



## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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## **Responding to COVID-19: Bristol's First Responders Keeping It Positive While Continuing to Serve the Community**

(BRISTOL, CT: April 24, 2020) – The City of Bristol's first responders are no strangers to handling stress on the job. During the current health crisis stress levels have risen exponentially with the added responsibility of keeping themselves along with the community safe.

Currently the Fire Houses are closed to the public and transfers and overtime are restricted between certain crews. The Police Department has also separated its workforce into different shifts to create distancing. "The goal is to always have a segment of the workforce available if another group becomes infected," stated Police Chief Brian Gould.

In order to counter some of the feelings of isolation among children who do not fully understand the complexity of COVID-19, both the Bristol Fire Department and Police Department have been participating in 'drive-by parties' for children's birthdays. The procession takes place at a pre-determined time on the child's birthday allowing them to be able to celebrate while staying safe.

"The community have been strong supporters of the Fire Department, and in return, it is our pleasure to brighten a child's day on their birthday which means so much during these stay home, stay safe times," stated Bristol Fire Chief Mark Flynn.

"These parades really make kids and families smile," stated Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu. "And luckily, to date we have only had one disruption due to a fire call, but the fire truck took a ride by later in the day." The Mayor also noted that "this is a service that is only going to be available while the stay home – stay safe measures are in place."

Jack Ferraro's grandson, Oliver, turned 4 on Saturday. "He was so excited, as were we," Ferraro said. "Oliver had his Fire outfit on, and his little sister had a police costume on for the occasion. Bristol is truly a city of All Heart. I had tears of joy in my eyes watching our Fire and Police Department do this. We are so grateful for our heroes, who are saving lives, and so much more during this unprecedented time."

Visit the Bristol Fire Department's Facebook page to view videos and photos:  
<https://www.facebook.com/bristolctfire>

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