Stamford Police Officer Recognized for Performance

William Garay was a night-shift patrol officer when he received orders to catch an armed criminal loose in Stamford last year. What happened next, he will remember for the rest of his life.

After Garay started the chase, the gunman turned around to face him, pointed his weapon straight ahead and pulled the trigger — but it didn't go off. As Garay hit the year anniversary of the March 28 incident, the Stamford police officer says he feels blessed he was able to walk away with his life.

“It’s not something that happens very often,” he said. “I didn't grab hold of the reality of the situation until a day or so later and I got a lot of support from my co-workers and family.”

The Police Commissioners of Connecticut Association took notice of his performance that night and granted Garay its Distinguished Officer Award this year. Garay was humbled by the nomination, but says he was just doing his job.

“I was lucky more than anything else," he said. "It goes to show how dangerous it is to be a cop and a lot of people aren't as lucky.”

Garay has been an officer with the Stamford Police Department for almost five years. On the 10-year anniversary of September 11, he was awarded the Blue Mass Award by the Diocese of Bridgeport. The award is given to one police officer, one firefighter and one first responder each year.

Garay is always looking to improve his abilities as a police officer, which is why he is currently enrolled in the University of Bridgeport's IDEAL program (an accelerated adult program.) He is scheduled to graduate this May with a degree in human services and plans to earn his master’s degree after that.

In addition to his academic goals, Garay hopes to be a role model for his 10 year-old son.

“I'm trying to show him that life throws you challenges but go to school and pursue what you can,” he said.

by Christine Loughran

Guests at the event hosted by the Police Commissioners of Connecticut Association to recognize William Garay for his achievements.

Photo Credit: Christine Loughran