

For Immediate Release

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Charlotte County CIT Training Group Congratulates Recent Graduates

Punta Gorda, FL (September 7, 2017) – The Charlotte County Criminal Justice & Behavioral Health Advisory Council held a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for local law enforcement officers during the week of August 28th at the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office Training Facility.

Sixteen Charlotte County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) deputies and three Punta Gorda Police Department (PGPD) officers graduated on Friday, September 1st, 2017. Graduates from CCSO are: Adam Freitas, Adam Herrey, Aleya Leonard, Brian Mueller, David Imbruno, Elijah Lee, John Diaz, Jonathan Schwartz, Joseph Eilerman, Joshua Lindsey, Kim Ouellette, Krystal Coelho, Mark Vanderwaag, Nicholas Owens, Richard Nelson, and Sharief Thabit. Graduates from PGPD are: Aaron Russell, Fernando Burga, and Larry Schrader.

CIT is a 5-day, 40-hour class that is used nationwide to train law enforcement officers on how to recognize signs and symptoms of mentally ill individuals in distress and to learn techniques to de-escalate situations to prevent injury to both the officer and the individual.

Officers learn about community resources that may assist in diverting the person from jail and into a treatment program when appropriate as well as calming techniques, taught by fellow law enforcement officers that are proven to reduce officer injury rates and incidents of violence.

The class included lectures and on-site visits to mental health facilities as well as scenario role plays in which mental health professionals mimic real-life calls which officers might be dispatched to in which a person was displaying symptoms of severe mental illness.

CIT segments were facilitated by volunteers from Charlotte Behavioral Health Care, 211, Charlotte County Sheriff Office, Punta Gorda Police Department, Charlotte County Homeless Coalition, Florida Gulf Coast University, Russell Kirshy Law Office, Charlotte County Courts, Riverside Behavioral, Salus Care, and the Veteran's Association.

Some of the topics that were taught were signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance abuse in adults, juveniles, geriatrics, and the developmentally disabled, veteran's issues, legal issues, and suicide and violence risk assessment. For more information call Jim Cox at Charlotte Behavioral Health Care (941) 639-8300 x 2490.

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