



## WALLA WALLA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

December 15, 2012

I, like you, am sickened by yesterday's events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. I want everyone to know that the victims, their families, and all who are affected by such a horrific event are in the conversations, thoughts, and prayers of our Sheriff's Office and myself. Events such as yesterday bring home the realities of this world and strengthen our resolve as a law enforcement agency to protect and serve our own wonderful community here in Walla Walla County.

The reality of this event is that we are ALL affected in some way. In one way or another, we are all different today than we were yesterday. The important thing is that we absolutely ensure that something good comes from such a terrible incident. I suggest that in order to do this, we must start by not worrying so much about the small, insignificant stuff and start taking the time to appreciate one another and our community a bit more. We are so very blessed here in Walla Walla County.

We must never take for granted what we have and we must resolve to protect the sanctity of life, to protect children – protect our communities! Sadly, I believe the days of just ignoring reality and saying, "that's not my problem" or "that doesn't happen here" need to become a thing of the past.

Although an active shooter event is highly unlikely, we must nevertheless prepare ourselves to RUN, HIDE, FIGHT. Please view and share the Run, Hide, Fight video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0>. This video contains information which could save your life or the life of a loved one somewhere. Additionally, a more important responsibly is for us to reduce the potential for active shooter events in the first place.

As public safety officials we have done a good job preparing to respond, but this is reactive – it is after the fact, and alone is not the best way to approach to this problem. In addition to constantly training and preparing for responding to such a tragedy, we must also work toward prevention, interruption, and mitigation.

Ironically, a good friend of mine who is a Police Chief in Texas recently spent a week at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. Much of this letter is from our shared correspondence after yesterday's tragic event. He shared with me that he spent this week at FLETC with about 30 professionals from across the nation; who, representing public safety, public health, corporate America, civil right interests, and academia; participated in a National Summit on Multiple Casualty Shootings. This summit was sponsored by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, the Department of Homeland Security, Federal

Law Enforcement Training Center, and the Johns Hopkins University, School of Education, Division of Public Safety Leadership.

Out of this initial three-day summit emerged a series of recommendations that will create the foundation for future work allowing us to move forward in a way that will create a more holistic and collaborative approach, focusing first on prevention/interruption/mitigation, and then on response. This collective body of knowledge will continue to expand and work toward the creation of promising practices for the larger law enforcement community here in the United States. While this work takes place, I remain steadfast that our immediate obligation continues to be here, at home in Walla Walla County – and now! Therefore, with this emphasis in mind, we must work collectively and cooperatively to:

Identify suspicious activity;

Notify an appropriate authority (e.g. police, school, clergy, etc.) of anything suspicious, out of place, and simply not right. These authorities must then work collaboratively for appropriate resolve;

Evaluate the information by conducting an appropriate risk assessment;

Act in a responsible manner that prevents, interrupts, or mitigates violence in our community.

And if need be, Run, Hide, Fight. Again, please review the Run, Hide, Fight, Public Service Announcement video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0>.

Additionally, I ask that we work as a team. Many times, we in law enforcement are only as good as the information we receive from the public we serve. Please notify us if you observe suspicious activity.

- **Emergency: Call 9-1-1**
- Non-Emergency Service: Call Dispatch at (509) 527-3265.
- For questions or concerns: Call the Sheriff's Office at (509) 524-5400 and you will be forwarded to the appropriate person to help you and answer your questions.

Please do not assume that we know of something going on; you may be the first person to let us know. By making us aware, you give us the opportunity to evaluate the information and take appropriate action. For example, we were able to solve numerous local burglaries recently, make appropriate arrests, and recover literally hundreds and hundreds of items of stolen property partially because of information we received from citizens and the great work of the men and women of the Walla Walla Police Department and the Walla Walla Sheriff's Office. These arrests and search warrants are great examples of how we can protect our community when we work together as a team. I have talked to many folks who saw something or had information, but later shared with me that they didn't call because it "feels funny to call the cops for nothing" or "it doesn't matter anyways." Please don't feel that way. If you have a legitimate concern, call us. That's what we're here for.

In closing, I respectfully submit that we as a community, and as a nation, must not allow incidents such as the Colorado Movie Theater shooting, Oregon Mall shooting, Las Vegas shooting, Connecticut School shooting, and others paralyze us with fear or panic. Instead, we must use them to increase our awareness and to strengthen our resolve to keep our community safe by working together. I assure you that the men and women of the Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office are committed to protecting and serving our community, but it is not our job alone – we must work together as a community who cares! From what I've seen, I know we do.

Sheriff John Turner