



## **VJJA Meritorious Award in the Area of Administration 2021**

Elizabeth St. John

Our award winner in the area of Administration graduated from right here in Williamsburg from the College of William and Mary in May 1981 with a Bachelor of Arts in Government and a Minor in Sociology. She is also a graduate of DJJ Justice Transformation institute, having completed JTI Cohort VI in 2019.

Our recipient has been employed with the Chesapeake Court Service Unit more than 40 years. She was hired as a Probation Officer in in October 1981 and was promoted to supervisor in 1992. Six years later in 1998, she was promoted to CSU Deputy Director and in that role served as the CSU's workload and data analyst. She was also the acting deputy director for significant periods of time. She was promoted to CSU Director in 2018. Among the many significant contributions she has made to her CSU, was developing a CSU staff training manual, coordinating the CSU's student intern training and orientation program and providing training for partners including the Chesapeake Police Department, Chesapeake Schools and the Chesapeake Volunteers in Youth Services.

Our award winner has established great collaborative working relationships with community partners that have allowed her to receive grants from companies to provide incentives to the youth and families served by the CSU. She also started a clothing closet in the CSU to provide clothing and other items to youth and families. She started the clothing closet in 2016 and managed it until 2018, when it was passed to a Probation Officer. She still oversees it. She has worked with local business to provide youth incentives for the past 11 years.

Our award winner has been involved in many activities in the community and encourages staff to give back through volunteering or being involved in community activities as well. Many of the things that she has been involved in occurred or continued even while she was dealing with her own medical issues. She has served on the Chip Healthy Families Board, serves on the Tidewater Youth Services Commission's Board and volunteered for the COVID-19 Center for VHD in Chesapeake in the call center. She also serves the homeless at her church and heads up the cancer survivor committee and gives out bears.

She also has a long list of other memberships and volunteerism:

- Member of Virginia Juvenile Justice Association (VJJA).
- Member of Virginia Governmental Employees Association (VGEA)
- Member of the Crisis Family Assessment and Planning Team
- Member of the Bank of Hampton Roads South Norfolk Advisory Board
- Volunteer for Chesapeake General Hospital
- Member of the Great Bridge Food Closet
- Member of the Good Hope United Methodist Church (where she teaches Sunday School and participates on several specialized committees)
- Volunteer for Career Day activities for both the College of William & Mary and for Chesapeake Schools

Our award winner shows a great deal of leadership and support to everyone who works in her unit. She is always willing to help out when/where she needs to, while also supporting her staff's growth in their profession. Her leadership has been particularly valued and apparent during the pandemic. She has been open and honest with information, receptive to staff's concerns and working together to make sure employee's feelings were validated, while also continuing to serve the community. This allowed staff to telework as needed and still meet the needs of the court and community. Our recipient also developed some good, fun activities to keep staff engaged with one another and motivated in the face of the on-going pandemic.

**The 2021 VJJA Meritorious Award Winner in the  
Area of Administration is:**

**Elizabeth St. John**