

Lake County Sheriff's Office



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John D. Idleburg
Sheriff

MEDIA RELEASE

Crisis Outreach and Support Team Record Successful First Year

The Lake County Sheriff's Office is pleased to announce a successful year for the Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COaST) in Lake County's ongoing efforts to help those with mental illness.

Since beginning this initiative, sheriff's deputies made 785 referrals to COaST, a program launched in October 2018 to support Lake County residents with mental or behavioral health illness who have law enforcement interaction. These referrals occurred during various calls for service. Of those 785, COaST personnel have successfully made contact with 654 of the referrals and offered additional resources, including referrals to the Lake County Health Department and other health service providers.

"We are grateful for the collaboration with the Sheriff's Office to address unmet behavioral health needs in Lake County," said Sam Johnson-Maurello, Director of Behavioral Health for the Health Department. "The real success of the COaST program is when we have been able to help people access the services that they need."

In October 2018, the Lake County Sheriff's Office and Lake County Health Department began piloting the COaST program. The COaST team consists of a specially trained Lake County Sheriff's Deputy and a Lake County Health Department licensed mental health counselor.

Within approximately three days of a law enforcement officer encountering a mental health interaction, COaST arranges a meeting with the individual or a "cold call" to their residence. During the meeting, COaST checks the well-being of the person and determines if they have sought any treatment or services since the initial event. COaST then provides a "warm handoff" to the Health Department, or if necessary, refers the person to appropriate services.

Sheriff John Idleburg said, "Mental health initiatives like this are making a difference. Through COaST, we have successfully made contact with 83 percent of the referrals to offer services to people facing behavioral health or substance use challenges. I firmly believe that people with mental illness require services and not incarceration, and

programs like this aid in that quest.”

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