

Published July 3rd, 2013

## Meet Officer Mandy Smith

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided

Sheriff's Department in 2004 where she worked for three years in the jail and over six years on patrol, including municipal policing in Patterson.

"Let me say how thrilled I am to have her join our department," said Robert Priebe, chief of police. "She is very skilled and her experience will be a great asset to our department and community. She really wants to be here and looked for an opportunity to come here for a long time. As (she said) at the council meeting, she wants to spend the rest of her career here and we hope to provide a work environment that will encourage just that."

Smith said she did not come to Moraga for the salary, but for the environment—a choice that is reassuring to a police chief who has been struggling with high turnover rates.

Where Mandy Smith comes from, police work is about arresting drug dealers and stopping gang violence. Moraga's newest officer arrives from Patterson, a city of 21,000 people in Stanislaus County, where the crime statistics do not resemble Moraga's in any way. The young officer said she wanted to move to the Bay Area and work in an environment where prevention would be bigger than repression. She thinks she found her niche in Moraga and plans to stay here forever.

"I'm looking forward to serving the community and interacting in a positive way, instead of reacting to crime," said Smith. "What I want to do is work hand in hand with residents, preventing crime and keeping the statistics low."

By the time she was six years old, Smith knew she wanted to be a police officer. "There was no one in my close family in the police," she said. "I just knew that's what I wanted to do." She was born and raised in Modesto, earning an associate degree in administration of justice from Modesto Junior College and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice management from Union Institute & University. She started her career as a deputy with the Stanislaus County

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