

Bill Selke Heart of Justice Award Winner: Chris Wolak

Presented by: Marla Sandys

It is my pleasure to recognize Chris Wolak as this year's recipient of the Bill Selke Heart of Justice Award. This award is named after a former colleague. Bill was the director of our internship program, he taught our intro course. I remember how he and a colleague from the math department worked together to offer a computer-based, applied version of our statistics course. He did so because he recognized that some students would learn the material better if it was presented in a different way. In many respects, that is what defined Bill Selke's approach to education, our department, and our larger community. Bill always went the extra mile, made the extra effort, to help others in need, whether that meant a student struggling with a course, or a person in the community.

This award was created to honor Bill's efforts and to recognize those who embody his dedication to service. This year's recipient, Chris Wolak, meets those criteria. Chris is a part-time police officer with the IU Police Department. As he sees it, his role involves much more than enforcing laws. He sees himself as a friend, a helper, and a protector to those in need. In his relatively short time with the Department, he has done just that. He has responded to wellness checks,

administered Narcan to prevent a death from overdose, and worked with police departments from another state to ensure the safety of a person contemplating suicide. In each case, he aspired to approach the situation with a positive attitude, having learned, as he said, that “a simple act of kindness or showing empathy to an individual can go much farther than anyone could ever imagine.” It is for all these reasons and more that it is my pleasure to recognize Chris Wolak as this year’s recipient of the Bill Selke Heart of Justice Award.