

The Friendship Center
1430 Sanders St.
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 442-6800
www.thefriendshipcenter.org

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CONTACT:

Melinda Reed, Executive Director
Abbie Chermack, Outreach and Education Coordinator

**Helena Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Working Group Announce
Officer of the Year Winners**
Attorney General Tim Fox to present the awards Oct.23

Helena, MT – The Helena Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) Working Group, along with The Friendship Center, is excited to announce the recipients of the Officer of the Year award. The purpose of the award is to recognize the critical role law enforcement plays in serving victims of domestic and sexual violence in our community, and to highlight the role of uniformed officers in particular.

This year the DVSA Working Group chose to honor Officer Jonathan Cook of the Helena Police Department and Deputy Chris Joyce of the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office for their exemplary work in the field of domestic and sexual violence. Both officers received multiple nominations for going above and beyond in serving victims of abuse.

Officer Cook has been a member of the Helena Police Department for two and a half years. In Helena Police Lieutenant Tim Coleman's nomination letter, he wrote that "Officer Cook has shown empathy for victims, an understanding of the victim centered approach, learned from training and applied it, and asks for assistance or guidance as needed". Deb Bakke, Client Care Director at the Friendship Center stated that "when interacting with victims, Officer Cook has a gift for balancing a mix of respect, empathy and compassion with the professional boundaries necessary for him to do his job well". Assistant Chief Steve Hagen of the Helena Police Department stated, "The Helena Police Department strives to provide the best service to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Officer Cook's efforts and empathy when working with victims sets the standards for all officers to follow. We thank the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Working Group and The Friendship Center for recognizing Jon with the Officer of the Year award and their efforts to eliminate Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in our community."

Deputy Joyce has been a member of the Sheriff's office for three years. His nominating letters highlighted his genuine concern and compassion for the victims he has met and served. In Detective Dan O'Malley's nomination letter, he said a victim Deputy Joyce served said "she felt he cared enough to get her help and gave her the confidence to reach out". A community member

also nominated Deputy Joyce for his help when she was experiencing crisis. She also referred to his kindness, compassion, and respect that he showed her, stating “I don’t know what would have happened to me if he had not made the decisions he made to help a struggling young woman.”

“We have seen how a positive interaction with law enforcement, particularly during an initial response, makes a real difference for victims,” says The Friendship Center Executive Director, Melinda Reed. “Honoring the officers who go beyond their duty to respond to a call for service by supporting victims is the least we can do as a community to say thanks for their help in addressing domestic and sexual violence.”

An Officer of the Year award will become an annual event for the DVSA Working Group in October as it is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The DVSA Working Group would like to recognize the other officers nominated this year: Officer Bryan Fisher, HPD; Deputy Greg Holmlund, LCSO; and Officer John Kaleczyc, HPD. The DVSA Working Group is comprised of advocates, therapists, attorneys, law enforcement, educators, health workers and others.

Attorney General Tim Fox will be presenting the awards to the two winners at his office at 215 North Sanders Street Friday, October 23, 2015 at 10:00 am.