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Press Release **For Immediate Release**

Date: 07/22/2021

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Linden Police Department Fulfills One Mind Campaign Pledge

Linden, NJ – The Linden Police Department is pleased to announce that they have completed a pledge they took to improve their response to those suffering from mental illness in their community. The pledge is part of an initiative called the One Mind Campaign started by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), a 31,000 member professional association for law enforcement that provides training, technical assistance, and recruitment services. To join the One Mind Campaign, law enforcement agencies must pledge to implement four promising practices in a 12-36 month period to ensure successful future interactions between police officers and persons with mental illness. Linden became just the second agency in New Jersey to complete the pledge.

In the law enforcement community, mental illness has become a common focus, with some departments estimating that as many as 20% of their calls for service are related to mental health challenges. Chief David Hart made the decision to join the International Association of Chiefs of Police's One Mind Campaign because of the growing number of calls for service related to mental health, as well as the challenges associated with safely dealing with a person in crisis.

"For years, we have been among the most progressive agencies in Union County and across the state in our efforts to build relationships within the mental health community," said Chief Hart. "The One Mind Campaign is a natural fit, and our participation further demonstrates our commitment to helping members of our community who are in crisis."

The Linden Police Department Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), led by Captain Abdul Williams, hosts several events throughout the year to help build relationships and interact with affected members of the community when they are not in crisis. Captain Williams and other members of the team have been instrumental in developing curriculum and facilitating training for Police officers across the state. The program is well-respected for their consistent, sustained efforts; in 2017 the program was honored as the Program of the Year by the CIT – NJ Center of Excellence in 2017. Captain Williams was also personally honored earlier this year when he was selected as the 2020 Program Coordinator of the Year.

In completing the One Mind Pledge, the Linden Police Department established a sustainable partnership with a local mental health organization, developed and implemented a model policy to address officers' interactions with those affected by mental illness, and ensured that all of their officers received some type of mental health awareness training, with at least twenty percent of the department completing the more intensive CIT



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or equivalent crisis response training. The 40-hour Crisis Intervention curriculum is designed by local agencies to train a team of specialized officers to respond to calls that involve individuals with mental health disorders such as depression or intellectual disability. The curriculum includes education on various de-escalation techniques as well as live role-play scenarios of officers responding to persons who need mental health assistance.

“I want to tip my hat off to our Linden Police Department for their constant dedication and commitment to the Linden community and putting practices in place to bridge the gap between officers and persons with mental illnesses,” said Linden Mayor Derek Armstead. “The Linden Police Department is the second police department in NJ to complete the pledge, and we are proud of their efforts.””

For more information about the One Mind Campaign, visit the IACP’s website at <https://www.theiacp.org/projects/one-mind-campaign>. A list of all agencies who have taken the pledge is available there. For more information about the Linden Police Department’s CIT program, please visit their website at www.linden-nj.gov/police.

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