



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."*

MARGARET MEAD

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 2009 from

[http://www.facesva.org/pdf/articles/message\\_from\\_executive\\_director\\_2009.pdf](http://www.facesva.org/pdf/articles/message_from_executive_director_2009.pdf)

**FACES** is encouraged by the position the Henrico County Police and Emergency Medical Services Unit is taking in developing and training their own Crisis Intervention (C.I.T.) Team. The C.I.T. is a law enforcement model which relies on the partnership between advocates such as **FACES**, the mental health community and law enforcement. When police officers and mentally ill individuals come into contact with each other, people with mental illnesses often find themselves charged with low-level offenses, and thrown in jail. What they really need is a Jail Diversion program in place and community based treatment for their mental illness and substance abuse problems that often accompany it. I encourage you to contact your local county or city representative from the locality where you preside, your local member of the General Assembly both from the House and Senate, and your local Community Service Board TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINION OF THE FORMATION OF C.I.T. TEAMS WITHIN YOUR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.

*As this letter about the necessity for Crisis Intervention Training was being written, a tragedy occurred in Chesterfield County. On April 25, 2009, a mentally ill man was shot and killed by a Chesterfield County police officer. The victim's mother had called the police for help explaining that her son had a history of mental illness and that he had inexplicably attacked his father. According to the Richmond Times Dispatch, (Sunday, April 27, 2009) the mother told the dispatcher he needed to call a crisis intervention professional, but she said the dispatcher told her to stay on the phone. Could this tragedy have been averted if Chesterfield County had officers especially trained in de-escalation of crisis with mentally ill persons? CIT outcomes have been very positive in the communities nationwide that have adopted them. They not only increase treatment options for the ill person but they also increase the safety for the police officers. We ask your support in spreading the word about CIT and urging you state and county governments to fund them to keep all our citizens safe.*

Thank you,  
**FACES** Board Members