

Located on the campus of Raritan Valley Community College is the Somerset County Police Academy with an outstanding 16 year reputation for providing high quality training and education. The 6-month basic training program for police recruits received national acclaim in 2001 when it was featured as a premier basic training facility in the country when Court Television, with a viewing audience of over 60 million, produced a 1 hour reality show called the "The Elite." Producers spent 6 months at the academy illustrating to viewers the comprehensive nature of training relative to academy certification to become a police officer.

As part of the training process recruits are required to complete a Capstone Project which is a comprehensive written initiative to address issues that face the public at large. For the purposes of the Homeland Security Grant, Academy Director Dr. Richard Celeste has mandated that all projects will have Homeland Security as their central theme. Eleven teams of four recruits will work with members of the community called "Community Facilitators" to develop a variety of "Capstone Projects" during the current basic training program which is January – July 2004. A sampling of the project ideas include:

1. The Development of an appropriate Law Enforcement Response regarding Death Notifications during times when loss of life occurs.

Community Facilitator: Reverend Virginia Samuel
Drew University

2. Awareness Program for Law Enforcement Officers "Understanding Mental Health Concerns" in a Post 9/11 Society.

Community Facilitator: Mr. Paul Mehaffey, M.A./M.S.
Behavioral Health Specialist

3. Protecting the Civil Rights of all citizens and the Profiling Concerns in a Post 9/11 Society.

Community Facilitator: Mr. Dan Puntillo
Director of Middle Earth
Social Service Agency

These are three of eleven projects that will be developed in a variety of ways such as a lesson plan, flyer, strategic plan, handbook, or other tangible resource that will benefit the law enforcement community or citizens in better understanding the broad spectrum of issues brought forward by the very nature of Homeland Security.

Dr. Richard Celeste, Deputy Chief (ret.), Exec. Dir.
Raritan Valley Criminal Justice Institute
Academy Director