



# CITY OF CLEARWATER

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POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## OPERATION GRADUATE: GIVING AT-RISK CHILDREN AN ADVANTAGE AND A SECOND CHANCE

**Clearwater, Fla.** – The Clearwater Police Department, United Way of Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg College and their partners are launching a new innovative initiative that encourages on-time graduation and provides exposure to college while breaking the cycle of juvenile recidivism. Operation Graduate targets at-risk children who are high school juniors in good academic standing and juveniles between the ages of 15 to 18 who are currently on probation.

National studies and statistics indicate a direct correlation to graduation rates and crime rates. The Clearwater Police Department strives to reduce crime and recognizes that education plays a role in crime reduction, so it partnered with several academic and community-based organizations to create Operation Graduate.

“Our main focus is intervention,” said Clearwater Police Chief Anthony Holloway. “This will provide some of the children with a taste of college life and encourage them to further their education. For others, this is a rare opportunity to get out of ‘the game’ and get back into the classroom. It’s a win for the students and a win for us.”

“Helping youth achieve their potential is a top priority at United Way,” said Diana Baker, President and CEO of United Way of Tampa Bay. “We’re committed to helping young people stay on the path to graduation because it helps them build better lives. That’s good for them and good for our community.”

The program will kick off with a ceremony open to the public and the media.

Event: **Operation Graduate Kickoff Ceremony**  
Date: **June 2, 2011**  
Time: **4:00 – 5:00 p.m.**  
Location: **North Greenwood Police Substation**  
**1310 N. Martin Luther King Junior Avenue**  
**Clearwater, Fla.**





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Participants include high school juniors, who will be enrolled in a three-credit hour course at St. Petersburg College. The course will focus on writing resumes, creating career portfolios and fine-tuning life and work skills. These students will also have the opportunity to obtain part-time employment for the summer with partnering businesses. They will receive a summer bus pass to ensure they have transportation to and from class, as well as a summer pass to City of Clearwater recreation facilities.

A second group of juveniles will attend online classes based at the North Greenwood Police Substation as part of their probation. This will allow them to make up high school credits, putting them back on track for on-time graduation. These students will also be involved in a job readiness program that provides them with financial education and life skills so they can have a second chance to become successful and contributing members of society.

A total of 40 students are participating in Operation Graduate this summer. Each student will be matched with a mentor.

Operation Graduate seeks to increase the number of youth with on-time graduation, introduce high school students to college and work experiences, help develop life skills and provide students and their families with service referrals and interventions. Partners include the Clearwater Police Department, United Way of Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg College, Clearwater Campus, Pinellas County Schools, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Clearwater Parks and Recreation and the Upper Pinellas Ministerial Alliance.

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