

Cops And Barbers



What does a police officer and a barber have in common? Believe it or not – a lot.

What *is* Cops and Barbers?

The idea is simple. Barber shops are typically known as places where people come to have honest conversations about real-life issues. Having an officer actively participate in these discussions gives them an opportunity to hear community members' opinions and concerns and take those ideas back to their department. Local barbers recognize that having an officer present in their shop not only can help their clients have their voices heard, but it also creates an environment for conversation and opportunities to bridge the gap when it comes to police-community relationships.

The nationally-recognized program was highlighted by the White House as part of a progress report on police-community relations since the establishment of the national 21st Century Policing Taskforce.



How it Started

In 2016, the Greenville Police Department and local barbers launched a “Cops and Barbers” initiative, modeled after a pilot program in Charlotte. Cops and Barbers – an idea developed during a routine haircut – quickly became a powerful community engagement tool for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD). The concept of Cops and Barbers was first created by former CMPD police chief Rodney Monroe and his barber after several high-profile shootings of black men by law enforcement in Charlotte.



Photo by Joe Pellegrino / The Daily Reflector

Cops & Barbers – Greenville

GPD Officer Richie Williams is spearheading Cops and Barbers – Greenville. Williams is a 16-year veteran of the Greenville Police Department with extensive experience in the Major Crimes Unit investigating homicides. Most recently, he worked as a school resource officer. He is passionate about working with the community. Williams collaborates with area barbers to coordinate meetings at their shops. The meetings enable members of the Greenville community to learn about their rights and the appropriate manner to handle themselves when coming in contact with police. Additionally, citizens are informed of the appropriate manner with which officers must conduct themselves when engaging with the public.



Giving Back

In addition to hosting regular meetings and facilitating tough discussions, Cops and Barbers – Greenville is also extremely engaged when it comes to community outreach. Annual Cops and Barbers – Greenville programs include a back-to-school backpack giveaway, free haircuts, a Thanksgiving turkey giveaway, and high school prom sponsorships.

How to Get Involved

Those who are interested in participating are encouraged to contact Officer Williams at (252) 916-1261 or via email at rlwilliams@greenvillenc.gov.



Greenville

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