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PRESS RELEASE
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FAMILY SERVICE OF RI'S POLICE PARTNERSHIPS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD

"Let's expand to benefit crime victims in more communities" says FSRI CEO

PROVIDENCE, RI, 2BMarch 1, 2018— Family Service of Rhode Island (FSRI) has received a national award recognizing its work with several Rhode Island police departments to provide psychological first aid and other help to victims of crime and violence.

FSRI's CEO said she would like to see their police partnership model replicated in all communities in Rhode Island and beyond. Currently it involves the Providence Police, the East Providence Police and the State Police.

"More communities need to intervene immediately to help victims begin the healing process. Research shows that the effects of a traumatic event extend well beyond the date of the incident and can affect educational and job performance as well as relationships with friends and family," said FSRI CEO Margaret Holland McDuff. "Healing trauma is not only about mental health; it's about learning at school, earning at work, having family and friends and belonging to a supportive community."

The Mutual of America Community Partnership Award, which included a \$25,000 grant, was bestowed on the statewide non-profit in a ceremony Thursday, March 1 (2018) at the Omni Providence, 1 West Exchange Street, Providence. Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo and Congressman David Cicilline were among the dignitaries attending. She was a member of the FSRI board of directors when the agency was creating the police partnership initiative, and he was mayor of Providence.

The award is the result of a national competition in which organizations demonstrate the value of their partnership to the community they serve, their ability to be replicated by others and their capacity to stimulate new approaches to addressing significant social issues. The Mutual of America Foundation has recognized 220 partnerships from communities across America since creating the Community Partnership Award in 1996.

The recognition for FSRI comes nearly 15 years after starting the program, which was created after inspiration and training from Yale University's "Child Development-Community Policing Program."

"We started our Go Team police partnership program in 2004 with the Providence Police; a few years later, we began working with the East Providence Police and then the State Police," said Holland McDuff. "It's grown because our police partners see firsthand it is making a difference at scenes of crime and violence and beyond."

Funding over the years has been primarily from the federal Victims of Crime Act through the state's Public Safety Grant Administration Office.

FSRI's trauma-trained experts are deployed with law enforcement on patrols each day. FSRI staff offer immediate on-scene crisis intervention, compassionate assistance and language support and follow-up. The team is available seven days a week, 365 days a year, either in the patrol cars or by responding to the police department's call.

FSRI regularly responds to reports of sexual assault, human trafficking, homicide, suicide, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and other forms of crime.

FSRI is one of only 10 organizations in the country to receive the latest Mutual of America Community Partnership Award. Since its inception in 1996, the Community Partnership Award has recognized 220 partnerships from cities and towns all across America.

"Justice," a six month old Golden Retriever/Poodle mix, was introduced at the event as the newest member of the FSRI/Providence Police Partnership team. Once training is completed, "Justice" will accompany FSRI's Carla Cuellar as she responds to scenes of crime and violence. The dog will assist Carla in providing comfort to victims of, or witnesses to, sexual assault, human trafficking, homicide, suicide, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and other forms of crime and violence.

"Justice" is believed to be the first dog to be utilized in this manner in the Ocean State.

More information about the award is available at <https://www.mutualofamerica.com/cpa/CommunityPartnershipAward>.

More information is available about FSRI at www.familyserviceri.org.

About Family Service of Rhode Island: FSRI is a comprehensive non-profit social service agency and essential part of the Rhode Island community. FSRI provides support to children and families-from birth to adulthood-through services focused on three general areas--physical and mental health, education, and overall well-being. Every program or service FSRI offers is geared towards promoting healthy families and strong communities.

~ ~ ~If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Stephen Hug at 508-243-7686 or email at hugst@familyserviceri.org.