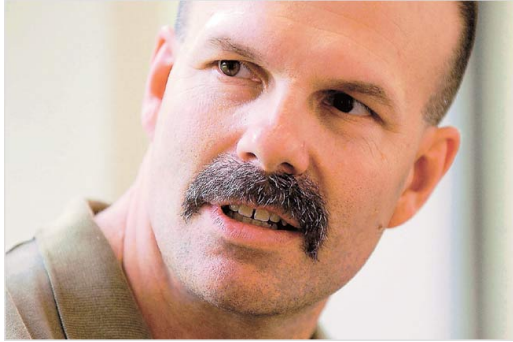


# "Take up the Shield": Support for heroes



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## Inspirational message handed out

A group of Tulsa police officers led by Capt. Travis Yates has given an inspirational book to nearly every law enforcement officer in the county.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Tony Miano wrote an inspirational book, "Take Up the Shield."



The "Take Up the Shield" project has distributed 2,000 books by that title to police officers and sheriff's deputies, most of them in the Tulsa area. Another 1,000 books are being prepared for shipment.

"It's absolutely the most important thing I've ever done in law enforcement," Yates said. "It's humbling to be a part of it."

"We're getting a lot of great feedback. It's been incredible. It's touched a lot of people's lives."

Yates said the program is being duplicated in several other states.

"It's an ongoing program. We're targeting the whole country," he said.

The idea for the project came up about two years ago when Yates invited author and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Tony Miano to speak at several events in Tulsa, including a law enforcement appreciation service at Faith Fellowship Church in Broken Arrow.

After hearing Miano speak, some Tulsa police officers thought it would be great to get the book into the hands of as many officers as possible, Yates said.

"It's kind of snowballed," he said.

Brad Toliver, father of Tulsa police Officer Will Toliver, donated 1,000 books, more than enough for all of the Tulsa Police Department officers and reserve officers.

First Baptist Church in Broken Arrow donated 250 books to the Tulsa County Sheriff's Department deputies.

Nine departments in Tulsa County have received books.

Yates said the program has been a way to build avenues of communication between churches and businesses and the law enforcement community.

Miano, who wrote "Take Up the Shield" two years ago, was a deputy for 20 years with the 15,000-member Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the largest sheriff's department in the world.

He retired this year and continues to work as a volunteer chaplain with the department.

Miano said the book, published by Genesis Publishing Group of Bartlesville, is part testimony and part teaching.

"I take the pieces of law enforcement equipment, analogize that with the spiritual armor in Ephesians 6:10-17, and share my personal testimony about how I came to faith in Christ," he said.

"And I tell war stories."

Miano said he has encountered no resistance in distributing the book to police officers.

"We respect that we're bringing an openly Christian book into secular organizations," he said.

"This is not a covert operation. We don't show up unannounced.

"We develop a good liaison with someone in the department and make sure they're supportive of the project.

"We make sure officers who get the book want the book," he said.

"Our goal is to bless the members of the law enforcement community."

The first of several churches to get involved in the project was Broadway Baptist in Sand Springs.

The Rev. Ken Choate said the church provided copies of the book to all of the officers and detectives on the Sand Springs Police Department.

"If you give people a Bible, it might sit on the shelf," he said.

"This book is a great way to help these guys understand that they're not alone out there, that through faith in Jesus Christ, he is their armor."

Choate said the book helps police officers relate faith in Christ to their life situations, and shows them how to accept Christ.

Sand Springs Police Chief Dan Bradley said he handed out the books at a department briefing, and has not seen them laying around the office, so he believes his 34 officers kept them.

He said the book is appropriate because police work is a calling, and because police officers are public servants.

Bradley said he is distributing copies of the book to federal courthouse guards downtown and to the Mannford Police Department.

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