Since our last newsletter, much has happened with the nation and the agency. Nationally, communities were awakened by the sounds of protest in response to the officer-involved deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Gardner, and other unarmed black men. A stronger movement for body-worn cameras was activated and supported by all as the panacea to the question, “What’s wrong with policing?” In response to the community’s demands for understanding and changes in policing, the ACRB increased its outreach engagement efforts to be involved in the conversations. The ACRB released a study on body-worn cameras (BWC) to bring additional attention to concerns (privacy, redaction, access, etc.) and the need for community involvement in the development of policy and the need for strict enforcement of the (BWC) policy. Continuing with its effort to serve the citizens of Atlanta beyond the walls of City Hall, the agency conducted public meetings in the community – Adamsville Recreation Center and Peachtree Hills Recreation Center. Citizens had the opportunity to see the board in action, hear and participate in the discussion involving police complaints. We look forward to more meetings in the community. Please be sure to get a copy of the 2014 Annual Report, 2014 Community Outreach Report, BWC Focus Group Report, and ACRB BWC Study. The reports can all be found on the ACRB website, www.acrbgov.org.

Sweeping Ordinance Changes Proposed for ACRB

The most sweeping ordinance changes in the history of the Atlanta Citizen Review Board were submitted to the ACRB Board and proposed by its Executive Director during the February 2015 Community Board Meeting and Elections held at the Peachtree Hills Recreation Center in Buckhead. Currently, ACRB has jurisdiction to investigate cases of false arrest, false imprisonment, harassment, excessive force and abusive language by sworn officers of the Atlanta Police Department and Atlanta Department of Corrections. But if approved by Atlanta City Council, the ordinance would allow anonymous complaints and include allegations of discrimination, abuse of authority, lack of service and/or discourteous behavior.

In an exclusive interview with WXIA 11Alive News Reporter/Anchor Blayne Alexander, Executive Director Lee Reid said from 2012 to 2014, the Board had to dismiss nearly 30 percent of all complaints filed because the Board did not have the authority to investigate them. “It doesn’t allow us to fully provide our services.”

2015 Board Members
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Investigator, Senior
Brian Fleming
Investigator, Senior
Myola Smith
Project Manager
Charles Curry
Outreach Specialist
In the fall of 2014, ACRB began making regular appearances, meeting/greeting shoppers and taking misconduct complaints, at Mall West End.

For newly-hired veteran Investigator Brian Fleming, it was a valuable learning experience.

“One of the goals that’s been set forth at ACRB is to get the word out to the community that we are here. Doing the outreach at West End Mall, it solidified that. It showed us that we have to get the word out because many of the people that we encountered did not know that we are here and did not know what we do,” explained Fleming.

“Also, it gave us a chance to tell the community don’t just complain about the bad stuff, but also, talk about the good stuff. If you see an officer going out of his or her way to help somebody else in the community, report that. Let us know. We want to continue to be a voice for the community, a fair voice and an unbiased voice as well.”

Thanks to Mall West End Manager Cletta Rowden.

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ACRB Outreach Day at Mall West End

Investigator Brian Fleming taking complaints at Mall West End during ACRB Outreach Day

“...WE HAVE TO GET THE WORD OUT BECAUSE MANY OF THE PEOPLE THAT WE ENCOUNTERED DID NOT KNOW THAT WE ARE HERE AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT WE DO.”

Know Your Rights Training

From ex-offenders at the Greater Atlanta Urban League to seniors at the Emma Darnell Multi-Use Center (right), the ACRB Know Your Rights Training has reached hundreds of enthusiastic trainees eager to know exactly what to do when encountering a sworn officer of the Atlanta Police Department or Department of Corrections.

Concerns About Cops at Annual Youth Day Conference

ACRB was there as children convened for their annual Youth Day Conference during the Dr. MLK, Jr. Holiday Weekend in Atlanta.

Their tough questions to the ACRB Executive Director Lee Reid (left) and members of the Fulton County Police Department during a panel discussion displayed a keen awareness of and serious concern about news accounts of violence and death involving citizens and law enforcement.

For their efforts, they were rewarded with lunch and goody bags that included ACRB Activity Books.

Youngsters pose tough questions to ACRB and Fulton County Sheriffs.
Michael Morrison said “Candidly, I didn't think that anything would come out of it. I thought it was just another grievance board that would do nothing. But they actually did an investigation, more than was expected...”

Morrison went online and filed a complaint at acrbgov.org after encountering an Atlanta police officer who pulled him over for speeding. "I had an officer who was sweating profusely, yelling at me and swearing over something that didn't require that kind of demeanor. I said, 'Fine, let's get this over with so I can get on my way.' That's when he told me to get out of the car. I was sitting there with my wife with yelling and swearing and really crazy behavior. I'm wondering why I was getting out of the car over something that didn't require that. I wasn't pulled over for D.U.I."

Morrison registered complaints online with ACRB and the Atlanta Police Department (APD). He got no response from APD.

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Donnesha Jackson, an expectant mother, just weeks away from giving birth, is pulled over in her neighborhood for allegedly running a stop sign. She is cursed out, harassed and threatened. It is suggested that she was cruising to score in a high drug crime district. "He called me over...two blocks away from the sign and treated me nasty, like a crumb on the bottom of the earth."

Tense and upset, Jackson, a SW Atlanta resident, lodged a police complaint but nothing happened. She felt ignored. Jackson said "I didn't want a lawyer, I wanted my voice to be heard." She is convinced the episode caused her to go into early labor. She was listening to the radio one day when she discovered she had another option. She filed a complaint with ACRB.

(continued on page 4)

Is it true that a pedestrian may be stopped by police in a parking lot if the person is not coming from or going to a car on the lot? That is what Allan King was told when he was stopped and questioned by Atlanta Police Department (APD) officers as he walked through a Lenox Square Mall parking lot one evening.

The 42 year old comedy promoter contends he was illegally stopped as he was walking to the mall. He filed a complaint with ACRB alleging false imprisonment. For King, the incident was no joke. All parties were subpoenaed to testify. The investigation sustained King's complaint and found the unsupervised rookie officers violated his Fourth Amendment rights.

ACRB recommended Police Chief George Turner to reprimand the three officers and provide department-wide training to help officers better understand Fourth Amendment law.
The keyword in the Atlanta Citizen Review Board is CITIZEN. The agency is only as effective as the level of Citizen involvement. This is why ACRB urges all Citizens to regularly monitor, question and support its work. This is why ACRB urges all Citizens to know where your elected officials stand on civilian oversight of police and corrections. This is why it is so important for Citizens to be registered and vote. This is why Citizens need to join and be active in community groups. Get involved in Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs). Attend Public Safety meetings and Atlanta City Council meetings. Fill the chambers to capacity when Council votes to fund issues that matter to Citizens like you. Thank you, Citizens of Atlanta, for your continued support.

Testimonials: “When I think of ACRB... (from page 3)

Michael Morrison

But “ACRB ruled in my favor. It’s investigation found out the officer lied about the onboard camera not working,” said Morrison. ACRB determined the officer, assigned to a special, anti-crime team, was supposed to keep his camera on at all times while on duty. He claimed his camera was not working when he stopped Morrison, but it was turned off. "The Review Board found that to be very suspect and thought he was being dishonest."

Donnesha Jackson

The officer was once part of the discretionary Red Dog unit that began in 1987 as a ground-level anti-drug task force. Atlanta Police Chief George Turner denied that he ended the 29-member team in 2011 as a response to allegations the unit used excessive force. Mayor Kasim Reed authorized disbanding Red Dog when the City of Atlanta had to settle civil rights claims for more than $1 million following the unit’s involvement in the botched and infamous violent Atlanta Eagle raid in December 2009.

Allan King

Jackson said police began paying attention to her case after the ACRB made a determination of misconduct, Donnesha says the process was quick and easy. "First, I called, then registered with ACRB and did an interview. Four or five days later, I got a letter. That’s when the police decided to investigate, about a month later. Judicial action was taken against him...and he was found guilty. Thanks

While praising the ACRB report, Allan King also advises anyone who encounters officers of the law to remain calm. “…I still kept my cool. I answered their questions...Five to ten, fifteen minutes of your time is better than spending, you know, unnecessary extra time in jail."