

## Caroline Presented with Two Prestigious Awards at Maryland School Safety Conference



August 13, 2018 – **Corporal Michael (Rico) Gestole** with the Caroline County Sheriff's Office has been named the **Maryland School Resource Officer of the Year**. The award was presented at the Maryland Center for School Safety's annual conference in Annapolis, MD, which gathers attendees from across the state including law enforcement, school security, and student services staff.

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program in Caroline County Public Schools was piloted in 2008 through grant funding. In partnership with the Caroline County Sheriff's Office, Officer Gestole was appointed as the first SRO and assigned to the campus at Colonel Richardson Middle and High Schools. Since that time, in addition to his regular school year duties, Gestole has become a 12-month SRO which allows him the summer months to work on school crisis management plans and provide training to school staff.

According to the nomination, submitted by Assistant Superintendent Milton Nagel, Officer Gestole epitomizes the role of the SRO. "I have never seen Rico in his office. He is always out and about interacting with students, staff, and visitors. His visual presence combined with his engaging personality is one of his best characteristics. Not only does he know every student by first and last name, he knows many of their parents and extended family members. Rico has broken down walls between students and law enforcement, and students are comfortable coming to him and sharing information that is then used to help diffuse situations before they become a problem."



At the same conference, **Assistant Superintendent Milton Nagel and Caroline County Sheriff Randy Bounds** were presented the **School Safety Superintendent and Law Enforcement Executive of the Year Award**. The award is given in recognition of outstanding commitment to working together to keep students and staff safe throughout the school year.

In her nomination, Superintendent Patricia Saelens wrote, "Mr. Nagel and Sheriff Bound's teamwork, outstanding leadership, and special commitment to Caroline County Public Schools and the Caroline community is inspiring. They have developed a comprehensive school safety program with other counties

modeling our practices and standards. Their leadership skills have enabled us to maximize our dollars and resources, which is vital to our small community.”

The Maryland Center for School Safety was created to promote learning environments in which our youth across the State are in a position to acquire the skills and knowledge to help them succeed in school and in life. The Center serves as a central location for school safety information, and provides schools with research, training, and technical assistance to reduce youth violence and promote safety in the state.

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