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## CITIZENS' FEEDBACK

“Dear Officers:

First I would like to say **thank you** for talking the time to attend the CIT program that was offered by NAMI Medina County. I hope that the class was helpful and informative. I have a 22 year old daughter who has mental illness and we have had many encounters with the police and or sheriffs departments over the past 15 + years. I am sorry to say that many times the outcome was very discouraging, because the officers were untrained in how to handle this type of crisis.

I was very encouraged to see officers who are taking an active roll in helping our family members and loved ones who cannot always help themselves. Knowing that we now have a CIT program in Medina County gives me hope as a mother that the next time I have to call the police or sheriffs department due to a crisis there may be a CIT officer available to help.

It was mentioned many times during the program that when you are sent out on a call and a person with mental illness is involved you are called for that person as well as the family member's. This is so true. After the crisis is under control the person gets the help at the hospital or some sort of community service. In most cases the family member's are then left to pick up the pieces.

I am sure that you will encounter road blocks and obstacles as you are called to help the mentally ill, but please do not get discouraged or give up hope. Please know that we at NAMI appreciate ALL that you are doing to help our loved ones during a time of crisis. Thank you again for taking the interest and time to become involved with the CIT program.”

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“Last Tuesday, May 4, we had a crisis with our son, and we had to call the Medina City Police at 2:00 a.m. Our son had gone to a friend near by on his bicycle at 5:00 p.m., and did not return, despite the fact that he told us that he'd be home by dark. I called the police and told them that we had a mentally ill son and that he was missing. It is not like him to not come home. In fact, he is always her in the evenings. Naturally, we were very worried and frightened. A CIT trained officer arrived in just a few minutes. I had no number of where our son might still be, so I had to make another call to find out the gentleman's last name. The CIT officer called the man and our son was there. He talked to him and our son was uncharacteristically stubborn, and said that he was an adult and didn't have to come home.

The CIT officer explained to our son that he knew that he was going to be moving out on his own, but that there was a thing called respect, for his Mom. He told him that I was very worried about him and wanted him to come home. He said that he would wait at our kitchen table until he got home. I was really relieved when he got home a few minutes later, and he was apologetic and said the he knows how much we care, and that he made a mistake. He was going to just stay the night at his friend's apartment. The CIT officer spent time with us getting his history, his diagnosis, and what meds he is on. When we told him that we were NAMI members, he told us how impressed he was with the CIT training, and how he had used the training only a couple hours into his shift after he graduated from the course. He was very patient with out son and wanted to go to a NAMI meeting soon. He also wanted to know when there will be another CIT course for other officers. I know that officers who are not trained to handle a mental crisis would not have handled this situation so well. We thanked the CIT officer for all of his help. It really meant a lot to us to have a compassionate policeman, who knew what to do,

and what to say to a mentally ill person. Thank you so much for CIT. We hope that the training will continue, so we can have more and more police and EMS workers available for these crises.”

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“Our family wants to thank you so much for all the planning and hard work you put into the CIT Training course for Medina County. The timing of this training course was a true blessing to this family!

Two weeks ago, I was working at our Cleveland plant (usually I’m at the Strongsville plant) and called home as I was getting ready to leave from work. Both of my daughters and my husband were home. My older daughter answered the phone, and after speaking with her for a few minutes, I asked that she would put my husband on phone. She took the cordless phone to go looking for him. She couldn’t find him at first, and then I heard my daughter screaming and in such a terrified voice, “Daddy!! What are you doing?!! Daddy!!! What did you do?? Daddy!!” I knew my husband had tried to harm himself in some way, but did not know what he did. My daughter had hung up the phone, not telling me anything, and called 911. I too, called 911 from my cell phone and asked that a Brunswick CIT trained officer be sent to our home because my husband who has bipolar disorder and has been in a depressed state lately, tried to commit suicide.

As I was being driven home, I was able to speak with the CIT officer who was on the scene. It was such a comfort to know there was an officer at home who ‘had a clue’ about mental illness. After the ambulance took my husband to the hospital, she stayed with both of my daughters until I got home, so they would not have to be alone. She took the time to speak with me once I arrived at home about mental illnesses, where we can go for support, medications.. This may sound odd at a time like this, but I was excited to hear these things because it proved that the CIT course was working and this officer paid attention.

This mental illness has plagued this family heavily over the past several years. My daughter also has the illness. I was so happy to hear that the officer who is at Brunswick High School was also CIT trained. My daughter has never had a crisis at school, but if she ever did, (or any high school student for that matter), there would be an officer right there who could help her. THAT, not only give this family peace of mind, but it shows the children were not forgotten! We’ve even taken it one step further. As part of her IEP at school, she has a safety plan of what to do when she begins to feel overwhelmed and needs help. For the upcoming school year, we made sure it included, “if she has a crisis at school requiring them to call 911, and that they are to request a CIT trained officer.”

The CIT course has touched this family in multiple ways. I just wanted to share these with you, so you have proof how important this is to Medina County. We hope this is only the beginning in helping our officers to help our loved ones, and feeling confident when they are called to a crisis situation. Thank you so much!”

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## **CONCLUSION**

These comments are proof that CIT training is a life altering experience for the officer and the citizens of Medina County.

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On behalf of NAMI – Medina County, thank you for your commitment to the CIT concept and program.

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