

# NEWS RELEASE

## Winter Park Police Department

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**Winter Park, FL 32789**

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Winter Park Police Launch New Program for Drivers with Autism**

Winter Park, FL – The Winter Park Police Department is proud to launch the Blue Envelope Program, a new initiative aimed at improving interaction between law enforcement and individuals who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) during a motor vehicle stop.

The Blue Envelope Program initiative, endorsed by the University of Central Florida (UCF) Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (UCF-CARD), is based around a simple tool – a blue envelope. Upon receiving the envelope, the driver then places the documentation that would be requested by a police officer during a traffic stop in the envelope and stores the envelope in their vehicle. The outside of the envelope clearly identifies that the driver has been diagnosed with ASD, alerting the officer that some accommodations for the individual may be helpful.

The concept is aimed at relieving some of the driver's pressure or stress during the stop. While many people experience some stress during a traffic stop, those with ASD may find the experience overwhelming. Simple awareness may help facilitate a quick and stress-free interaction for both driver and officer. Through enhanced training, officers have learned that those with ASD may shut down in such situations, display repetitive mannerisms or sounds, perhaps even appear uncooperative.

Blue envelopes are now available at the Winter Park Police Department located at 500 N. Virginia Avenue, Winter Park. Individuals may also pick up their envelope through UCF-CARD or related provider.

While the program was inspired by a similar initiative in Connecticut, it was established in the City of Winter Park by a lieutenant whose loved one has been diagnosed with ASD.

The blue envelope holds the following information:

- Copy of driver's license
- Vehicle registration
- Vehicle insurance
- Emergency contact

The outside of the envelope:

- Winter Park Police Department's official insignia
- Notation that driver has ASD diagnosis
- Basic reminders (instructions) for driver

Link to video: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1Es4Uo8tGD/>

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