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Wichita Police Officers Honored with Statewide Award

Coalition awards Community Ally of the Year Award

2/18/16—Two Wichita Police Officers from the West Patrol Station have received the Community Ally of the Year Award from the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV). Officer Darrin Williams and Officer Lori Kimrey were presented the award during KCSDV's 13th Annual *Safe Homes, Safe Streets* event at the Sunflower Safety Luncheon and Awards Ceremony last week in Topeka.

Since 1995, KCSDV has been recognizing outstanding advocates and allies who are working to enhance victim safety, increase perpetrator accountability, and prevent and eliminate sexual and domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in Kansas.

Officer Williams and Officer Kimrey were nominated for the award by the Catholic Charities, Inc. Harbor House, a domestic violence advocacy program serving Wichita. Each year, Williams and Kimrey personally collect money and donations so that the West Patrol Station can throw a Christmas Party for the children residing at Harbor House's safe shelter. The Officers personally purchase the gifts, and with fellow officers and an "Officer" Santa Claus, they show up at Harbor House with armloads of wrapped gifts.

"Officer Williams and Officer Kimrey are perfect examples of going above and beyond the call of duty," said Joyce Mahoney, Harbor House Program and Outreach Services Director. "Not only have they shown compassion by giving the children at Catholic Charities Harbor House a Christmas to remember, they have given the children much more. They have instilled in these children the message that law enforcement are people they can rely on and trust," said Mahoney. According to Harbor House, the children look up to the Officers as role models, and their community policing efforts make law enforcement more accessible to survivors of domestic violence. "These interactions have allowed for officers and survivors to connect and build relationships that impact survivors' safety and wellbeing," said Joyce Grover, KCSDV executive director. "These Officers' partnership with Harbor House is life-changing and is the perfect example of what this award is about," said Grover.

Other award winners at this year's event included Sadie Madden from LARC, the sexual and domestic violence advocacy program located in Liberal, for the Juliene Maska Outstanding Advocate of the Year Award; Twila Wollenberg, MDCV Elementary School Principal for a Community Ally of the Year Award; and the Safehouse Crisis Center of Southeast Kansas and Pittsburg State University's Students for Violence Prevention, and Dung and Paul Kimble of Wichita, for Project of the Year Awards.

Photos available upon request.

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Founded in 1982, the purpose of KCSDV is the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence through a statewide network of programs providing support and safety for all victims of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, with primary focus on women and their children; direct services; public awareness and education; advocacy for victims; comprehensive prevention; and, social change efforts. Learn more at www.kcsdv.org, or call 785-232-9784.

Catholic Charities, Inc. Harbor House is a member of KCSDV and provides services to victims of domestic violence in Sedgwick County. Learn more at <http://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/family-stabilization/harbor-house>, or call (316) 263-6000.