

# 2021 CIT INTERNATIONAL AWARD WINNERS



## CITI First Responder of the Year

Officer Jerome Fatzinger  
Wooster Police Department  
Wooster, OH

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.

Patrolman Jerome Fatzinger is a mentor to other law enforcement officers in both counties he serves, and is thought of as the “go to” officer for CIT. He has started a Law Enforcement Peer Support Group for officers and a Liaison Group for administrators. His compassion led him to initiate a “Chat with a Cop” program to break down barriers between Law Enforcement and persons with mental illness. In 2020, when a CIT Officer in the county died by suicide, he was the first to be contacted and provide support. He participated in the Critical Incident Stress Management process provided for that agency. In April 2021, Patrolman Fatzinger was awarded the Ohio CIT Officer of the Year for his performance in the above scenario. Patrolman Jerome Fatzinger is the true picture of a CIT officer and is very deserving of this award.

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## CITI *Fred Frese* Person with Lived Experience of the Year

Justin Volpe  
Certified Peer Recovery Specialist  
Miami-Dade, FL

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.

As a certified peer recovery specialist, Justin Volpe works with people who are facing similar challenges. He is one of the first people whom program participants meet upon release from jail and he literally walks alongside them as they reenter the community. Justin offers encouragement and practical assistance that will serve to promote successful recovery. Justin understands the importance of helping others to connect to their own inner strength, motivation, and desire to move forward in life, even when experiencing challenges. He shares his own lived experience of moving from hopelessness to hope which promotes a significant interpersonal bond.

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**CITI Advocate of the Year**  
**Patrick Halpern**  
**New River Valley Crisis Intervention Team**  
**New River Valley, VA**

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.

Mr. Halpern joined the New River Valley's Crisis Intervention Team program at exactly the right moment. The team had been in operation for a little over two years and would soon be a focal point of analysis following the Virginia Tech mass shootings in 2007. With Halpern's mentorship, the team would learn a great deal from the experience – what was working well as a community program and what needed improvements moving forward. With his stewardship the small team from the New River Valley would teach the rest of Virginia how Crisis Intervention Team programs could transform emergency mental health responses. As the President of the Virginia Crisis Intervention Team Coalition, Halpern has helped steer emerging code changes at the state level and today is a guiding member of the Virginia Governor's Taskforce seeking to bridge the gap between emergency mental healthcare and social justice reform.

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## CITI Coordinator of the Year

Lt. Troy Siewert

Orland Park Police Department

Orland Park, IL

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.

Lt. Siewert created and leads the Crisis Intervention Team at the Orland Park Police Department (OPPD). His nomination stated that “he has completely surpassed all expectations” and his passion for CIT cannot be overstated. He led the department’s successful effort to become the first agency, internationally to complete the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) One Mind Campaign. As a result of Lt. Siewert’s efforts, OPPD CIT was selected as one of three best practice teams in the nation to participate in SAMHSA’s national Best Practice Implementation Academy in Washington, DC. Lt. Siewert’s passion for CIT cannot be overstated. He has committed so much of his own time and effort to further the cause of CIT.

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## CITI Law Enforcement Executive of the Year

Sheriff David Rhodes

Yavapai County Sheriff’s Office

Yavapai, AZ

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 Rhodes, Yavapai County's top sheriff, has set a gold standard in law enforcement, leading the state in meaningful mental health criminal justice collaboration, in the effort to decriminalize mental illness. Sheriff Rhodes has been an amazing champion for CIT in Yavapai County. There was much work to be done because the county had no CIT program, no jail diversion, and not many services for individuals in a mental health crisis. Sheriff Rhodes was one of a group of key members who were committed to bringing evidenced based practices to his region. Thanks to his efforts his county now has a robust CIT program that rivals that of the more urban area around Phoenix, complete with a crisis line, mobile teams, and no-wrong-door facilities for law enforcement officers. His coalition has been industrious, creative, and has built a model CIT program in a very challenging area. Sheriff Rhodes was also one of the first leaders to join the Stepping Up Initiative, a national movement to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails. Of all the executives involved in CIT, Sheriff Rhodes has been the most passionate, dedicated, and supportive. He is especially invested in evidence-based practices and his efforts stick closely to the Memphis Model of CIT. His hard work and dedication are deserving of the highest honors.

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## CITI Behavioral Health Practitioner of the Year

Dr. Margaret Balfour  
Crisis Response Center  
Tucson, AZ

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.

Dr. Balfour joined the Crisis Response Center in 2014 when Connections Health Solutions was contracted to assume the management of a struggling crisis facility in Tucson. As the clinical leader of that facility, she led an initiative to overhaul the clinical processes and organizational culture, resulting in significant improvements in safety, throughput, and patient experience. Today, Tucson's Crisis Response Center is the centerpiece of a premier crisis system in the U.S. and hosts visitors from across the nation seeking to learn about best practices in crisis care. Dr. Balfour is passionate about improving patient experience and safety for vulnerable populations, beginning with their contact with first responders, which is often law enforcement. She provides Crisis Intervention Team Training and other education to local law enforcement and has helped inform the design and development of new programs at the Tucson Police Department.

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## CITI Corrections Officer of the Year

Mark Vosecky

Cook County Dept. of Corrections

Cook County, IL

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.

The nomination submitted by Dr. Carl James Alaimo Sr. stated that Officer Vosecky has an undeniable dedication to his career and has always been an absolute joy to work with. He is a true team player, and always manages to foster positive discussions and bring out the best in his co-workers. He continues to be a role model for officers around him by continuing to explore with them the benefits of CIT. Officer Vosecky's role demands that he recognize potentially high-risk situations and find a solution before they escalate, and if they do escalate, deal with them swiftly and appropriately. He performs his duties with professionalism and diligence, impartiality, and fairness, with a cool-headedness and diplomatic approach. He is undeniably dedicated to his career and is an absolute joy to work with. Officer Vosecky is a true team player, and always manages to foster positive discussions and bring out the best in his co-workers.

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## CITI Crisis Specialist of the Year

Jena Wolfe

Augusta County 911 Center

Staunton, VA

The CIT Crisis 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.

Jena Wolfe began her career over 15 years ago with the Augusta County 911 center where she built a strong reputation as a skilled dispatcher and excellent call taker long before joining the Staunton Police Department in September of 2018. In February of 2014, Jena became one of the first 4 dispatchers in the area to take the 40-hour CIT Course and was immediately recognized by the team as an exceptional student who embodied the skills and mindset needed as an instructor. Jena was recognized by the Virginia CIT Coalition as the 2020 CIT Communications Officer of the Year, for her extraordinary dedication to the program which exemplifies the best practices, values, and purpose of CIT.

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**CITI CIT Program of the  
Year and CIT Best of Pin  
Detroit Wayne County Crisis  
Intervention Team  
Detroit, MI**

