



# ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

## NEWS RELEASE

*Brendan F. Kelly - Director*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 4, 2024

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### **ILLINOIS STATE POLICE CELEBRATES YOUTH CAMP SUCCESS STORIES**

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois State Police (ISP) is preparing for the 2024 Team Illinois Youth Police Camp (TIYPC) summer camp series across the state. The TIYPCs are highly structured week-long residency camps held in Elsah, Romeoville, and Carbondale each year. The camps are based upon a military model and are geared for teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17. Attendees, or Cadets, learn military drills and participate in physical fitness exercises. Cadets also attend classroom instruction on leadership development, substance abuse resistance, team building principles, and other life enhancing skills. TIYPCs promote positive rapport and interactions between law enforcement and the attendees. Graduates of the youth camps have experienced great success, and many have credited their camp experiences as pivotal points in reaching their future goals.

The first TIYPC originated in 2006 in the Metro East and was held in Granite City. In 2009, the location of the camp was moved to Alton, and then in 2013 it was moved to its current location, Principia College in Elsah. Since its inception, 879 cadets have graduated from the Metro East TIYPC. The 2024 Metro East TIYPC will start in July and applications for the camp are being accepted through June 14. If you know a teen who would benefit from attending the Metro East TIYPC, please contact Ms. Sandra Voytas at [Sandra.Voytas@illinois.gov](mailto:Sandra.Voytas@illinois.gov).

“The ISP youth camp definitely influenced my future, because at the age of 8-years-old, I knew that I wanted to become a police officer or join the US Army,” said Swansea Police Officer and Metro East TIYPC graduate Marquis Jones. “With the help of the camp and counselors, I was able to do both. I have been a police officer for eight years and I have been serving for 13 years as a Military Police Noncommissioned Officer in the Illinois Army National Guard. After completion of the TIYPC, I was able to keep in contact with the troopers for mentoring and advice along my journey to becoming a police officer.”



**Officer Marquis Jones**

After many years of successful participation from teens across the state who attended the Metro East TIYPC, there was a desire to expand the program to help youth in other areas of the state succeed. ISP started a second camp for teenagers in the northern portion of the state. The Northern

TIYPC was originally held at Olivet Nazarene University, but Lewis University in Romeoville is the camp's current home.

“In 2017, I went to the TIYPC at the age of 14,” said Metro East TIYPC graduate MacKenzie McGee. “At that time in life, I was struggling with a lot of things. The path that I was on was going to get me in a lot of trouble, so I went to the camp. This camp impacted the way I saw my future. This camp taught me structure and discipline and from learning these things and more, I ended up choosing the military as my career. I left for the marine corps at 18 on November 15, 2021. When I look back at it, honestly, if it wasn't for the camp teaching me these things and turning my life around, I wouldn't be where I am today. I recently got out of the military but my next goal in life is to become a cop. I want to be able to help kids and see them succeed in life. This camp helped inspire me to be who I am today.”



MacKenzie McGee

In 2023, ISP, in partnership with the Carbondale Police Department, established the Southern TIYPC located at Southern Illinois University, building on the success of the other camps and providing a safe, structured environment where teens develop positive self-esteem and leadership skills.

“I cannot advocate enough for the TIYPC-C,” stated Rene Voss, mother of Southern TIYPC graduate Gary Stone. “It made so many positive changes in my son. He came home with self-respect, and I feel it gave him a strong sense of direction for his future. When he talks about his experience at the camp, he always gets a smile on his face, he stands a little taller and his confidence has made so many gains. The best part about the camp is Gary has connected with so many positive mentors that have stayed in contact with him all year long. He has developed lifelong relationships with these local law enforcement officers and ISP Troopers.”



Gary Stone and Southern TIYPC Coordinator Master Sergeant Joey Watson

Both the Northern and Southern TIYPCs are held in June. The application window for those two camps have closed for 2024, but be sure to follow ISP [Troop 3](#), [Troop 8](#), [Troop 10](#), and [statewide](#) social media feeds and look for the opportunity to enroll in next year's camps beginning in early 2025. TIYPCs are made possible through public and private donations, and partnerships with local law enforcement, civic organizations, state agencies, and the Illinois National Guard. The cost to attend the camp is dependent on location of attendance.

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