



The Collier Star

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Special Edition
 Sheriff Kevin Rambosk

CCSO Crisis Intervention Program Honored



Corrections Cpl. Hanser Gonzalez, left, and Corrections Deputy Clinton Ashline role play while being evaluated during a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training class in October. More than 650 CCSO deputies are currently CIT-trained. Photo by Cpl. Efrain Hernandez/CCSO

When it comes to training law enforcement officers how to best interact with people with mental illness, the Collier County Sheriff's Office is the gold standard.

CCSO was recently honored for its commitment to providing specialized Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to the community, a program that improves outcomes for deputies, persons in mental health crises, their family members, and the community as a whole.

The Florida CIT Coalition presented Sheriff Kevin Rambosk with a Gold Standard Certificate recognizing CCSO for meeting and exceeding the Memphis Model Core Elements. The Memphis Police Department in Tennessee developed CIT training in 1988 to give officers enhanced training related to people with mental illness and teaches de-escalation techniques. The training has proven to reduce injuries and deaths to police and people with mental illness.

CCSO is the only agency to achieve gold standard status out of an estimated 150 counties and municipalities with CIT programs in Florida and the first agency to be awarded a Gold Standard Certificate, Larry Thompson said of the Coalition.

The Florida CIT Coalition is comprised of representatives of communities across Florida currently providing CIT training based on the Memphis Model. The group supports statewide implementation of CIT training for law enforcement officers.

Nearly 1,000 people have been through the 40-hour CIT training since the program was

introduced in Collier County in February 2008. More than half are CCSO deputies.



CCSO's Crisis Intervention Team training program was recently honored with a Gold Standard Certificate from the Florida CIT Coalition. Pictured from left: Coalition Chairwoman Michele Saunders, Sheriff Kevin Rambosk, Coalition member Larry Thompson and CCSO program Coordinator Lt. George Welch. Photo by Kristi Lester/CCSO

"From the very first day there was no question in my mind we should be doing this," said Sheriff Rambosk.

Florida CIT Coalition Chairwoman Michele Saunders said Sheriff Rambosk has taken the initiative to support consumers of behavioral health services, family members, mental health providers and law enforcement officers who assist those in need or in crisis.

"The Collier County Sheriff's Office CIT program has provided its deputies with new tools to address the needs of its citizens with mental illness who are in crisis and others with disabilities and has moved beyond this important component of training to develop a first responder system," Saunders said.

Saunders said deputies have taken on more

responsibility considering the limited funding available for mental health, developmental disabilities and addiction services.

"Oftentimes these officers who provide assistance to all citizens, but especially those with disabilities, receive little recognition for their caring and compassion," she said.

Sheriff Rambosk said CCSO shares the honor with the many organizations and individuals that have partnered with the Sheriff's Office since 2008 to bring CIT to Collier County, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Collier County and the David Lawrence Center (DLC). NAMI provides the funding, facility and staff support for the training. DLC provides the facility and staff support for the training.

"This certification underscores the incredible commitment of Sheriff Rambosk, the Collier County Sheriff's Office and the Board of Collier County Commissioners who have prioritized the assurance that mental health and addiction challenges in the community are met with the most compassionate and effective interventions," said Scott Burgess, chief executive officer for the David Lawrence Center. "We are grateful the CCSO is receiving this recognition for their dedication to CIT training and for their exemplary leadership in advancing this initiative, not only in Florida, but across the nation."

Pamela Baker, executive director and CEO of NAMI of Collier County, echoed Burgess's comments, saying the honor is well deserved.

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Dear Friends,

Here we are once again coming into a busy winter tourist season. We welcome our friends from the North, and we are working hard to make sure that everyone stays safe on our roads.

Since Aug. 23, the Collier County Sheriff's Office has been conducting a campaign aimed at curbing aggressive driving. To maximize their effectiveness deputies have been focusing largely on corridors identified by data as being high-volume crash areas. Deputies have used electronic signs in these areas to raise driver awareness.

From the start of the campaign through Oct. 20, deputies have conducted 991 traffic stops in these areas. Of those stops, 316 resulted in a citation and 814

resulted in a warning. In addition, the traffic stops included 44 commercial motor vehicle inspections.

The goal of this initiative is to slow down traffic and reduce injury crashes and fatalities on our roads, while achieving voluntary compliance of traffic laws through education and enforcement.

The winter tourist season can be a stressful time to be on the road in Southwest Florida. That's why we are doing everything we can to increase motorist safety. I also want you to know that if you see areas of Collier County where traffic enforcement is needed, please call our ZOOM Traffic Hotline at 239-530-ZOOM (9666). Deputies incorporate ZOOM hotline information into their traffic enforcement plans. Together we will keep our roads safe.

Yours in a safe community,
 Kevin Rambosk, Collier County Sheriff

Here are some ways you can help us keep our roads safe:

- * Obey all speed limits and signs
- * Limit distractions like eating, drinking, or talking on your phone
- * Be alert and remain focused solely on the task of driving.
- * Always wear your seatbelt.

Comm Center Earns First CALEA Accreditation

The Collier County Sheriff's Office Communications Bureau has been awarded its first Public Safety Communications Accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc. (CALEA).

In order to achieve accreditation, a highly prized recognition of law enforcement professional excellence, the CCSO Communications Bureau was required to demonstrate full compliance with 212 state-of-the-art performance standards.



From left, CALEA Executive Director Craig Hartley, CCSO Communications Bureau Manager Nicholas McFadden, Communications Bureau Director Chris Gonzalez, Sgt. Nicole Minick, Communications Bureau Technical Manager Bob Finney III, Communications Bureau Supervisor Melanie McFadden, and CALEA Commissioner Richard Myers.

Compliance with the performance standards was verified through a file review and on-site assessment by a CALEA-certified public safety practitioner in April. The public was invited to offer comments in writing or by telephone about CCSO's ability to meet the standards.

Communications Director Chris Gonzalez noted that while the Communications Bureau was preparing for the accreditation process, telecommunicators were simultaneously transitioning to a new computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. The Bureau also had recently completed the conversion to a new 911 system.

"This required a significant amount of training and patience," Director Gonzalez said. "This is an incredible feat and a true testament to the dedication and professionalism of the hardworking men and women of the Communications Bureau."

The CALEA accreditation performance standards focused on four areas of responsibility: policy and procedures; administration; operations; and support services.

Accreditation is for three years, during which the Sheriff's Office must submit annual reports attesting to continued compliance with those standards under which it was reaccredited.

The Public Safety Communications Accreditation is one of five accreditations currently held by CCSO. The agency also is accredited by:

- * Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc. (CALEA) - Law Enforcement
- * Commission on Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation
- * Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission
- * National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch

CCSO Launches 'Carpool Cruiser'

Move over James Corden, the Collier County Sheriff's Office is in the carpool lane.

There won't be singing, but the Sheriff's Office is looking to pick up fans with its new video ride-along series.

"Carpool Cruiser" is an occasional series featuring CCSO deputies talking about their jobs while riding around in a sheriff's cruiser.

Inspired by Corden's "Carpool Karaoke," Lt. J.J. Carroll will take the wheel and interview a different agency member about his or her job.

Each episode will start with Lt. Carroll picking up a deputy and end with him dropping off the deputy at work.

The first episode features Cpl. Jerrod Carver of the Agriculture Unit riding shotgun while talking about his job and engaging in lively and upbeat banter with Lt. Carroll. Cpl. Carver discusses everything from his favorite vehicle to use on patrol to his strangest call (it involves a kangaroo).

You too can come along for the ride.

Watch the video on CCSO's YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/colliercountysheriff> or on ccso.tv.



Agriculture Deputy Jerrod Carver, left, joins Lt. J.J. Carroll for the debut of "Carpool Cruiser," a video ride-along series featuring CCSO deputies talking about their jobs. Photo by Cpl. Efrain Hernandez/CCSO

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"Through its collaboration with NAMI, the Collier County Sheriff's Office has always ensured that advocates and individuals with mental illnesses are integrally involved in CIT design and implementation," Baker said.

Baker noted that CIT training is offered locally at least five times per year, which takes considerable time and resources.

"By ensuring that as many officers as possible are trained in CIT, including other local jurisdictions, CCSO minimizes unnecessary jail admissions and maximizes humane treatment for people with mental illnesses," Baker said.

Sheriff Rambosk also recognized the primary program facilitators: Coordinator Lt. George Welch and Sgt. Leslie Weidenhammer of CCSO, and Master Officers William Gonsalves and Tyrone Davis of the Naples Police Department.

Organizations and individuals who have helped provide training over the years include George Drobinski, a licensed mental health counselor; Catherine Cruikshank, regional director of education/program specialist for The Alzheimer's Association - Florida Gulf Coast Chapter; Sgt. Dan McDonald of CCSO; Martha Lenderman, an expert on Florida's involuntary commitment Baker Act law; and retired Lt. Brian Garrett of the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

Community members with a mental health diagnosis and their families have also played a role in the training as have representatives from the court system, Shelter for Abused Women and Children, Survivors After Suicide, Naples Community Hospital, Park Royal Hospital, The Willough at Naples, Hazelden Naples, the local Veterans Affairs office and more.

A total of 994 people are currently trained in CIT in Collier County.



Deputy Kevin Saliba and Megan Cobb of NAMI of Collier County engage in a role-playing scenario enacting de-escalation strategies during a mental health crisis during a CIT training class in October. In this scenario, Cobb portrays a woman who has taken a number of pills and is suffering from severe depression. Photo by Cpl. Efrain Hernandez/CCSO

There are now: 652 CIT-trained CCSO deputies; 102 CIT-trained Naples police officers; and 39 CIT-trained Marco Island police officers. Seventy-eight Hendry County Sheriff's Office deputies, 30 National Park Service workers, 15 Collier County Probation employees and 19 Florida State Probation employees are also CIT trained. Fifty-nine civilians, including area mental health agency workers, also have taken the training.

Sheriff Rambosk's goal is to have 100 percent of Collier deputies trained in CIT.

Collier County Judge Janeice Martin is CIT trained, having taken the course in 2009 as she prepared to become the presiding judge over Mental Health Court.

"I found the course to be extremely helpful to me in understanding how to recognize and interact effectively

and respectfully with persons who were suffering from a mental health diagnosis," she said.

Judge Martin said she sees the benefits of CIT training on a near daily basis in her role as a criminal court judge and in her role as the presiding judge for all three local treatment courts: Mental Health Court, Drug Court and Veterans Treatment Court.

"I note that whenever possible, persons are being diverted from jail into treatment on Baker and Marchman acts - and those petitions are being supported by detailed and thoughtful affidavits by the trained officers," she said. "And when diversion is not possible and an arrest must be made, I see efforts to de-escalate the situation, minimizing the number and type of charges that must be brought."

Furthermore, she said, reports now include valuable details about any signs and symptoms of mental illness that were observed by the officer. Those report details help ensure the court system identifies the person as a potential treatment court participant earlier in the process, thereby reducing unnecessary time in jail and expediting the move toward meaningful treatment.

"I commend the Sheriff for his leadership in this area, for recognizing years ago that law enforcement is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor," Judge Martin said. "His efforts to provide officers with these additional tools for use in interacting with and serving the mentally ill bring benefits throughout the community. Officer safety and public safety are improved, persons in need of services are linked with those services, and valuable law enforcement resources are conserved in favor of treatment whenever possible."

CCSO Celebrates Safe Communities

Deputies joined forces with residents in neighborhood celebrations across Collier County to promote community safety.

Celebrating Safe Communities is designed to heighten crime prevention and drug prevention awareness; generate support for and participation in local anti-crime efforts; and strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships.

CCSO celebrated the fight against crime by hosting family friendly events and activities in all six patrol districts in early October in an effort to bring neighborhoods, communities, businesses, and law enforcement together.

Festivities included cookouts, bounce houses, wall climbing, and refreshments. Informational kiosks and demonstrations by representatives from area emergency services and county government agencies were also featured.

All of the events were free and open to the public.



Cpl. Michael Ramos and K9 Spyder take time out to visit with a young participant at the Celebrating Safe Communities event in North Naples. Photos by Cpl. Efrain Hernandez/CCSO (3)



Sheriff Kevin Rambosk, center, hangs out with participants at the Golden Gate event.



SWAT was a popular stop for participants during the East Naples event.

CCSO Awards, Appointments and Recognitions

Here are some of the recent awards, appointments and recognitions at the Collier County Sheriff's Office:

Sheriff Kevin Rambosk has been appointed to the board of directors for David Lawrence Center, Collier County's only comprehensive, not-for-profit mental health and substance abuse treatment facility serving children, adults and families. He will serve a three-year term.

"Through his leadership, the Sheriff's Office and David Lawrence Center partnership has evolved to identify the best ways law enforcement can serve the growing mental health and substance abuse needs of those struggling in our community while maintaining public safety," the DLC said in a news release announcing the appointment.

Community Engagement Chief Stephanie Spell has been selected to participate in the 2016-2017 Annual Class Program of Leadership Florida.

Leadership Florida is a nonprofit organization founded in 1982 by the Florida Chamber of Commerce. The bedrock of Leadership Florida is the Annual Class Program. Each year the program selects Florida's finest leaders to participate in an eight-month curriculum, held in six different Florida cities, to learn about statewide topics of concern and opportunities, while also encouraging interaction among the state's leadership. Participants are chosen for their abilities, passion about Florida and commitment to help make great things happen for the Sunshine State.

Chief Spell was among 56 professional men and women selected for Leadership Florida's 35th class that began Sept. 14 in Howey-in-the-Hills.

Sgt. Timothy Cornelius and Cpl. Daniel Darren took top honors at the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) 16th annual Florida State Recognition Dinner in Fort Lauderdale in early August.

Sgt. Cornelius, who is assigned to the CCSO Safety & Traffic and Enforcement Bureau, was awarded the Millennium Award for more than 1,000 driving-under-the-influence (DUI) arrests during his career.

Cpl. Darren, who is assigned to CCSO Marine Bureau, was honored for Outstanding Dedication to Boating Under the Influence (BUI) Enforcement.

Director of Communications Chris Gonzalez has received certification as a communications center manager.

Director Gonzalez recently completed the national Emergency Number Association (NENA) Center Manager Certification Program (CMCP) following an intensive weeklong training session in Indianapolis.

The program is designed to equip current, new and potential public safety answering point and 911 authority managers and supervisors with the tools needed to effectively manage their agency through a rigorous 40-hour course of lecture and lab-based education.



Sgt. Leslie Weidenhammer was honored by the DLC during the annual Recovery Month awards ceremony in September.

The DLC recognized Sgt. Weidenhammer for her involvement as a Crisis Intervention Team Trainer and coordinator of the Mental Health Unit with the CCSO. She is also a member of the Collier County Drug Court, Mental Health Court and Veterans Court Teams. She serves as a volunteer board member for National Alliance on Mental Illness where she also works in their youth programs.

"She is as a steadfast mental health advocate and conveys the message of help," the DLC said in recognizing Sgt. Weidenhammer.

Sgt. Brian Sawyer graduated from the 75th Class of the Command Officers Development Course, sponsored by the Southern Police Institute, Department of Justice Administration at the University of Louisville.

Sgt. Sawyer, who oversees the Fraud Section, joined 56 law enforcement officers from 31 agencies in five states who completed the 400-hour course. The 10-week intensive course is heralded as the institute's flagship educational program for upper-level managers in law enforcement. The course provides a solid foundation for practical law enforcement administration and a comprehensive overview of management practices.

Sgt. Nicole Minick has been named Team Leader of the Year by the FCAC. The award is presented to individuals who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, mentoring and effective management of assessments while serving as the team leader.

Sgt. Minick serves as the CCSO accreditation manager and is responsible for all agency accreditation processes. She has also served as an FCAC assessor since 2002, a Commission for Florida Law Enforcement assessor since 2013 and was also selected to be a team leader in 2013.

The CCSO website www.colliersheriff.org was honored by Vision Internet in the third annual "What's Next Awards." The competition recognizes local government websites for excellence in citizen engagement, green government, online innovation, transparency and visual impact.

CCSO was recognized as "Best In Community Engagement" for providing its 349,000 residents and 1.7 million annual visitors with easy access to its online resources.

"Its Vision-hosted website and social media make it easy for citizens to subscribe to Sheriff's Office news, view interactive crime maps, report nonviolent crimes, get real-time traffic updates and request public records," Vision said in announcing the award. "Better yet, this online service delivery is saving tax dollars and freeing up deputies to focus on more urgent situations."



COLLIER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Community Snapshots

Hundreds of people waving blue glow sticks lined U.S. 41 North in Naples to show their appreciation for law enforcement during a "Let's Glow For LEOs" event Aug. 3. Organizer Gianluca Corso, owner of Cosmos Café & Pizzeria, also offered free pizza at his restaurant. All of the proceeds benefitted the Collier County 100 Club, which provides financial assistance to the families of fallen emergency responders who have lost their lives in the line of duty. Photo by Jacob LaRochelle/CCSO



K9 Sydper helps keep in shape by taking a run on a treadmill. All of the running rarely tucks him out; he's got a toy and is still ready to play! Want to see more of Sydper and his fellow K9 coworkers? CCSO launched a new Facebook page dedicated to our favorite furry crime fighters in September. Make sure to like us at CCSO K-9 Unit! Photo submitted by Sgt. William Gifford/CCSO



Preschoolers from East Naples United Methodist Church Learning Center dressed up like superheroes and made a trip to CCSO Headquarters to bring their "superheroes" special cards, cakes and goody bags. Photo by Cpl. Efrain Hernandez/CCSO



Cpl. Sylee Gibson talks about upcoming community events planned by the CCSO during a Coffee With A Cop session at an East Naples' Starbucks. Photo by Kristi Lester/CCSO



Crime Prevention Specialist Connie Ledbetter chills out with a Golden Gate Estates family during CCSO's first "Slurpees With A Cop" event, held at 7-Eleven, 14344 Immokalee Road. Photo submitted by Cpl. Sherry Anderson/CCSO