**Virginia is Recognized for two 2012 Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) International Awards**

CIT International is a non-profit membership organization whose primary purpose is to facilitate understanding, development and implementation of Crisis Intervention Team CIT programs throughout the United States and in other nations worldwide in order to promote and support collaborative efforts to create and sustain more effective and safer interactions among law enforcement, mental health care providers, individuals with mental illness, their families and communities and also to reduce the stigma of mental illness.

One of CIT International's signature events and strategies for promoting and sustaining CIT programs is its annual International conference. Each year during this conference several individuals around the country and world are recognized for their exemplary work with their CIT program and within their community. Two of the categories that awards are given in are Police Chief of the Year and Advocate of the Year.

This year CIT International selected Kathy Harkey as the CIT Advocate of the Year and Chief Douglas A. Middleton as the CIT Police Chief of the Year.

An advocate is a champion for people in need. This person needs to have demonstrated exceptional involvement, dedication and/ or support for people with mental illness who may not be able to speak for themselves.

Kathy became a certified trainer for CIT and has served as a family member trainer during the 40 hour training since the CIT inception in Henrico County. She is an outstanding advocate for CIT and today serves as the program director for NAMI Central Virginia. It is people like Kathy who devote their time and energy to helping those who are the most vulnerable.

Chief Middleton is very committed to supporting the CIT programs in his county and the surrounding counties who have requested their personnel to be CIT trained by his staff. He plans to CIT train 100% of Henrico County Police Officers and the Henrico County Academy Recruits. He is committed to partnering with Fire, Mental Health and the Sheriff's Department to ensure all first responders are CIT trained. The success of the CIT programs in Henrico County and the surrounding counties is because of Chief Middleton's tireless efforts and his dedication to duty.

The Henrico Police Department CIT trainers have facilitated six 40 hour Basic CIT classes and two Train the Trainer (TTT) classes. In December 2012, Henrico County celebrated the graduation of its 15th Basic CIT class. Since December 2012, Henrico Police Department has conducted 2 more basic classes. In 2011 Henrico County trained 402 first responders in either the 40 hour Basic Class or the abbreviated CIT training for Communications Officers. The Mobile Response Team (MRT) has spent over 1,100 hours assisting citizens in our community and attending to crises. This program has received enthusiastic reviews from our responders who feel they are more quickly able to attend to crises and have a more effective response.