



FRANKLIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Dallas Baldwin

MEDIA RELATIONS | PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 11, 2024

Operation Bridge: Beyond Arrests, Transforming Lives

(Columbus, OH) In collaboration with state and local agencies, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office just wrapped up "Operation BRIDGE." The initiative targets the intersection of drugs and crime. The night operation, held on Tuesday, October 8th, focused on executing drug trafficking and arrest warrants, addressing human trafficking, and disrupting drug distribution networks.

But this initiative goes beyond enforcement. Operation BRIDGE prioritized connecting individuals to resources, offering immediate assistance for those struggling with addiction and mental health issues.

"Operation BRIDGE reflects our commitment to both law enforcement and community support. While we hold individuals accountable, we also want to provide the help needed to break cycles of addiction and mental health struggles," said Franklin County Sheriff Dallas Baldwin.

This year, Franklin County Coroner Nathaniel Overmire joined the operation, witnessing first-hand the critical efforts being made. "It's crucial we intervene early, so these individuals don't end up in my office," the coroner stated. He rode alongside law enforcement for an on-the-ground look at the challenges and issues faced on the streets.

During Operation BRIDGE, an on-site location was established to provide immediate assistance to the women who found themselves involved in a life of prostitution. The resources included drug and alcohol addiction support, mental health counseling and faith-based comfort.

"This comprehensive approach to the substance use crisis has proven successful," said Cynthia Peterman, Executive Director of the Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center. "Every county that has held an Operation BRIDGE saturation event has seen a marked decrease in overdoses for several weeks afterwards. That is proof that lives are being saved."

On the second day, Wednesday, October 9th, the operation expanded into "**Operation Unity**," with teams focusing on the southwest corner of the county in response to community concerns. This phase targeted drug crimes, robberies, and traffic violations, with a specific emphasis on apprehending violent criminals and recovering illicit substances and materials.

Both operations are designed to not only enforce the law but also provide lasting benefits to the community we serve. While arrests were made, the initiatives also emphasized offering immediate access to resources, helping them address addiction and mental health challenges.



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Stats

- 64 Individuals provided treatment options
- 13 Individuals set up appointments with treatment providers
- 5 Individuals immediately connected with treatment providers
- 20 Individuals connected to community resources (foodbank, employment, housing, etc)
- 7 Felony arrests
- 25 Misdemeanor drug-related citations
- 4 Firearms seized

Highlights

- 2 Individuals immediately connected to treatment were actively using controlled substances while pregnant
- 1 Individual connected with treatment was a prior U.S. Service member
- 1 Individual was arrested for Involuntary Manslaughter stemming from an overdose death
- 1 Pill press used to manufacture counterfeit prescription medication was seized

Participating Agencies:

- (Southeast Healthcare RREACT) • Southeast Healthcare Vocational Services • Judah Tabernacle / Care Connection Columbus • Victorious Living / Gates of HOPE • Freedom Recovery • Hope Valley Recovery • House of Hope • Community Medical Services • Overcomers on the Move • Salvation Army) and law enforcement entities (Ohio Department of Public Safety – Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center and Ohio State Highway Patrol, • Madison County Sheriff's Office • Upper Arlington Police Department) participated in a two-day community outreach event known as BRIDGE (Bridging Recovery Interdiction Data Gathering Enforcement).

Link to video and photos

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ojoeta8de1tdv7uvwt7aq/AEQQK3vrCZgtkQIT54G0W4U?rlkey=5qv24e_gf0crmf4ndgkaxy59ed&st=3g4bp266&dl=0