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Brendel named state school resource officer of the year

By Sarah Hardee, Contributor

What started out as a two-year assignment for School Resource Officer Todd Brendel, has turned into a six-year-and-counting career.

The Elsmere native started his position at Tichenor Middle School in 1999, just one year after joining the Erlanger Police Department. He thought he would hold the position for two years and move on to another position within the department, he said. As it turns out he was wrong.

"The position has continued year after year and I have stayed because I love my job," he said.

His choice paid off last month when the Kentucky Association of School Resource Officers named him the Statewide School Resource Officer of the Year. He will be presented with the award during the second annual Kentucky Safe Schools and Communities Conference awards dinner Wednesday, June 15.

Erlanger Police Chief Marc Fields said Brendel is a huge asset to the department, the school district and the community as a whole. Brendel has taken the position to a whole new level, he said, and deserves the award for his dedication.

"When the Kentucky Center for School Safety was looking for a model school for safety, they looked at Tichenor Middle School and Todd Brendel," he said. "He has helped implement many programs and has greatly improved the safety of the school. He also helped shape the school resource officer position."

His love and dedication to the job stems from the school's students and staff, Brendel said, as well as his roots in the district itself.

"I grew up in Elsmere, so I went to Howell (Elementary), Tichenor (Middle School) and graduated from Lloyd (Memorial High School) in 1985," he said. "I grew up in this district, so it means a lot to me."

Keeping Tichenor's students and staff safe also means a lot to Brendel, he said. His duties include handling security, traffic, discipline and emergency issues. Brendel has helped establish a Youth Crime Watch at the school, as well as national Internet safety programs, including I-SAFE and I-STIK.

As another facet of his job, Brendel gives students a specific person to go to for help with issues like abuse.

"To have (students) trust you enough to come in and tell you they are getting abused at home is really something," he said. "This job gives you the opportunity to really help kids because you get to know them personally."

Although his current position is quite different from his earlier days as a patrol officer and SWAT team member at different police departments, Brendel said helping the school is rewarding in a different way.

"I enjoy the atmosphere at the school and hope I make everyone feel a little more secure," he said. "I have roots here, I have family here; and I love coming to work everyday."

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