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COPS Office and Not in Our Town (NIOT) Release Film To Help Law Enforcement and Students Work Together to Build Trust in their Schools and Communities

“Moses Robinson: School Guardian” presents a portrait of a School Resource Officer working to bridge the gap between students and police officers in Rochester, NY

Oakland, Calif. — Today the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and Not In Our Town (NIOT) released *“Moses Robinson: School Guardian,”* as part of the series of films focused on helping law enforcement and students work together on improving relationships and building trust.

“Moses Robinson: School Guardian,” (00:09:50) follows an officer through his day in the Rochester schools and shows how he listens to and mentors students and works with his colleagues to promote positive youth development and create a culture based on understanding and mutual respect.

Moses Robinson, a 28-year veteran of the Rochester Police Department, says that his community policing background has opened many doors of trust, “I believe that we have the ability to bring community stakeholders together and come up with an action plan for change. Working on this issue will provide strength and respect that enable the groups to continue to work for solutions that affect not just race, but also community violence as well.”

In a statement about the goals of the School Resource program, the Department of Justice released this statement, *“Interactions with [School Resource Officer] SROs should be a positive experience for young people, and it is critical that we continue to foster the resulting relationships of mutual respect and understanding. We’ve heard countless stories from across the country of SROs developing one-on-one relationships with students that led to life-long positive impacts that changed the trajectory of their lives for the better.”*

At the same time, DOJ/COPS addressed the concerns about placing police officers in schools, *“We have seen that there is the potential for SROs to have a negative impact on students through unnecessary arrests and improper involvement in routine school discipline matters. If SROs are not properly hired, trained, evaluated, and integrated into the school community—or if they are given responsibilities more appropriately carried out by educators— negative outcomes, including violations of students’ civil rights, can and have occurred. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us, including law enforcement and education leaders, to do everything we can to directly address these concerns and reduce the potential for problems.”*

Through the *Working Together for Safe, Inclusive Communities* project, DVDs of the film are available free of charge to law enforcement agencies, civic leaders, community groups, schools, national organizations, and others for public screenings and discussions, town hall meetings, internal trainings, conference workshops, and other activities. The DVD can be ordered online at www.NIOT.org/cops/manhattanbeach or through the COPS Resource Center.

The COPS Office, headed by Director Ronald Davis, is a federal agency responsible for advancing community policing nationwide. Since 1995, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to advance community policing, including grants awarded to more than 13,000 state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to fund the hiring and redeployment of approximately 129,000 officers and provide a variety of knowledge resource products including publications, training and technical assistance.

Developed in 1995 by The Working Group, an Oakland, California-based nonprofit strategic media company, Not In Our Town is a movement to stop hate, address bullying, and build safe, inclusive communities for all. NIOT films, new media, and organizing tools help local leaders build vibrant, diverse cities and towns, where everyone can participate. Learn more at www.NIOT.org.