



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HONORS FRANKLIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE THERAPY K9 UNIT WITH ALLIED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime, a division of the Office of Justice Programs, presented Franklin County Sheriff’s Office Therapy K9 Unit in Columbus, Ohio, with the Allied Professional Award. This National Crime Victims’ Service Awards category recognizes an individual or individuals from a specific discipline outside the victim assistance field for their service to victims and contribution to the victim assistance field.

In March 2017, the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office Therapy Dog (K9) program was created to improve relations between local law enforcement and the community. Since then, the K9 unit has assisted thousands of victims of crime as they navigate their way through the initial investigation, through therapy and prosecution, on their way to achieving justice and healing.

“The Franklin County Sheriff’s Office K9 Unit provides greatly needed comfort to crime victims in their most vulnerable moments, helping to ease their distress and anxiety and allowing them to take a step closer to healing,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan. “We commend these officers and their loyal therapy dogs for the invaluable support they provide to victims and for their dedicated work to protect and serve their community.”

The FCSO K9 program has become a model for many other law enforcement agencies in the United States that wish to expand their vision of policing to reach and assist victims of crime. The FCSO K9 unit hosted a Law Enforcement Therapy K9 School in 2019, where nine handlers from four law enforcement agencies received a free, week-long training focused on dog handling, policies, operating procedures and developing partnerships with local organizations.

“Because of the tremendous service it provides to victims in the wake of trauma, the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office K9 Unit has become a central part of the community and a model for other departments across the country,” said OVC Director Jessica E. Hart. “We are grateful for the part they play in helping victims face adversity, deal with trauma and begin the road to recovery.”

The Office for Victims of Crime leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. President Reagan proclaimed the first Victims’ Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. This year’s observance took place April 19-25 and featured the theme, “Seek Justice | Ensure Victims’ Rights | Inspire Hope.” The award recipients were honored privately and virtually with friends, family and Office of Justice Programs leadership.

The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.