

Regional Youth Police Academy explores world of policing

Young filmmakers to capture story of cadets

By: [Mary Genson](#), [Mary Beth Almond](#) | C&G Newspapers | Published May 8, 2024

OAKLAND COUNTY — Teens can get an inside look at law enforcement next month with the Regional Youth Police Academy, which is being offered alongside a new documentary youth workshop that will film the process.

The police departments in Bloomfield Township, Birmingham, Rochester and Auburn Hills have joined forces again this year to host the second annual Regional Youth Police Academy in June.

“We go through all different topics of law enforcement. ... We focus on things like communication, traffic stops, investigations, and show them some of our equipment,” said Officer Nick Soley of the Bloomfield Township Police Department. “We try to make it a fun environment for them to learn and explore our career.”

Open to Oakland County students ages 14-18, the free academy will take place 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. June 24-27 at the Bloomfield Township Training Center, 4315 Andover Road in Bloomfield Hills. The program will cover many topics of law enforcement — including a hands-on look at investigations, criminal law, procedures, CPR certification, traffic stops, firearm safety and scenario training. All training is provided by officers from Bloomfield Township, Birmingham, Rochester and Auburn Hills.

Soley said the CPR certification is one of the most valuable parts of RYA.

“That is something that I think is important because, one, it gets more people out in the public that are certified in this skill that can save a life, and two, it’s an immediate career-builder for these kids,” Soley said.

Rochester Police Chief George Rouhib said the program fosters connections.

“It’s a great way for us to make a connection with youth, because there has been that stigma for years, that younger people are afraid of the police. We just want to teach them, engage with them and show them what we do,” said Rouhib. “The goal is to get them interested in a law enforcement career.”

The academy is free to attend. Lunch will be provided daily, and participants will receive an academy T-shirt. Space is limited to 30 students, and applications are due before May 20. Soley said those who apply must possess good character and a good work ethic, demonstrate their honesty and trustworthiness, be in good legal standing, and authorize their respective police department and its agents to complete a thorough background check on them.

Birmingham Police Chief Scott Grewe said any youth, especially any who are considering a career in law enforcement, would be a great fit for this program.

“Even if it’s a youth that maybe isn’t desiring a career in that path but wants to know more about it and get an inside look at what police officers do on a daily basis, it is great for that, and it’s great for someone that does have interest or (is) considering it to get a firsthand experience of what it can be like,” Grewe said.

Applications can be emailed to CRO@bloomfieldtwp.org, or mailed or hand delivered to Officer Nick Soley, Bloomfield Township Police Department, 4200 Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Township, MI 48303, before the May 20 deadline.

The students who are accepted — along with at least one parent — will be required to attend an informational meeting at 6:30 p.m. June 11 in the Bloomfield Township Training Center. A Regional Youth Police Academy graduation ceremony will be held June 27 in Bloomfield Township.

This year, a media training component has been added to the program through a partnership with Bloomfield Community Television. BCTV is offering a separate and free documentary workshop that will allow nine selected applicants to tell the stories of Regional Youth Police Academy cadets. LeZotte said priority will be given to students in the BCTV coverage area — which includes Beverly Hills, Birmingham, Bingham Farms, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township and Franklin — as well as those in Auburn Hills and Rochester. BCTV staff will teach the nine young filmmakers interview techniques, pre-production strategies, hands-on camera training and editing the same week as the academy. The final short video created by the students will be shown at the Regional Youth Police Academy graduation ceremony. Applications for the BCTV Documentary Youth Workshop — which are due May 20 — may be picked up from the Bloomfield Township Cable Studio, 4190 Dublin Road, or by emailing cable_dept@bloomfieldtwp.org.

BCTV Cable and Community Relations Director Carrie LeZotte said the relationship between media and the police in the U.S. is fractured.

“While we have excellent relationships locally, national stories and coverage impact the morale of public safety professionals everywhere. My hope is that programs like this one can help build mutual trust and respect between media and police, both complicated and stressful professions,” LeZotte said in a statement.

For more information on the academy, contact Bloomfield Township Police Officer Nick Soley at (248) 433-7724 or email CRO@Bloomfieldtwp.org.

For more information on the Documentary Youth Workshop, call Director of Cable and Community Relations Carrie LeZotte at (248) 433-7791.