

Sergeant Chris O'Dell: Life Saving Award

On August 5, a deputy at the William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center was having a conversation with an inmate. The inmate confided that he was having mental issues. The deputy immediately alerted a supervisor.

Sergeant Chris O'Dell was the sergeant on duty that night. He checked the inmate's records and discovered that he had previously made threats of harm against himself which had resulted in a mental health evaluation.

Sergeant O'Dell entered the unit. Two deputies were speaking with the inmate, who was inside his cell. Sergeant O'Dell approached and asked the deputies to secure the other inmates in their cells so his team could properly address the distressed inmate. The lighting was low, making it difficult for Sergeant O'Dell to see the inmate, however, he could hear him repeatedly say, "I have to do this."

As the lighting was increased, Sergeant O'Dell saw the inmate had a pen clenched in both hands and pressed behind his chin and near his throat. Sergeant O'Dell called for the aid of an emergency response team. However, the inmate appeared to be applying more pressure to the pen, pushing it against his throat. The inmate became louder as he repeated the statement, "I have to do this." Sergeant O'Dell feared that the inmate would hurt himself before the emergency response team arrived.

With the help of another deputy nearby, Sergeant O'Dell cracked the cell door enough to have a clear view of the inmate. He began to talk to him, urging the inmate to put the pen down. The inmate appeared to slowly begin to lower the pen. He glanced away from Sergeant O'Dell, who quickly entered the cell, grasped the inmate's hands, and secured the pen. Another deputy applied handcuffs as Sergeant O'Dell removed the pen. Once the inmate was fully secured and searched, deputies discovered that he had written "Help me" in ink on his hand.

Thanks to Sergeant O'Dell's swift actions and quick thinking, the inmate was stopped from physically harming himself and he was able to receive the help he very much needed. We award Sergeant O'Dell the Life Saving Award in recognition of his efforts.

