

Remarks by Cambridge Police Deputy Superintendent Christine Elow during Memorial Vigil for George Floyd on 6-1-20

My Name is Christine Elow, I was raised in the City of Cambridge and educated in the Cambridge Public School system, I am a mother of twin 14-year-old African American boys. I say this so you can see that I am worried too.

The death of George Floyd was shocking and absolutely could have been prevented. He has a family. He's a human being.

There are systemic problems in policing and the criminal justice system. We, as a profession, should never treat anyone the way Floyd, Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor and others have been treated.

In law enforcement, we must serve with compassion and care for all. We must constantly critique, analyze how we do things and always work hard to improve.

After a controversial arrest involving our police department took place over 10 years ago, we took a deep look in the mirror and recognized areas where we needed to improve. Over that time, we have worked extremely hard to build trust and open communication lines with the most vulnerable in Cambridge, including our communities of Color.

As examples, we recently have engaged in intense training on procedural justice and legitimacy, Fair and impartial policing, Historical Injustice, ICAT, trauma training, policing the teenage brain, and so much more. We committed 25% of our resources to outreach.

I say this to stress that CPD (Cambridge Police Department) is working hard to develop best practices in policing. Arrest as a last resort, increased training on mental health and substance abuse and also incorporating non-sworn professionals' psychologist, social workers, domestic violence advocates, recovery coaches, working with ROCA for our most at risk youth.

Are we perfect? No. But are we committed to setting the standard of what policing should look like, positive interactions between our youth and our police officers; we are in the schools, community, youth centers; we are coaches, mentors, and advocates for the most vulnerable in our community.

We as a city and police department need our young people, first as voices to give feedback on how we are doing, and next for our future. The way I decided I could make change was to first be a police officer and change through interactions and next as a leader in our police department to guide policy changes in addition to being in the community... the community I grew up in and care deeply about.

The City of Cambridge, including your police department, is keenly aware of the systemic injustices and are working hard every day to ensure that every member of our community are treated with respect and dignity. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make change a reality not only here in Cambridge, but across the country.