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SFPD Officers to Take San Francisco Teens to Africa “Operation Genesis” Enables City Students to Explore Their Heritage 19-028

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On Thursday, March 21st 2019, nine high school students from San Francisco's Bayview and Western Addition communities and four San Francisco Police Department officers will embark on a nine-day trip to Accra, Ghana. The Operation Genesis program aims to instill a sense of self-discovery in the teenagers as they learn the history of their African ancestors, meet local youth and learn about the differences between life in Africa and the United States.

Officer Jason Johnson- an 11-year veteran of the San Francisco Police Department assigned to the Community Engagement Division- created Operation Genesis in hopes of making education a pivotal point in the lives of youth. Students have spent weeks studying Ghana culture and raising money for the trip. As in previous years, the students will bring books and gently-used clothing for their younger counterparts in Ghana. The President of Ghana has designated 2019 as the “Year of Return,” in which people of African descent are encouraged to journey back to the country to explore their heritage.

This is the sixth year of a program that previous participants have described as a life-changing experience. Documentaries on the 2014-2018 Operation Genesis trips to Ghana can be viewed on SFPD's YouTube website and on SFGovTV. This year's trip can be followed via Twitter at @op_genesis. More information about Operation Genesis can be found at www.operationgenesisinc.org.

There will be a media availability at 11:45 AM on Thursday, March 21st at Mission Station (3401 17th Street) with Officer Johnson and the young travelers as they say goodbye to their parents before heading to San Francisco International Airport (SFO). The travelers begin their trip at 2 PM in the lobby of the International Terminal Building at SFO.

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