



## THE BLUE FAMILY TREE

Newsletter article December, 2019

It's December. We've made it through another year. It's time to shop and spend our hard-earned dollars on our loved ones. Soon enough we'll be getting up early to the pitter patter of the smallest feet in our households prancing back and forth outside our bedroom door, and little voices "yell whispering" a small debate about whether or not to wake us up. Yep. A precious time indeed. A time we can all remember from various stages of our own lives. We've been the prancing child filled to the brim with Christmas excitement. We've been the teenager who lost sleep the night before wondering if we got that one thing we've been dying to get, but way too cool to tip our hand that we care. That young couple just starting their lives together who calmly sip their cocoa at 11am and enjoy the peaceful serenity that is Christmas morning. We have been the new parent when all we wanted for Christmas was a day to sleep in, but Santa overlooked us again this year. Some have been the parent with grown children who have their own Christmas now, and we get to watch proudly from the couch, after making the grandchildren wait of course. What goes around comes around...right?

Whatever adult stage of Christmas you find yourself in this year, it's also a time we reflect on the year we are leaving behind. We reminisce a bit about the good times, and the bad. We feel a sort of closure with friends we lost, like we're going through some sort of time door and leaving them on the other side. We say a final, "Goodbye, wish you were here, see you when my journey is through" and we turn our focus to the challenges of the year to come. But we never really forget... nor should we. Our friends have brought us valuable lessons. In their final moments, their greatest gift to us was a continued knowledge of their demise and our abilities to learn and improve ourselves from it. They gave everything so that we may live and continue to protect the flock.

Often you hear about our "blue family." Quick snippet posts on social media, maybe a popular song on the radio that supports blue. You might hear it whispered about in the halls of your own department. But being a family means more than saying we are. Being a family takes conscious effort. You need to take time for special events. You have to plan family

vacations and set savings aside for the unexpected. You have to go shopping in December and invite the in-laws to town for Christmas morning. Being a family does not just happen because you have something in common. You have to care and show you care about the others in your family. All too often I hear from cops around the nation who medically retired against their will, and never heard from a co-worker again. I cannot think of anything more sad than to get hurt, lose your livelihood, your lifestyle, and your contact with your family in one fell swoop. "Where is family now?" they ask me, founder of The Blue Family Tree.

As this Christmas marches past us and the new year storms in, think about your family. You are part of the largest family in the world and should be damn proud. Let's not be the family member that sits back and allows others to pick up the slack. Participate. Take care of your brothers and sisters in blue, not just in the good times, but when they are down as well. Call an old co-worker who retired and share what's new on the streets with them. Give to all the families of those fallen brothers and sisters that went before us by giving ten dollars a month to The Blue Family Tree. You can give easy monthly donations that you never have to think about again once set up, and you will support your blue family that might otherwise be left to fade away. We all need to receive connection, and we all need to provide connection. This is your opportunity to be a good family member. TBFT is listed with Kroger and Amazon Smiles as a charity you can give your spending dollars to as well. If you have other endeavors that earn you an income great enough that you are seeking charitable tax breaks, we can accept one time donations on our website as well. Finally, if you're the type of person that is so moved by the mission of The Blue Family Tree, that giving monthly just doesn't feel like enough, please reach out to us with an email and we will find a way to use your generous heart to support families of fallen peace officers.

Go enjoy the holiday with those that matter most to you, and bless you and your families this Christmas. May we never have to provide a gift to them from The Blue Family Tree, but should we need to, may our coffers be plentiful. We will see YOU in 2020.