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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GREATER WASHINGTON LAW **ENFORCEMENT LAUDED FOR FIGHT** **AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING**

17TH-ANNUAL EVENT HONORS LOCAL POLICE IN FIGHT AGAINST DUI

Washington, DC, Dec. 12 – One-dozen Washington-metropolitan area police officers were cited today for their “outstanding commitment in the fight against drunk driving in Greater Washington” and presented with the area’s 17th-annual “Law Enforcement Awards of Excellence for Impaired Driving Prevention.”

Presented this morning at a regional ceremony held in McLean, Virginia, the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) presented its 2014 Law Enforcement Awards to:

- **City of Alexandria Police Department** Officer Nicolette Clara
- **Arlington County Police Department** Officer Michael Merhar
- **City of Falls Church Police Department** Officer Alex Cruzvergara
- **Fairfax County Police Department** Police Officer First Class Vincent P. Vella
- **Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office** Deputy Timothy Iversen
- **Maryland State Police** Trooper Brian R. McInerney
- **Metropolitan Police Department** Police Officer III Patrick Vaillancourt
- **Montgomery County Department of Police** Officer John Romack
- **Prince George’s County Police Department** Officer Wilber Alvarez
- **Prince William County Police Department** Officer II Jeremy A. Schenck
- **United States Park Police** Officer Matthew Manning
- **Virginia State Police** Trooper Wesley M. Paul

The annual awards, presented at a ceremony this morning at Maggiano’s Little Italy in the Tysons Galleria, were bestowed by WRAP in memory of Metropolitan Police Department’s Motor Patrol Officer Anthony W. Simms. Officer Simms, as a result of injuries sustained while on duty, lost his life to an impaired driver during Memorial Day weekend in 1996. WRAP’s 2014 Law Enforcement Awards were presented by Officer Simms’ widow, Lieutenant Pamela Simms, also formerly with the Metropolitan Police Department, along with *News4*’s (NBC) News Anchor Aaron Gilchrist. Today’s event speakers included Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran as well as Falls Church Police Chief Mary Gavin. (The Falls Church Police Department co-hosted this morning’s event with WRAP.)

“Today’s awardees represent the front lines in the fight against drunk driving in Greater Washington,” said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP’s President. ***“It is only through their commitment in stopping the threat that impaired driving presents to all our friends and families that the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia each posted declining numbers of alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities in 2012 year.”***

In addition to receiving the Law Enforcement Awards, each of the 2014 WRAP honorees also received a Checkpoint Strikeforce shirt and ticket board as well as a pair of complementary Washington Nationals tickets (courtesy of the Washington Nationals) and a \$ 25 gift card to Glory Days Grill (courtesy of Glory Days Grill).

Sponsors of WRAP’s 2014 Law Enforcement Awards & Holiday Campaign Kick-Off included The Beer Institute, Cardinal Bank, GEICO, Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Glory Days Grill, Interstate Worldwide, Red Top Cab, Safeway, Volkswagen Group of America and Washington Wholesale.

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area’s alcohol-related traffic deaths consistently lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization’s popular free cab ride service for would-be drunk drivers, SoberRide®.

For more information, visit WRAP’s web site at **www.wrap.org**.

*(WRAP’s holiday free cab ride service for would-be drunk drivers, SoberRide, will operate between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am each evening between tonight and January 1, 2015. During these evening hours, Washington-metropolitan area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI and be afforded a no-cost [up to a \$ 30 fare], safe way home. AT&T wireless customers can call #WRAP for the same service. See **www.soberride.com** for more details.)*

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