



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 30, 2019

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LOUISA COUNTY RECEIVES HONORS IN VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES 2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS PROGRAM

LOUISA, VIRGINIA – The County of Louisa is pleased to announce that it has garnered two 2019 Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) Achievement Awards for its programs Project First Responder and Kindness Day. VACO received 96 submissions for Achievement Awards this year, and this is the fifth year that Louisa has been selected for an award. The County also received VACO’s overall Best Small County Achievement Award.

2019 VACO Best Small County Achievement Award – Project First Responder

The Louisa County Sheriff’s Office started Project First Responder after receiving a letter from a 12-year old citizen stating why he should be chosen to participate in the Law Enforcement Adventure Program (LEAP). The individual explained that he was autistic and wanted to bridge the gap between those with autism and law enforcement to help people like him feel more comfortable around police. The Sheriff’s Office reviewed the letter, recognized the need and developed Project First Responder.

Project First Responder is designed to improve communication between first responders and those with autism and similar conditions. The program allows family members and other caregivers to provide crucial information about their loved ones to first responders, prior to any reported incidents. The information is utilized by emergency personnel to properly respond to situations with details about proper interaction and care.

“Because law enforcement officers are often the first to respond to an emergency, it is critical that these officers have a working knowledge of autism and the wide variety of behaviors those with autism can exhibit in emergency situations,” said Major Donald Lowe, Louisa County Sheriff’s Office. “It is imperative that all entities involved work together to make these interactions safe, successful and productive.”

Families, caretakers, or anyone else interested in the program can learn more and submit information online at <https://www.louisacounty.com/1855/Project-First-Responder>.

2019 VACo Achievement Award - Kindness Day

Kindness Day fosters kindness through working together and helping others with the intent of spreading a spirit of “paying it forward”. The program was initiated by the Louisa County Public Schools, and the County government soon became involved as well. The effort has since spread to local businesses and other organizations. The program is simple: staff plan and publicize Kindness Day projects such as helping at community functions, donating to worthy causes, assisting those in need, and others. The projects take place on designated Kindness Days which occur every few months. On Kindness Day, those who are helping wear their Kindness Day t-shirts, perform their projects, and kindness spreads. Several businesses and organizations have taken notice and gotten involved, and projects have stretched from Louisa all the way to the Carolinas, where Kindness Day played a role in hurricane recovery efforts.

“The positive power of kindness is infectious and necessary in our society today. Kindness Day has been an amazingly effective tool in spreading thoughtfulness and compassion both within our County and beyond,” said Louisa County Administrator Christian Goodwin.

“The mission behind our #KindnessDay initiative has always been to show that, through the simple acts of kindness, everyone can make a positive difference in the world,” said Superintendent Doug Straley, Louisa County Public Schools. “At Louisa County Public Schools, our young men and women are striving to be both great students and great people. I’m so proud of them for embracing this initiative!”

“I’m proud of these and all of our innovative efforts to make Louisa an even better community,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Toni Williams. “The level of creativity and collaboration between various entities and functions on a County-wide basis is something that doesn’t happen in every locality, and our citizens reap the benefits.”

To learn more about Louisa County’s winning achievements and other awards, visit www.vaco.org/county-profiles/achievement-awards/2019-achievement-awards-entries

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