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## **Mental Health America of Eastern Missouri Honors Brentwood Police Officers Hopler and Drexl with 2019 McAtee Awards**

**Brentwood, Missouri – May 7, 2019** – Brentwood Police Officers Brian Hopler and Ben Drexl received the John J. McAtee Award from Mental Health America of Eastern Missouri. The McAtee award is presented annually to law enforcement officers who demonstrate compassion, patience and understanding when dealing with persons in a psychiatric crisis.

The awards were presented at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual John J. McAtee Police Recognition Luncheon on May 7, 2019. This is the second time Officer Drexl has received this award.

Major Jim McIntyre nominated the officers for the award for their handling of an incident in January 2019. This is the description of the incident:

“On a winter evening during a snowstorm, with almost a foot of snow already on the ground, Hopler and Drexl responded to several calls for a subject yelling profanity and trying car door handles of parked cars on a residential street. The officers continued receiving calls even as they arrived and began searching for the subject. One of the calls was from a resident reporting an attempted break-in at his home, and that he was actively armed with a gun to protect his family.

Hopler located the subject near the caller’s home. The subject was not a Brentwood resident, but was known to the police as someone who had arrived in the area, was homeless, and was living in parks and other outside areas. Reports of his behavior and prior encounters strongly suggested a history of chronic mental illness, most likely paranoid schizophrenia.

When the subject ignored Hopler’s commands to stop, and ran from the scene screaming obscenities, Hopler gave chase on foot while Drexl maneuvered the police vehicle to cut off the subject. The man stopped in the middle of the street and began screaming for officers to shoot him. He was non-compliant to verbal commands and refused to show his hands. Eventually the officers were able to physically restrain the subject and transport him to the hospital for immediate medical attention. Thanks to these young officers’ restraint from using lethal force, the subject was subdued, averting a tragic outcome at the home of the armed resident or in the open street.”

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