious. No matter how busy the shift or how challenging the call is, she shows up with professionalism, patience, and a willingness to help. She is always ready to support her fellow dispatchers, assist her supervisors, and step in wherever she's needed. Because of her, partnerships are stronger and responses are smoother. What truly makes her special is the kindness and dedication she brings to work every single day. She is a true professional who makes our department better every day.



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Temple Public Safety donates thousands of books to North Philadelphia school

Temple University Police Officer Leroy Wimberly replaced his blue service cap with a tall, floppy red and white 'Dr. Seuss hat' as he gathered other Temple police officers, football players and students from Temple's Health Sciences Center together before they donated thousands of books to Mary McLeod Bethune School.

"We're about to do a lot of heavy lifting to get these books inside. But together, the work becomes a lot lighter because of this partnership," Wimberly told the crowd. "Just like when you were in elementary school, today is about making sure the young students inside are prepared and excited for Read Across America Week."

Melissa Dankwa, a first-year medical student at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine, jumped at the opportunity to give back.

"I think today is about community. It's important that we give back to the community beyond medicine," Dankwa said.

She was among a dozen students from Katz, the Kornberg School of Dentistry and the School of Pharmacy—which are all located at the Health Sciences Center—who united with Temple Police and football. Together, they formed a human chain—stretching from the school parking lot to inside the Bethune front door—to carry more than 3,500 books inside.

"Forming that human chain was symbolic, because it represents partnership and togetherness," said Amro Khair, a third-year student at Kornberg. "We're all connected when it comes to supporting our North Philadelphia neighbors, especially these children."

Doreen Nelson, a first-year medical student at Katz, said it was fun to learn outside of the classroom.

"Today teaches us about service, and that's what being a doctor is, first and foremost, is a servant," she said.

The books are intended for pre-K through eighth-grade students and were secured through generous donations from BookSmiles and Toys for Tots of Burlington County.

"When young students see Temple students and police officers reading to them, it helps break down barriers," said Chief of Police and Vice President for Public Safety Jennifer Griffin. "They begin to see us not just in our roles, but as people who believe in them and are invested in their success. We hope those moments leave a lasting impression and inspire them to see their own potential."



To ensure young students are prepared for Read Across America Week, police officers from Temple Public Safety and students from the Health Sciences Center joined together with Temple football to donate 3,500 books to Mary McLeod Bethune School.