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CONTACT: LAUREN LAMBERT. 202-305-7776
LAUREN.LAMBERT@OJP.USDOJ.GOV

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS OHIO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT OFFICER WITH FIRST RESPONDERS AWARD

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime, a component of the Office of Justice Programs, presented the Award for First Responders to Violence Against Women Act Deputy Robin Taylor for her dedication to serving women who have been victims of violent crime. The Award for First Responders category is new for 2021 and recognizes an individual or individuals from the law enforcement, emergency services, firefighter and rescue professions for extraordinary acts of valor on behalf of crime victims or for contributions to the crime victims’ field beyond the call of duty.

“Deputy Taylor has gone to the homes of domestic violence victims, stood beside them during investigations and court proceedings, and served as the front line of defense between young women and the predators who seek to exploit them,” said OJP Acting Assistant Attorney General Maureen A. Henneberg. “She is proof that a law enforcement officer can be a leading advocate for crime victims and a champion for survivors of abuse.”

Deputy Robin Taylor has worked in the Geauga County, Ohio, Sheriff’s Department since 2006, transferring to become a specialized VAWA Deputy in 2010, focusing predominately on violent crimes against women. Since then, Taylor has trained all deputies within her office to serve as first responders to domestic violence calls and provided training on civil and juvenile protection orders. In 2019, she responded to, or assisted in the follow up of, 367 cases of domestic violence/dispute-related calls. She made nearly 60 domestic violence arrests and responded to dozens of protection order violations and sex offense calls, including stalking, dating violence and rape.

Deputy Taylor is the main contact for the Amish community on domestic violence and reporting requirements. Her relationship with the community was solidified after the Amish Safety Committee discovered that underage Amish females were posting pictures of themselves in situations that exposed them to online predators. The committee invited Taylor to create a presentation on the dangers of the internet and social media. She is also Co-Chair of the Geauga County Sexual Assault Response Team and a subject matter expert for the Ohio Peace Officer Training Council’s domestic violence curriculum.

“Deputy Taylor has had a major impact on the education and training of officers in her community, helping them understand the cycle and signs of domestic abuse and how to interact when an officer receives a domestic violence call,” said OVC Acting Director Katherine Darke Schmitt. “Victims are better served and her community is better protected thanks to her dedication and hard work.”

The selection committee for the NCVRW awards this year chose two individuals to receive the First Responder Award. In addition to Taylor, Chief Deputy John Guard of the Pitt County, North Carolina, Sherriff's Office received the award for his professionalism and expertise in handling domestic violence cases.

Every April, OVC leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week. President Ronald W. Reagan proclaimed the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. The 40th anniversary of NCVRW took place this year, April 18-24, and featured the theme, "Support Victims. Build Trust. Engage Communities," which emphasizes the importance of leveraging community support to victims.

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, advance racial equity in the administration of justice, assist victims and enhance the rule of law. More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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