

2019 EASTER EGG HUNT



Meet Your Police: Officers Hanson and Walter *continued from front page*

Officer Hanson gained some law enforcement experience as a member of the St. Helens Police Reserves as a volunteer and also worked for the Columbia County Sheriff's Office at the County Jail. After getting hired with the Vernonia Police Department, she graduated from the Police Academy in December of 2018.

Her first responsibility is at the school, where she is a friendly and helpful resource for students. "I love working in the schools," says Hanson. "Law enforcement is often about going to negative calls and it can be traumatic. Working in the schools I get help with our juveniles, which is really great. You get to see the kids and build relationships between them and the Police Department and be someone they can come to if things are not good in their life."

At the school Officer Hanson has worked on truancy issues and investigated child abuse concerns. She also spends time in the classroom introducing the equipment she wears and letting the students get to know who she is and help break down barriers between the community and the local police. "I've also had conversations with some of our older students who are interested in exploring a career in public safety, so I've tried to help guide them through the process," says Hanson. "I get to remind our students that what they do as a juvenile follows them as an adult, so some of our kids are now watching where they step, so to speak."

She says she is really starting to settle in and get comfortable in Vernonia. "The community has

been very welcoming," says Officer Hanson about her first year working here.

She said she is looking to purchase a home in the Vernonia/Columbia County area. In her spare time she continues to play competitive slow pitch softball. "I'm very competitive!" she says. "I take it pretty seriously!"

Officer Mikael Walter attended elementary and middle school in Vernonia before his family moved to Hillsboro, where he graduated from Hillsboro High School in 2011. After high school Walter enlisted in the United States Army and spent four and a half years as an infantryman, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, spent some time in Afghanistan, and finished his enlistment at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Mikael said he first got interested in a career in law enforcement after joining the Explorer Program and was involved with Search and Rescue with the Washington County Sheriff's Office.



Vernonia Police Officer Mikael Walter

Mikael and his wife and two children live here in Vernonia. In his free time he enjoys spending time with his children and doing anything outdoors, including hunting, fishing, camping.



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