



CONTACT:  
Barbara Beck, 215.209.3076 (o), 610-246-9167 (c)  
[bbeck@sage-communications.com](mailto:bbeck@sage-communications.com)

## **DEPUTY POLICE COMMISSIONER NAMED STONELEIGH FOUNDATION FELLOW**

*Veteran police officer will work to expand efforts to stem school-to-prison pipeline*

PHILADELPHIA, PA—(October 28, 2015)—The [Stoneleigh Foundation](#) today announced the selection of Philadelphia Deputy Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel as the first Diana A. Millner Youth Justice Fellow. The Fellowship will allow Bethel to spend the next three years expanding the successful pre-arrest diversion program in the School District of Philadelphia for students with no histories of juvenile justice involvement.

“Kevin Bethel has been a true leader in advancing policies and practices that help keep kids in school and out of prison,” said Ronnie L. Bloom, executive director of the Stoneleigh Foundation. “His long track record in law enforcement; expertise in juvenile justice; and relationships with local, state, and national stakeholders will allow him to further expand this already successful model.”

Stoneleigh was founded in 2006 by the late John and Chara Haas to improve the life outcomes of Greater Philadelphia’s most vulnerable youth. It targets young people impacted by violence as well as those who are in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems—or are at risk of becoming involved in those systems. It meets its mission through fellowship awards that support accomplished individuals working to improve these systems through research, policy change, or practice improvement.

Bethel will retire from the Philadelphia Police Department and begin the Fellowship in January 2016. The Fellowship was named in memory of [Diana A. Millner](#), a senior Stoneleigh program officer who was instrumental in shaping the Foundation’s agenda around juvenile justice and youth violence prevention. She passed away this year at the age of 40.

As a Stoneleigh Fellow, Bethel will continue his work on the existing Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program as an advisor to the Police Department on juvenile issues. He will continue to work with cross-system implementation partners to refine and expand the program beyond students to include first-time youth offenders who have committed theft offenses. Within the first year of the Diversion Program, the number of arrests dropped by 54 percent and there were 1,061 fewer behavioral incidents in School District of Philadelphia schools. In addition, he will work with state-level officials to encourage broader implementation of the school diversion program and with federal partners to raise awareness about the model nationally.

Bethel’s work will be housed at the Juvenile Justice Research and Reform Lab within the Department of Psychology at Drexel University. Dr. Naomi Goldstein, who is also a Stoneleigh Fellow, and her colleagues at the Lab have supported Bethel’s work on the program since its inception. The Lab is currently conducting an evaluation funded by the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the program’s effectiveness and its impact across the District, within individual schools, and for individual youth.

“As a law enforcement officer, it has always saddened me to see young people get in trouble with the law, especially when early intervention at critical points can lead to a more productive path,” said Deputy Commissioner Bethel. “The police department’s youth diversion program and the broader juvenile justice work we’ll do through the Stoneleigh Fellowship will help fulfill our responsibility to provide young people with strong pathways to the future.”

Bethel has served in the Philadelphia Police Department for nearly 29 years. In his current role as Deputy Police Commissioner, he oversees patrol operations. Bethel has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the Police Commissioner’s Crime Strategy for the City, and he has been recognized at the local, state, and national levels as a leader in community policing and trauma-informed care.

“I am honored to have worked as a Philadelphia Police Officer and am equally honored to be the first Diana A. Millner Youth Justice Fellow,” said Bethel.

Throughout his career, Bethel has been committed to improving the lives of vulnerable young people in Philadelphia. He currently serves on numerous national, statewide, and local committees and advisory boards focused on juvenile justice reform.

“Deputy Commissioner Bethel has led the creation of a life-altering program that gives children a chance to get the support they need, rather than a trip to jail in what often can become a first step along a school-to-prison pipeline,” said Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey. “The program’s early successes reflect just the beginnings of the positive influence it can have on law enforcement and social service agencies as well as youth across the country.”

Commissioner Ramsey added, “Beyond his outstanding work with young people, Deputy Commissioner Bethel has done immeasurable work to improve the services the Department provides to all Philadelphians. I’ve worked with thousands of people at various agencies across the country, and his commitment to quality of service and openness to innovation is virtually unparalleled. It has been a joy working with him; he has been a colleague and will always be a friend.”

First Deputy Commissioner Richard Ross added that “Deputy Commissioner Bethel’s commitment to improving the lives of young people in Philadelphia is underscored by the potential impact of this program. Although his departure is a loss for the police department, I look forward to working with him as a partner in ongoing efforts to improve the quality of our services to young people in Philadelphia.”

#### **About the Police School Diversion Program**

In May 2014, the Philadelphia Police Department -- in collaboration with major youth-serving agencies, including the School District of Philadelphia and the Department of Human Services -- initiated the Police School Diversion Program to reduce the number of juvenile arrests in Philadelphia, improve school retention, and prevent the collateral consequences of justice system involvement. The program targets students who have committed first-time, low-level delinquent acts on or about school premises by diverting them from arrest to Intensive Prevention Services provided to them and their families. For more information, visit <http://www.stoneleighfoundation.org/sites/default/files/SchoolDiversionProgram-Spreads.pdf>.

#### **About the Stoneleigh Foundation**

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