



# CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

## TESTIMONIAL

At the Treasure Coast CIT annual appreciation breakfast on November 5, 2009, two officers from St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office were recognized for successfully working with a very psychotic person whose bizarre behavior had drawn the attention of the State Supreme Court.

After the awards were presented, a family member, representing NAMI, spoke to the group.

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### This was her message:

You just heard the story behind the awards to the two officers. That psychotic person in that story was my son.

I can't begin to describe my feelings when I heard what he had done. He had been stable for ten years – no problems! And now – this!

I felt immense gratitude and relief when I heard that he had been Baker Acted to a mental health facility and that there had been no violence. I thought – the responding officers must have been CIT trained. I am well aware of what could have happened and that we could have been on the evening news. Because of this intervention by CIT trained officers, my son is stable and ready to go back to work instead of sitting in jail.

### But there is another story here.

At a recent CIT steering committee meeting this story came up. When I said "that is my son", there was a look of disbelief around the room. Somehow I just don't look like the mother of a monster! The real story is --- he is not a monster. He started out as a cute kid, played Little League and a lot of other perfectly normal things. For much of his adult life he has been stable and productive. In early adulthood he was robbed of a normal life by a mental illness. It is very common for people to assume that a psychotic person comes from some unknown, weird place. Not so. They come from ordinary homes. There are many stories like mine. Many caregivers and family members being completely overwhelmed trying to take care of their mentally ill loved one. A better system of care is needed for this population and there is also a need for more education of the general public.

One long-time need has been the education of law enforcement about mental illness. With CIT that is finally happening! *I don't know of a better example of its effectiveness and how everything "went right."*

**Thank you and God bless you! And thanks to all of you for taking this training and for supporting CIT.**

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