



## Legislation Text

---

File #: 19-805, Version: 1

---

**TO:** Mayor and Commissioners  
**FROM:** Chief Javaro Sims, Police Department  
**THROUGH:** Neal de Jesus, Interim City Manager  
**DATE:** August 20, 2019

PRESENTATION OF THE FLORIDA POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION 2018 LIFESAVING AWARD  
TO SERGEANTS MICHAEL DEBREE AND BRIAN GRIFFITH

**Recommended Action:**

Recognition of Sergeants Michael Debree and Brian Griffith for receiving the Florida Police Chiefs Association 2018 Lifesaving Award for the lifesaving act they performed on May 19, 2018.

**Background:**

The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) is the third largest state police chiefs association in the United States, composed of more than 900 of the state's top law enforcement executives. The Association was originally organized in 1952 to promote legislation that would enhance public security by providing superior police protection for the residents of Florida and its many visitors. Its role has since expanded to provide better communication, education, and training for the various police and security agencies in the State of Florida. Annually, the Florida Police Chiefs Association presents a Lifesaving Award for on-duty or off-duty police actions that occurred the previous calendar year. Nominations for this award may be made for an exceptional lifesaving act that places the nominee's life in jeopardy. A rescue via CPR or AED does not qualify unless the nominee's life has been placed in jeopardy. All sworn, full-time Florida Police Officers, below the rank of Chief, of the FPCA member agencies are eligible. An agency can only nominate one officer per nomination period or a team if they worked together and were involved in the same incident or project.

On Tuesday, July 30, 2019, the FPCA notified the Delray Beach Police Department of their decision to award the 2018 Lifesaving Award to Sergeants Michael Debree and Brian Griffith.

On May 19, 2018 officers responded to a host of frantic calls reporting a young "deranged" female was outside on a second-story townhouse ledge with her two very small children. Callers advised the female appeared to be impaired on narcotics, was exhibiting bizarre behavior and her children were scared and crying. It was evident the children were in immediate danger. Sergeants Griffith and DeBree arrived on scene and took immediate action. They were able to gain access to the home and went out onto the second-floor ledge themselves. Sergeant DeBree quickly maneuvered around the hysterical female to get near the children. He grasped the arms of each child and led them across the narrow ledge to another bedroom window where other officers were waiting to take them safely inside. He was able to guide the children to safety, while assuring them that they were going to be okay. During the time Sergeant DeBree was attending to the children, Sergeant Griffith was out on the ledge trying to calm and gain the trust of the female. She was delusional and did not believe he was a police officer. She was convinced he was going to hurt her. There was very little room for

Sergeant Griffith to take any type of action. He calmly spoke to her and waited until he had an opportunity to act. When he felt comfortable, he quickly grabbed the female and pulled her into him to keep her from falling. Sergeant Griffith remained in this position until Sergeant DeBree got the children to safety and returned to assist him. The sergeants were able to secure the female and get her safely off the ledge without injury. Sergeants DeBree and Griffith, without hesitation, placed themselves in an extremely dangerous situation to safely remove two small children (ages 1 and 2) and their mother who was obviously suffering from some type of mental crisis, from a second story narrow ledge. They worked together during this critical incident utilizing their crisis management skills, tactical experience and critical thinking abilities. This selfless act of courage and compassion avoided what could have been an unspeakable tragedy. Sergeants DeBree and Griffith are both very much deserving of the FPCA Lifesaving Award.

In an effort to bring recognition closer to the recipient's jurisdiction he/she serves, the FPCA requested that the award is presented to Sergeants Michael Debree and Brian Griffith at a City Commission meeting, The City Commission will hear directly from a FPCA Board Member about the exceptional work accomplished by Sergeants Debree and Griffith. The FPCA will also provide a press release that the City of Delray Beach can use for publications and/or media.

**City Attorney Review:**

N/A

**Funding Source/Financial Impact:**

N/A

**Timing of Request:**

N/A