



East Ridge Police Department

MEDIA RELEASE

The East Ridge Police Department (ERPD) is launching a free new program to help officers better serve the needs of people with disabilities.

"Take Me Home" is designed to assist law enforcement in emergencies when they interact with people with disabilities like Autism or Dementia. These individuals may be unable to speak, properly identify themselves, or may act in ways that could be misinterpreted by first responders.

"Autistic people are much more likely to wander away and get injured or die. The Take Me Home program helps officers identify people who cannot communicate who they are or where they live. It ultimately saves lives. We strongly urge people to participate." said Dave Buck, Executive Director, Chattanooga Autism Center.

The system includes a current picture, demographic information, and caregiver contacts. If a police officer encounters someone in the system, they can locate their records and use the information to help that person.

Chief Stan Allen learned of the program from the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police.

If officers run across someone nonverbal who can't tell them their name, they can input that information into the software or onto the website and it will pull up a list of everyone who meets that criterion.

The database is voluntary, confidential and free. Enrollment is easy - caregivers can enroll family members, friends, or clients with special needs online at <https://www.takemehometn.org/> or on the City of East Ridge website.