

Sgt. Christie Wood RE: death notices:

Probably the saddest experience for law enforcement is to do a death notification to a loved one of a deceased. It is a role we fill because we are community caretakers. We need to help people through the most difficult experience they will ever face. I have held mothers in my arms as they experience the agony and devastation of loss, and comforted elderly men who need to be informed their brother has died. It sticks with you for days, and I always call my child when my task is complete just so I can hear his voice. Most officers I know have experienced this.

So imagine my surprise when we asked a police department in CA to do a death notification for us last night and they said they do not do those. They offered to stand by the mother and hand the phone to one of our detectives and have him tell her. That would have been better than nothing but they did not even perform that service. Instead they stuck a business card in her front door that instructed her to call our detective at CDAPD and then left. Our detective got a call from a frantic mother and he had no choice but to deliver the awful news by phone. She had no one with her at the time. He made sure she called a family member to come to her aid and then called her back again later to check on her. I understand budget cuts and the impacts of less staff but I do not see any of the agencies in our region ever adopting that kind of policy. It is frankly heartless.