

# 2022 CIT INTERNATIONAL AWARD WINNERS



CITI First Responder of the Year

**Officer John Bangs**  
**West Palm Beach, FL**

The CIT First Responder Award is to recognize a CIT first responder who demonstrates continuous use of exemplary CIT knowledge and skills. Their work highlights their outstanding dedication to the CIT program, CIT Services and advancing CIT as a community success.

Over the years, Officer John Bangs has responded to hundreds of calls involving those in crisis, individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders. He is familiar with both the individuals who frequently call for police assistance and the community partners in the area who can provide resources. Officer Bangs is known to volunteer and be the first officer on scene of a dispatched CIT call. After assessing the situation, he patiently and successfully reaches out to community resources and will locate an appropriate location for the individual in need of mental health and/or substance use treatment rather than transport the individual to jail. Officer Bangs received his agency's Lifesaving Medal for his heroic actions in saving a young woman's life. Officer Bangs recently applied for his agency's Crisis Negotiations Team and was selected as the top recruit.

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*CITI Fred Frese*  
Person with Lived Experience  
of the Year  
**Cynthia Richardson**  
**Charlottesville, VA**

This award, which is named in honor of CIT International former Board Member, Dr. Fred Frees, recognizes a person who lives with mental illness or co-occurring substance use disorders who is actively involved with CIT as a community program – from promoting, planning, participating in the training, assisting with implementation or with ongoing sustainability efforts. A person who incorporates his/her knowledge and familiarity with systems and care issues; engages opportunities (as peer and/or friend) to assist others and always introduces CIT in conversations with others as a theme or calling of hope.

Cyndi Richardson works for On Our Own, a peer recovery center, that provides community members with the support, understanding, and resources they need to pursue their own unique paths to recovery from mental health challenges and substance use. She has excellent relationships with her clients as well as all the CIT officers. Her calm demeanor and assuring manner help put distressed individuals at ease and de-escalate chaotic situations. She firmly believes in and exemplifies rehabilitation over retaliation. Ms. Richardson has spoken about CIT at many state, regional, and local conferences, as well as forums and community agency meetings. She is a mental health/substance use leader in the community and a well-informed advocate for CIT training. Sharing her experiences with the criminal justice system gives her credibility that few have. She knows both the offender's and authorities' points of view. She is the living testament to the value of the CIT approach. Ms. Richardson has lived in Charlottesville for many years and is well known and highly respected in the community. For those still suffering from Mental Health Challenges and Substance Use Disorders, Cyndi knows how to approach them without judgement, encouraging them to discover the benefits of the CIT program for themselves, their friends and family members. She knows how to approach them without judgment, encouraging them to discover the benefits of the CIT program for themselves, their friends and family members. Cyndi believes that it was CIT that first showed her the possibility of new freedom.

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**CITI Advocate of the Year  
George Reynolds  
Pinehurst, NC**

The CIT Advocate Award recognizes a family member or other community advocate who demonstrates exemplary active involvement with their CIT program. They must have been instrumental in getting CIT started and/or promoting CIT as an engaging program that elevates the identity and ownership of CIT as a Community Program. This person always speaks boldly of issues specific to mental illness stigma and advocates for access to high quality care services for people who live, struggle and cope with mental illness.

George is an exceptional advocate for persons with mental illness and has been an instrumental leader and supporter of CIT since 2008. George has been involved in training countless numbers of officers over the years, reaching out to the Moore County Sheriff and the Sandhills Center Chief Executive Officer to begin discussions around CIT. He coordinates with NAMI members to participate in family panels during the weeks of instruction, as well as shares his personal story regarding the concerns and challenges family members have while caring for their loved ones with mental illness. In 2013, he approached the Moore County CIT planning committee to discuss mental health education in local schools using the general design of CIT. By way of the initial conversations, George formed The Sandhills Partnerships. Through the Sandhills Partnerships working with Sandhills Center and school administrators, his efforts resulted in the creation of a two-day mental health crisis prevention and intervention training program for school personnel in 2014. Since its inception, the annual training program has expanded to additional county and city school districts, and The Sandhills Partnerships gained recognition as a Program of Excellence in North Carolina. George works tirelessly and selflessly to advocate for persons with mental illness and educate communities about mental illness.

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*Mike Woody & Michele Saunders*  
CITI Coordinator of the Year  
**John Hollingsworth**  
**Huntsville, AL**

The CIT Coordinator Award is named in honor of CIT International founding Board Members Michael Woody and Michele Saunders and recognizes a person from law enforcement or corrections that oversees their CIT program or a mental health provider or advocate who is a strong leader for their community CIT program. This person must demonstrate their leadership in organizing their CIT program, ensuring there is a community steering committee, and using their leadership abilities to help grow and sustain CIT as a community program.

John Hollingsworth became a pioneer for justice in Alabama when he launched the first CIT program in Huntsville, AL. Since that time, he has spread the word to numerous locales. He played a role in establishing the first local Crisis Care Center in July 2021 when he taught the first CIT 40-hour training at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. John's deft use of CIT was a catalyst for local mental health advocates in attendance to demand improvements for access to crisis health care. As a result, Birmingham will inaugurate its first Crisis Care Center and will begin offering services to those who are experiencing psychiatric, behavioral and/or substance use crises in August 2022. In April 2022, it was announced that the first statewide CIT program was funded by the Alabama Department of Mental Health. Without John's pioneering work within multiple municipalities and counties, there would not be a statewide CIT program. John is fearless in the face of ignorance and leads by living out his purpose and mission to bring dignity to people with mental illness via CIT.

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**CITI Law Enforcement Executive  
of the Year  
Sheriff Mark L. Pettway  
Birmingham, AL**

The CIT Law Enforcement Executive Award recognizes a Sheriff, Chief or a member of the Law Enforcement Executive Staff who actively supports the CIT program in their community. This person must demonstrate their support of the Core Elements of the CIT Program as well as a commitment to community partnerships. This person may be instrumental in driving the creation of a new program or they could be instrumental in maintaining a vibrant, existing program including the incorporation of refresher training and other advanced efforts.

Sheriff Pettway, after 28 years in law enforcement, felt that running for Sheriff was his calling and won the election over a longstanding incumbent. While he has only been involved in CIT for a short time, he has shown that he is extremely dedicated to the cause of CIT. In 2021, he sent his two executive assistants to the CIT Conference to return and plan the CIT Program in the area. He speaks from his heart to crowds and funding officials across Jefferson County. He knows officials at all levels of government must agree that implementing CIT includes them and they are critical to maintaining a healthy and thriving community. He has implemented improved mental health care in two jails and the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program placed in each county school brings the Sheriff's vision for community policing into local schools and provides a positive role model for the students. CIT aligns with his established vision and mission. Sheriff Pettway is kind, thoughtful, professional, loyal, dedicated, and committed to his CIT International Program and the mental health care system.

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**CITI Behavioral Health  
Practitioner of the Year  
Peggy Gorenflo  
Kansas City, MO**

This award recognizes a person who demonstrates exemplary, ongoing commitment to being actively involved with CIT community partnerships and works to improve access to services within their own system or with the community mental health system.

Peggy is a shining example of what a Community Behavioral Health Liaison (CBHL) should strive to be and has been the go-to person for any law enforcement CIT related issues for more than a decade. Peggy is directly responsible for developing and maintaining the region's CIT Council and the expansion of the region's overall CIT program. Peggy was a founding member of the regional CIT Council, Tri-CIT. Together with her local law enforcement, Peggy identified the need, formed the vision, and created Tri-CIT from the ground up in 2017. In 2021, due to increased funding, Peggy is now the supervisor of a much larger team. She supervises four additional CBHL's and a case worker. This additional staff share the work and responsibilities that allows for better service for the three-county area. Peggy understands the law enforcement culture, has built local relationships, and earned the trust that is needed for law enforcement to call for outside help for both the citizens and officers in crisis. Peggy assists with two 40-hour Basic CIT classes per year and was awarded CIT Instructor of the Year by Missouri CIT Council for 2019.

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**CITI Corrections Officer of the Year**  
**Kevin Monroe**  
**Greenville, NC**

The CIT Corrections Officer Award recognizes a CIT Corrections Officer who demonstrates continuous use of exemplary CIT knowledge and skills. Their work highlights their outstanding dedication to the CIT program, CIT Services and advancing its success within Corrections.

Kevin Monroe taught CIT in the prison system prior to getting involved with his current CIT program and has developed presentations, including de-escalation and self-care. He is an incredible role player and gives valuable feedback while taking prison policy into consideration. Officer Monroe also practices what he preaches and is the go-to in his facility when offenders are in crisis. He is respected by those who are incarcerated as well as his fellow officers. Kevin is continuously working with staff on their CIT communication skills and how to identify a developing mental health crisis. He has worked with other staff to help facilitate and provide debriefings. He has an open-door policy when it comes to other staff wanting to learn de-escalation skills. Kevin has also spoken about CIT to leaders in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety and has gained full support of CIT from the state prison system. He is patient, empathetic and a great listener. He demonstrates the essence of CIT by how he lives to serve others.

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**CITI Telecommunications Specialist  
of the Year  
Matthew Moddy  
Phoenix, AZ**

The CIT Telecommunication Specialist Award recognizes a dispatcher, call taker or crisis specialist who demonstrates continuous use of exemplary CIT knowledge and skills. Some examples of this may include successful use of telephonic de-escalation skills, knowledge and referrals to community resources, regular and continuous contact with the mental health community, following up after CIT calls, and/or showing compassion to people with mental illness lived experiences and families on a regular basis. Their work highlights their outstanding dedication to the CIT program, CIT Services and advancing CIT as a community success.

Matthew has worked as a call center specialist, supervisor, and is now the Director of Contact Center Operations for Solari, the NSPL certified crisis line for Maricopa, County Arizona. In each of these roles he has been enthusiastically supportive of CIT and its mission. Any community member can call the crisis line any time and receive assistance in a manner that exceeds national standards. It is truly “someone to call,” and no barrier access to care in a crisis. Matthew works tirelessly with law enforcement agencies all over the county to develop and improve ways to divert 911 callers directly to the crisis line, when possible, or to coordinate a mobile team response or co-response when the person needs “someone to come” or a “place to go.” He believes that, whenever possible, people in crisis should be diverted from a law enforcement response. He works hard to make sure that the crisis line and the mobile teams they dispatch are accessible and helpful to the community. He also ensures that when law enforcement is involved, that the crisis line and mobile teams are there to support them and take over the call as soon as it is safe to do so.

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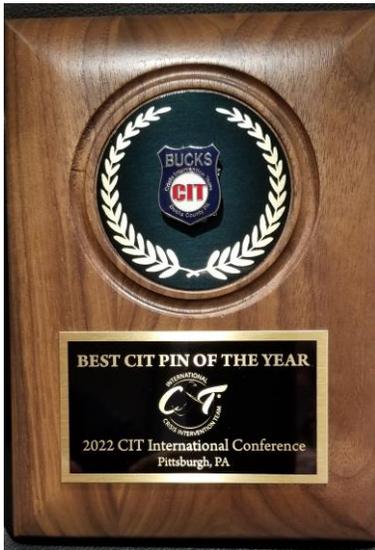
**CITI Researchers  
of the Year  
Jackson Beck  
Brooklyn, NY  
Jason Tan de Bibiana  
Brooklyn, NY**



This award is presented periodically to an individual or individuals who devote time and resources to conducting research that can advance CIT programs.

Jackson Beck and Jason Tan de Bibiana work as Program Associates for the Vera Institute Redefining Public Safety Program. Their work has focused on the intersection of public health and the criminal legal system's response to behavioral health issues. Their work supports the principles of CIT by providing examples of cutting-edge initiatives that embody its core elements and bring added benefit to communities. Jackson and Jason have been generous partners with CIT International, attending and presenting their findings at numerous CIT International conferences. They have also presented at other high-profile platforms and conferences. They are incredibly well-spoken and have been valuable partners in spreading the message of CIT while making the message fresh, relevant, and supported by research. We are proud to award Jackson and Jason with the CIT International Researchers of the Year Award in acknowledgment of their inspiring mission, talented work, and enduring partnership in furthering our shared values. They are generous and humble professionals who are doing meaningful and valuable work for communities nationwide.

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**CITI Best CIT Pin of the Year  
Bucks County  
Pennsylvania**



**CITI CIT Program of the Year  
Huntsville Alabama  
Police Department CIT Program**

CIT International applauds the Huntsville CIT program for building a strong foundation of success from its beginning a few short years ago. Most importantly, Huntsville’s program has a strong group of partners representing the key stakeholders for CIT—law enforcement, mental health providers and advocates—who oversee the program in a structured and organized way. The program has also built impressive connections at the regional and state levels, with successful efforts to advocate for additional services, such as the crisis receiving center. Huntsville has built a solid 40-hour CIT training program with sound officer-selection criteria to support the volunteer-specialist model of CIT. The training includes many of the best practice components that are key to officers building the empathy and skills to address mental health crisis situations, such as de-escalation, role-plays, site visits, and the inclusion of people with lived experience of mental illness as instructors. This specialized training is supplemented by mental health and de-escalation training available for all officers and CIT awareness training for supervisors, both of which help bolster CIT as a specialist program within the patrol division. Huntsville has also done a great job building awareness and visibility of the program with a website, awards ceremony, community awareness presentations and roll-call training. CIT programs need to constantly promote themselves to officers and to the broader community.