

Three CIT Officers Honored

Each year, the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County presents a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Officer of the Year Award to a deserving law enforcement officer who has completed the 40-hour CIT Training, and has demonstrated the values of the Crisis Intervention Team program. This year, the Portage County Police Chiefs Association reviewed the nominations and awarded three officers to be recognized: **Officer Joshua Bartholomew**, Streetsboro Police Department; **Officer Mike Fleming**, Kent Police Department, and **Officer Ralph Stover**, Kent State University Police Department. Waterloo teacher **Carrie Svada** was also recognized as the Founder of the CIT Education Collaboration program for educators starting in 2008.

Sponsored by the Mental Health & Recovery Board and the Sheriff's Office, the CIT training class provides law enforcement officers with tools to safely work with people in crisis and prevent arrests. The person may have a mental illness or be experiencing a traumatic event. Officers learn de-escalation techniques and leave the class with a fundamental understanding of mental illnesses and addictions.

Ofc. Bartholomew, who was trained in CIT in 2011, responded to at least nine calls in which the person was dealing with mental health issues during the first half of this year. In one of these calls, a 10 year old child called 911 because their grandparent was attempting suicide. Ofc. Bartholomew not only got the necessary help for the grandparent, but also consoled the child and kept the child calm until the parent arrived.

In another situation, Ofc. Bartholomew responded to a domestic violence call. After arriving on the scene, Ofc.

Bartholomew was able to determine the male was suffering a psychiatric problem and decided, together with the wife, that criminal charges were not the best solution in this situation. The man was transported to the hospital for psychiatric evaluation.

Ofc. Mike Fleming of the Kent Police Department has been part of the force for 27 years and is a former U.S. Marine. According to Chief Lee, Ofc. Fleming embraces the CIT philosophy and applied the skills he learned from the class he took in 2010 to a variety of calls involving mental illness.

"His patience and experience helps him interpret the appropriate approach to CIT calls for best outcome solutions," Lee explained. "Ofc. Fleming's military background has enabled him to be especially effective when dealing with homeless veterans of the Freedom House in the West section of Kent where Ofc. Fleming is permanently assigned."

Kent State University Police Ofc. Ralph Stover was nominated by Assistant Chief Bill Buckbee for his handling of numerous cases this year with people experiencing mental health crisis. Ofc. Stover completed the CIT training course in 2013.

In one particular case this year, Ofc. Stover was dispatched to investigate a possible suicide attempt. He discovered the individual holding a



The Officers of the Year were recognized at a ceremony in November. From left: Major Dennis Missimi, PC Sheriff's Office; Chief Dean Tondiglia, KSU Police Services; Asst. Chief Bill Buckbee, KSU Police Services; Chief Michelle Lee, Kent Police; Ofc Ralph Stover, KSU Police Services; Ofc Michael Fleming, Kent Police; Ofc Joshua Bartholomew, Streetsboro Police; Chief Darin Powers, Streetsboro Police; Atty. William Nome, Chair, Mental Health & Recovery Board; Dr. Joel Mowrey, executive director, Mental Health & Recovery Board.

piece of broken glass against their wrist with the intent to cut themselves. He was able to talk this person into discarding the glass. The person informed him that they drank three quarters of a bottle of Nyquil. The person was transported for medical care and Ofc. Stover referred them into care with an emergency hospitalization form and called Coleman Professional Services. His actions were timely, calm, and effective in managing this crisis.

"Ofc. Stover is thoughtful and compassionate," commented Buckbee. "He exemplifies the goals and objectives of CIT program and models how law enforcement can be an effective partner in both managing crisis events and delivering mental health services to the community."

The officers received a commendation from State Sen. John Eklund's office and the Ohio Senate.

Since 2006, more than 250 officers have completed the class. Every law enforcement agency in the county has CIT officers. The course is supported nationwide by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Surviving a Loss by Suicide

People affected by suicide loss gathered last month at the Survivors of Suicide Loss Day event hosted by the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Portage County. Those attended viewed a new documentary, "Family Journeys: Healing and Hope after Suicide" produced by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The film traces the ripple effects of a suicide through the eyes and experiences of three families, and shows how the members of each family are weathering the loss of their loved one, how they're healing, and how they're finding meaning again after living through a suicide.

A discussion led by Joel Mowrey, PhD, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County followed the screening. "This gathering provides people a chance to share their own stories with those who understand firsthand the challenges of living in the aftermath of a suicide loss," said Dr. Mowrey. "Listening to other people's stories and meeting people at all stages of healing can be very helpful to a person who is suffering a loss of a loved one."



Suicide Prevention Coalition members at the Survivors of Suicide Loss Day event: Paul Dages, Michelle Furbee, Iris Llewellyn Angle, Jim Angle, Karyn Hall, & Joel Mowrey

This event marked the last for longtime Suicide Prevention Coalition member and local author Iris Llewellyn Angle who recently moved to North Carolina. Iris's son Eric died by suicide in 1993. She wrote the book, "Tell Your Story Walking: One Mother's Legacy" from her experience dealing with the grief. She has also been the co-facilitator of the monthly survivor support group.

"We've been hosting the suicide loss day for a number of years, and Iris has been integral to our group," said Paul Dages, Coalition Chair. "It is important for people to know that they can survive loss by suicide. Through Iris, they were able to see that it is possible."

The Coalition holds a monthly Survivor Support Group meeting on the last Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:00 pm. The next one will be held on Wednesday, December 30 at the Mental Health & Recovery Board office located at 155 E. Main Street in Kent. For more information, call 330-673-1756.

New Integrated Medical Clinic at Children's Advantage

Children's Advantage opened an integrated care clinic in their psychiatric clinic building. Medical staff, including a pediatrician and a nurse practitioner from AxessPointe, our Federally Qualified Health Clinic in Portage County, conduct office hours at Children's Advantage every Wednesday to see current Children's Advantage clients and family members for physical health appointments. The medical staff attends Children Advantage's clinical group supervision meeting every Thursday to collaborate and educate the staff on physical health related issues.



Dr. Emmanuel Adekunle

Townhall II Expands Prevention Education

Too Good For Drugs, an alcohol and drug prevention program, is being offered to Portage County School Districts for grades kindergarten, third and fifth. The program is being implemented by Townhall II with funding from the Mental Health & Recovery Board. Students will be taught problem solving, decision making, and effective communication skills as well as peer pressure refusal and learn to set goals.

This is the first year implementing the program in kindergarten and third grade, and response from community school districts has been phenomenal. Six school districts are currently receiving this program in their classrooms.

If you have any questions or would like further information regarding Too Good For Drugs, contact Amanda Perrin at Townhall II at 330-346-3024.

Worth Noting

Nelson Burns and Coleman Professional Services received the Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation's Impact Award for Excellence in Mental Health. Congratulations!

Upcoming Events:

Mental Health & Recovery Board Meeting
Jan. 11 • 6:30pm
Mental Health & Recovery Board

NETWORK OF CARE
FOR ALL GENERATIONS



CHILDREN'S ADVANTAGE
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES
330-296-5552
childrensadvantage.org



330-673-1347
coleman-professional.org



330-297-7027
fcsOhio.com



330-678-3006
townhall2.com