

2008

Patrolman Paul Fiorilli

Mentor Police Department

The City of Mentor is home to many of the mental health agencies that serve the citizens of Lake County. Among these agencies are the Deepwood Center, which supports mentally retarded and developmentally disabled children and adults, the Broadmoor School, Crossroads, and Neighboring. Due to the number of clients that these agencies serve, the Mentor Police Department is frequently called upon to assist these agencies when one of these clients is in any type of crisis. Training is provided to the officers to deal with these issues, and Mentor Municipal Court hosts a Mental Health Court which services the county.

One of these crisis situations occurred on August 4, 2008, when the department was called to Neighboring to assist with an adult female who had damaged property at the facility and had left in her vehicle. She was reported to be suicidal, and due to past dealings with this same female, officers knew that her threats should be taken seriously.

Patrolman Paul Fiorilli responded to State Route 2, and quickly located her vehicle traveling westbound. He followed into Eastlake where he was able to stop her vehicle. Initially, she was uncooperative, and refused his requests that she get out of her vehicle. She stated that she was on the phone. Fiorilli began walking around the vehicle to approach the driver's side, when suddenly, the female bolted from the car. She yelled that she wanted to die and ran across the westbound lanes of traffic. Fiorilli ran and caught her near the far left, high speed lane, placed her in a bear hug, and dragged her back across the roadway. Once in the grass, he took her to the ground, controlling her until back-up arrived.

Mentor Chief Daniel Llewellyn nominated Fiorilli for the honor, stating that his actions "put him at risk because he entered a high speed traffic lane to save a life with only moments to do so. Based on Fiorilli's assistance, this serious situation was resolved without loss of life or injuries."

Fiorilli received the Jorge Medina Award with his fellow Mentor Officer Michael Bruening at LaMalfa Center on February 11, 2009. He commented on the honor stating, "Looking at the people before us, they're tough shoes to fill."

Doctor Ronald Taddeo, Lake County Blue Coats president, stated that "both men not only showed courage in the face of uncertainty, but a willingness to go above and beyond. They keep us safe. Without (people like) them, what would society be?"