



# JASMINE MERRICKS

Officer/Victim-Witness Coordinator

Virginia Commonwealth University Police Department



Since joining the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Police Department in 2017, **OFFICER JASMINE MERRICKS** has served on numerous university committees and community engagement initiatives. She's also served countless victims of crimes with guidance surrounding the criminal justice system. Not only does Officer Merricks provide safety insight from the law enforcement perspective, but she also provides tremendous support to victims throughout the justice process. When victims may be hesitant to proceed with prosecution, Officer Merricks is there to accompany them to court, establish meetings with the Commonwealth's Attorney, and provide them with the tools needed to stay engaged with the process.

Noticing a need for an initiative to address dating violence and abuse and help college students identify healthy relationship behaviors, Officer Merricks was instrumental in implementing the One Love Program. She successfully rallied support among the various entities on the VCU campus, bringing leaders together from Student Housing, Student Affairs, University Counseling, Title IX, and local victim advocacy groups to collaboratively develop the program. The One Love Program centers around engaging college students in discussions of what constitutes healthy dating relationships and empowers students to recognize the red flags of dating violence and abuse.

Finding motivation in having the space to be creative in service to positively affect the community, Officer Merricks has created video tutorials; virtual workshops; and, most recently, the virtual campaign Start by Believing, a sexual assault awareness program. All of these endeavors help creatively educate and engage the students at VCU in domestic relationship-based issues.

*"What motivates me each day is having the chance to reach people who may get overlooked or who wouldn't normally participate."*