

Georgia's Police Brass Learn From Israel's Finest

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Symbolic of their profession saving lives, 18, chai (life), is the number of public law enforcement leaders from Georgia who returned in late June from a public safety leadership training program in Israel.

Assistant DeKalb Police Chief Sonya Porter headed the delegation. "It was an awesome experience and I'm thankful I got to go," Porter said of her first visit to the country. One of the most valuable lessons she said she learned was how the entire Israeli police force, trained uniformly throughout the country, uses technology to improve communication between the stations.

While she doesn't think Georgia and the United States will ever switch to a national police force, she believes technology can be used more effectively to improve interaction between community police services.

For example, DeKalb and Atlanta police, also represented on the trip, can share information to protect themselves better from terrorism, Porter said.

Like she learned from Israel, she said she also would try harder to recruit from other religions that might not be represented well in the police force. "Our diversity is by races," Porter said. "We have to have diversity of religions to connect more to the community."

The 18 Georgia police chiefs, sheriffs, and public safety commissioners and officials —along with a senior corporate security manager—returned after two weeks of training with the country's top policing execs.

The Georgia group was part of a 21-member delegation of senior law enforcement officials from Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee who participated in the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange's 26th annual peer-to-peer training program in partnership with Israel.

While there, they studied the latest advances in community policing, counterterrorism, emergency management, advanced technologies and homeland security policies.

GILEE Founding Director Robbie Friedmann said from Israel that among the highlights of this year's trip were: seeing how Israel's police are increasingly recruiting from the country's Muslim Arab population; learning about community policing in AKKO, near Haifa, where four religions are concentrated in a small area; and visiting the 9/11 Living



Assistant DeKalb Police Chief **Sonya Porter** receives a gift from Israeli Police Commissioner **Roni Alsheikh**.

Memorial to World Trade Center victims in Jerusalem.

"Our GILEE delegates have returned with new ways of developing, collaborating on and using police and intelligence strategies to minimize the production of crime," said Friedmann, who is also professor emeritus at Georgia State University.

This year's peer-to-peer training emphasized community policing, the textbook definition of which Friedmann developed while a Georgia State professor.

"Community policing is a policy and a strategy aimed at achieving more effective and efficient crime control, reduced fear of crime, improved quality of life, improved police services and police legitimacy, through a proactive reliance on community resources that seeks to change crime-causing conditions. It assumes a need for greater accountability of police, greater public share in decision-making and greater concern for civil rights and liberties," said Friedmann.

Rome Police Chief Denise Downer-McKinney was among those who participated in GILEE's 19th delegation to Israel and recently shared her experience, "The phenomenal GILEE program makes us think outside the box, understand the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships and partnerships.

"It is critical that we continue to work diligently to forge and build public and private partnerships in our local communities and throughout Georgia. We must continue to develop and strengthen these relationships, along with our local business and community partners, to ensure our children and communities are safe, and that we have the tools to make this happen."

Friedmann said, "In GILEE's 26 years, our partnership with the world's top pub-

The Southeast delegation poses in front of the Israel Police Headquarters.



The Southeast police delegation witnesses a medical drill at Rambam Health Care Campus.

lic safety experts has returned more than 720 public safety officials home with the knowledge and skills they need to keep our communities safer.

"Among the program's many benefits, our delegates return home with a better understanding of effective ways to address modern policing challenges and increased communications and collaboration among different agencies, external organizations and the greater community."

Founded in 1992, GILEE is a Georgia homeland security program. The organization works continuously to improve public safety by enhancing inter-agency

cooperation, partnerships and professional educational training among the world's top law enforcement communities, most recently in Israel and Hungary.

To date, it has offered more than 200 special briefings to more than 32,000 law enforcement officers, corporate security personnel and community leaders. GILEE has carried out more than 450 programs and produced more than 1,500 graduates.

GILEE is a research unit within Georgia State's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Learn more about GILEE at www.gilee.org. ■