



City of Alexandria
Crisis Intervention Team
Awards
2016

DEC Employee of the Year ~ PSCO Kaneshia Foster



Public Safety Communications Officer Kaneshia Foster received information from Prince Georges County about a 60-year-old man in crisis. She initiated contact with him to arrange assistance and discovered he was experiencing an emotional crisis and contemplating suicide. He was upset over financial issues and dealings with the federal government and indicated he had a firearm in his possession.

Ms. Foster kept the caller on the line, providing reassurance while also giving updates to the responding field units. Her telephone demeanor created a rapport with the caller, calming

him and de-escalating the situation. The caller began confiding information to Ms. Foster and following her instructions. While units were staging to make contact, she was able to convince the caller to put his firearm away, lessening the potential for any action that could cause harm to responding units or himself.

For over an hour, Ms. Foster spoke with the man in crisis. She convinced him that the police and EMS units on the scene were there to help him. The caller's initial reluctance to allow units to provide aid was appeased by Ms. Foster, who assured him she would remain on the phone while he was being transported to the emergency room. The caller eventually agreed to voluntarily accompany EMS for a medical evaluation at the hospital.

By utilizing patience and skills learned in CIT, Public Safety

Communications Officer Foster was directly responsible for the peaceful resolution of this situation. Every day, members of the department of Emergency Communications field calls ranging from mundane to events with a tragic impact. Kaneshia Foster went the extra mile with this caller and displayed a level of professionalism all members of the team strive for daily. ■

Medic of the Year ~ Paramedic Chip Myers



Chip Myers is a seasoned veteran Paramedic with nearly 30 years of service in the Alexandria Fire Department. Paramedics are challenged with one-on-one patient interaction every

day with a very real potential of becoming unsafe quickly. They are charged with riding in the back of the ambulance, most times by themselves, with individuals who may wish to do harm to themselves or others. Paramedic Myers has an uncanny ability to engage in easy conversation with any patient and possesses a disarmingly charming personality.

Utilizing CIT training and skills,

Paramedic Myers has helped numerous people through crises ranging from mild to potentially life-threatening. He is deserving of recognition for his overall consistently engaging demeanor and ability to flexibly accommodate individuals in crisis. In short, Paramedic Myers is loved by all, both coworkers and patients alike, and embodies everything that a CIT-trained Paramedic should be. ■



Deputy of the Year ~ Deputy Darold Crawford



Deputy Sheriff Crawford works in the Sheriff's Office's Critical Care Mental Health Unit (CC-MHU). This area houses inmates with the most serious mental illnesses within the Alexandria Sheriff's Office's custody. These inmates require the highest level of supervision due to their acute mental health issues. By utilizing excellent interpersonal communication, law enforcement experience and skills learned in CIT training, Deputy Crawford does an excellent job of resolving potential issues before they become problematic.

On October 23,

2015, Deputy Crawford was conducting his security and observation round in the unit. He observed an inmate sitting on his cell bunk with his clothes neatly organized as if he were leaving the facility. Deputy Crawford knew this behavior was unusual for the inmate, so he began to monitor the inmate's behavior more closely via the camera system and security rounds. He attempted to engage the inmate in conversation, and noted the inmate was more reserved than usual.

Shortly thereafter, Deputy Crawford observed the inmate climbing onto the sink in his cell. The inmate had one end of a shirt tied around his neck and was attempting to tie the other end to the sprinkler fixture, located high on the wall. Deputy Crawford called for additional

staff and began talking with the inmate. These actions interrupted the inmate's progress in hanging himself. Other deputies arrived and were able to secure the inmate without injury to staff or the inmate.

Following the incident, the inmate was able to receive further intervention and appropriate mental health treatment. He had several visits with his family and the quality of his interaction with staff and other inmates improved. The inmate has since left custody and returned to live with his family. Thanks to Deputy Crawford, the former inmate looks to have a bright future despite this potentially tragic incident. ■

Officer of the Year ~ Officer Tarek Helmy



On February 1, 2015, **Officer Tarek Helmy** was dispatched to a local shelter for a call to remove a disruptive female, “Ms. B,” from the premises.

Upon arrival, “Ms. B” was screaming at officers on the scene. Officer Helmy could have arrested her for refusing to leave the premises but he chose to use CIT skills and spoke with her instead. He gave her a wide berth and asked other officers to do the same so she could move around in her agitated state. When she was calmer, Officer Helmy escorted “Ms. B” off the premises without incident.

Officer Helmy noted

the woman had nothing with her, which was unusual, as many people who are homeless carry their belongings with them. He began searching police databases to get more information about “Ms. B” but was unsuccessful. When other officers asked her for more information she became loud and agitated but Officer Helmy was not deterred. He escorted “Ms. B” to a nearby parking lot where he continued talking with her compassionately and respectfully. “Ms. B” began confiding in Officer Helmy, telling him about her sister, her favorite brand of cigarettes and that her medication made her feel “weird.” While “Ms. B” spoke with Officer Helmy, she also appeared to be responding to hallucinations, periodically screaming in different directions. Officer Helmy stayed calm and de-escalated the situation each time

she became agitated.

“Ms. B” eventually confided that her name was really “Ms. T.” Officer Helmy verified her identity using police databases and found she had been reported missing by her sister many weeks prior. Officer Helmy notified the sister, who expressed gratitude and confirmed Ms. T suffers from a serious mental illness. Officer Helmy then escorted Ms. T to the hospital where she was evaluated and hospitalized for stabilization.

If not for Officer Helmy and his CIT skills, this situation could have ended much differently. Either Ms. T or an officer could have been injured while attempting to take her into custody. Officer Helmy demonstrated exemplary professionalism and a unique ability to effectively relate with a person in crisis. ■

Intervention of the Year ~ Officer Frank Powers



On April 8, 2015, **Officer Frank Powers** responded to a call for service regarding an ongoing dispute about excessive noise coming from the apartments of two city residents. Upon arrival Officer Powers noticed that the complainants' door had been kicked in. While interviewing the suspect of the alleged destruction of property, Officer Powers discovered that the man was a former U.S. Marine with two tours of duty in Iraq and had awards and decorations hanging on his wall to validate the claim.

The veteran engaged in a lengthy conversation with Officer

Powers. Based on the veteran's statements, and his training and experience as a CIT officer, Officer Powers suspected that the man was suffering from PTSD and was in desperate need of services. Officer Powers spoke with the victim and property management who both declined prosecution in order to allow the veteran an opportunity to get the services he needed. Officer Powers then went above and beyond the call of duty when he requested, and was granted, permission to transport the victim to the Veteran Affairs Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he "hand delivered" the victim to the appropriate receiving staff.

Officer Powers' intervention was instrumental in diverting a resident of Alexandria and a decorated Marine in need of services from being incarcerated for a criminal

offense to being set up for success by ensuring he received the help he needed.

Officer Powers received a letter of thanks for helping the veteran get his life back on track. The resident stated, "Very rarely do we encounter people that have a genuine desire to help others. You are one of those people and I am grateful for it. Thank you." ■