

**Nomination Form****POST Excellence in Training Award****Application for 2015 Nominees**[POST Home](#)
[California Home](#)[Section 1 – Nominee](#)[Section 2 – Nominator](#)[Section 3 – Justification](#)[Section 4 – Documentation](#)**Section 1. Nominee Information**1. Award Category (select one only) ☐ Individual ☐ Lifetime ☒ Organizational

2. Nominee Orange Police Department

3. Title (if applicable)

4. Agency/Organization (if applicable) Orange Police Department

5. Mailing Address

6. Contact Numbers

Section 2. Nominator Information

7. Name Jennifer Amat

8. Title Sergeant

9. Agency/Organization Orange Police Department

10. Mailing Address

11. Contact Numbers

12. Department Head/CEO

13. Signature

Complete all remaining sections. Attach additional pages if needed.

[Section 3 – Justification](#)[Section 4 – Documentation](#)[How to Submit](#)

Nomination Form: POST Excellence in Training Award

Application for 2015 Nominees

[Section 1 – Nominee](#)[Section 2 – Nominator](#)[Section 3 – Justification](#)[Section 4 – Documentation](#)

Section 3. Justification for Nomination – REQUIRED

14. Describe the individual's or organization's purpose and training responsibility.

Today, police officers are increasingly called upon to serve persons impacted by mental illness. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, approximately 25 percent of Americans suffer from a mental illness. The Institute also estimates that nearly 75 percent of the homeless population suffers from a mental illness. For police officers, managing encounters with the mentally ill population is vital to effectively forming solutions and resolving issues in the field. Recent statistics show that annually, Orange Police officers respond to over 500 calls for service involving an individual with a mental illness. In addition, officers handled over 1,000 self-initiated contacts in which the person had a mental illness. Each incident averages over one hour and twenty minutes to resolve. In a city with a population of over 139,000 and a department of 150 officers, homelessness and mental illness proved to be significant issues for the Orange Police Department. Based on the volume and frequency of contact with individuals suffering from a mental illness, it was evident that mental health training would be a value to law enforcement and first responders.

15. Describe the nominee's overall achievement.

Orange Police Department partnered with the Mental Health Association of Orange County in 2008 when an Orange Police Department Captain joined the Board of Directors. This opened up communication and resources for the community and the Orange Police Department. Since 2009, the Orange Police Department began co-hosting the annual Meeting of the Minds Conference. This conference brings doctors, nurses, mental health professionals, community groups, law enforcement and individuals who face a mental illness themselves, together to facilitate training and classes on mental health.

In 2009, in an effort to respond to the training needs and raise awareness, a mental health steering committee was formed by the Orange Police Department and the Mental Health Association of Orange County. The steering committee, including Orange Police Department Chief Robert Gustafson, identified various ways to enhance officer awareness of mental illness in the community. The committee developed new alliances, increased cultural sensitivity and improved the quality of life for persons impacted by mental illness. The committee members were chosen from local law enforcement agencies, hospitals, Adult Protective Services and the Mental Health Association of Orange County. The committee initiated the production of a series of mental health training videos for police officers.

The Orange Police Department, along with the partnerships, collaborations and funding from Orange Rotary, has produced five mental health training videos to date. Topics covered in the videos include managing field encounters with persons with mental illness, autism, hoarding, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. A considerable amount of time was required with consulting subject matter experts in the script writing, editing, duplication and distribution of these videos. Initially, five hundred copies of each video were professionally packaged for distribution to law enforcement agencies in both Orange County and throughout the nation. Law enforcement, military institutions and medical facilities across the country have received these training videos. The first training video, Close Encounters: Managing Field Encounters with Persons with Mental Illness was endorsed by the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (A.P.N.A.) for its education to law enforcement. Currently, over 2,500 copies of the training videos are in circulation and distribution throughout the nation. The training videos include:

Nomination Form: POST Excellence in Training Award Application for 2015 Nominees

- Video #1: Close Encounters- Managing Field Encounters with Persons with Mental Illness (Run time is 15:02)
- Video #2: Autism- A Different Way of Viewing the World (Run time is 16:58)
- Video #3: Schizophrenia- Listen to My Voice (Run time is 17:38)
- Video #4: Hoarding- Understanding Their Possessions (Run time is 17:27)
- Video #5: Bipolar- Managing the Highs and Lows (Run time is 11:00)
- Video #6: Alzheimers/Dementia (Currently in Production)

The videos serve as a communication device that easily provides training in an area that had not previously received adequate attention. The T.A.C.T. (Time, Atmosphere, Communication, and Tone) method is taught and reinforced in each of the videos. These concepts help officers and first responders with encounters with persons with a mental illness. The content of the videos include actual field encounters, re-enactments, and interviews with experts and individuals who have suffered from the described mental illness.

Recognizing the continuing need to further serve those with a mental illness, the Orange Police Department identified the homeless who suffer from a mental illness as a vulnerable population, many of whom are in need of further assistance. To address the increasing number of calls for service regarding the homeless who suffer from mental illness, in June 2013, the Orange Police Department formed the Homeless, Engagement, Assistance & Resource Team (H.E.A.R.T) in the City of Orange. The team consisted of a sergeant, three officers and a clinician from the Orange County Centralized Assessment Team (C.A.T.).

H.E.A.R.T was developed and implemented to provide long term, innovative strategies for responding to transient related calls. Officers partnered with representatives from Orange County Mental Health and the Centralized Assessment Team (C.A.T.) to find long term solutions for these individuals. This core team became our department's subject matter experts and provided ongoing training for patrol personnel to effectively respond to, and manage calls for service for the mentally ill and/or homeless population.

In early 2014, the Orange Police Department recognized the need for continued education and training to supplement the ongoing video series. Orange Police Department furthered their partnership with St. Joseph Hospital of Orange and together developed lesson plans for a 24-hour training series for Orange police officers. The topics were chosen with the input from the police and behavioral health perspectives. The Orange Police Department submitted the training series outline to the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA). The organization certified and endorsed the 24-hours of training, and recognized it as one of a kind.

Section 3. Justification for Nomination *continued*

16. Give explanations for each of the following three criteria to support your nomination.

a) Innovation

Officers and the community alike have benefitted from the education, awareness, and training that occurred through the videos and classroom curriculum. With these videos, law enforcement and the mental health community throughout the county, state, and nation are being equipped with tools to successfully resolve encounters with persons with a mental illness. The videos and materials include interventions and resources for maximizing officer, individual, and community safety, while affording those with mental illness humane, dignified, and appropriate attention. The videos, Meeting of the Minds Conference, and services provided by the H.E.A.R.T officers combined with the ongoing, in-person training series, have equipped the Orange Police Department to better serve and respond to the needs of the mental health community. Currently, 95 percent of sworn police officers have completed the training series. By the end of 2014, all sworn and non-sworn employees had completed the 24-hour A.P.N.A. certified training.

Use of H.E.A.R.T. officers has eased the demand upon patrol resources used in dealing with the homeless population and individuals with a mental illness. Due to their familiarity and expertise with the system, the H.E.A.R.T. officers contacts have reduced the time of the average encounter by approximately 28 minutes. This 35 percent reduction is a direct result of the additional training, increased officer expertise and resources available to H.E.A.R.T. officers. Additionally, reduction of encounter time proportionately resulted in cost savings. The partnership with Orange County Mental Health resulted in the assignment of licensed clinicians to ride along with H.E.A.R.T. officers on patrol. A great benefit is the ability to have a first-hand, on-site diagnosis that helped direct individuals to an appropriate treatment facility. Each clinician also researches previous mental health-related contacts and performs follow-up visits with

Nomination Form: POST Excellence in Training Award Application for 2015 Nominees

individuals who may or may not be homeless. Mental health training and partnerships, combined with the H.E.A.R.T. officers' efforts has made a positive impact on officers and the community they serve.

In early 2014, the Orange Police Department recognized the need for continued education and training to supplement the ongoing video series. Orange Police Department furthered the partnership with a St. Joseph Hospital Board Certified Psychiatric Mental Health nurses and doctors. Together, we developed lesson plans for a 24-hour training series for Orange Police officers. The topics were chosen with the input from the police and behavioral health perspectives. The curriculum and instruction have proved to have great value for officers. The curriculum created by the Orange Police Department and hospital has been recognized as being one of a kind in law enforcement training.

Over the course of three months, all sworn Orange PD personnel received 24 hours of APNA approved and certified mental health training. The learning environment went beyond instruction from the experts and doctors. It also included actual patients and their families who spoke with and interacted with the officers. This training series included topics of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression and anxiety and autism. The officers were able to ask questions and see first-hand the human side of mental illness and the significant effects it has in the community.

A portion of the 24-hour training included a man who shared his experience of being diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic and the treatment required to stabilize the disorder. Suffering from the illness for nearly twenty years, the man explained his life journey of living with the mental illness. He described his thought process, the active counter measures required to minimize the effects, and provided helpful techniques for law enforcement officers. The man told officers about specific behaviors that trigger his mental illness and cause him to be difficult to interact with. His testimony taught officers how to more efficiently deal with the mentally ill population that suffers from schizophrenia.

Additionally, a female shared with officers her experiences related to her bipolar disorder. She explained how the mental illness is a portion of her personality, but does not define her as a person. She described her experiences during a bipolar episode, such as mania or depression, and how it affected her decision making ability. The woman provided valuable insight to law enforcement officers when they interact with subjects who have bipolar disorder.

b) Impact

Officers are being trained, educated, and have more awareness on successfully handling individuals with a mental illness. In the short-term, officers are better prepared to handle contacts with persons with a mental illness and provide them with the dignity and appropriate attention they deserve. The training has a long-term effect with the mental health community and the quality of interaction with law enforcement. The training videos and recommended techniques and interventions will assist law enforcement for years to come.

A major responsibility of the H.E.A.R.T. officers' activities was to help in reuniting individuals with a mental illness with their families, and/or facilitate access to treatment centers and other specialists. The involvement of partner organizations helped produce successful outcomes while reducing the number of repeat calls for service. H.E.A.R.T. officers are able to focus on specific calls, which allows for a concentrated effort to provide long-term solutions. Within any municipal law enforcement agency, resources are a precious commodity. The decision to allocate officers to forming a specialized unit was dependent on the department's philosophy and commitment to finding long-term solutions for community issues.

Officers and the community alike have benefitted from the education, awareness, and training that occurred through the videos and classroom curriculum. With the videos, officers and the mental health community throughout the county, state, and nation are being equipped with tools to successfully resolve encounters with persons with a mental illness. The videos and materials include interventions and resources for maximizing officer, individual, and community safety, while affording those with mental illness humane, dignified, and appropriate attention. The videos, Meeting of the Minds Conference, and services provided by the H.E.A.R.T officers combined with the ongoing, in-person training series, have equipped the Orange Police Department to better serve and respond to the needs of the mental health community.

Nomination Form: POST Excellence in Training Award Application for 2015 Nominees

In July 2014, two Orange Police officers responded to a call involving a male who was bleeding from the head. The man was visibly distraught and could not provide any further information. Utilizing recent mental health training the officers had received, they determined he was autistic and remained with him to keep him calm while family members and his counselor were contacted. His parents arrived and were reassured that their son was safe. The family was amazed and comforted knowing that the Orange Police Department valued mental health training. They felt the training had a direct impact on how the officers successfully treated their autistic son. The entire family came to the Orange Police Department's training and provided officers with additional insights on autism. The family recounted the incident and shared that the handling of this incident was evident the training and utilization of resources was a success.

Use of H.E.A.R.T. officers has eased the demand upon patrol resources used in dealing with the homeless population and individuals with mental illness. Due to their familiarity and expertise in the system, the HEART contacts have reduced the time of the average encounter by approximately 28 minutes. This 35 percent reduction is a direct result of the additional training and increased officer expertise.

c) Reputation/Recognition

In 2011, the ongoing commitment to serving the mental health community was recognized by St. Joseph's Hospital and the Mental Health Association of Orange County. The Orange Police Department was awarded the Transformational Leadership Award. In 2012, the Orange Police Department received the Thomas Reilly Champion Award for the training video series and their commitment to training officers on mental illness.

In 2014, the Orange Police Department was recognized by the Association of California Cities of Orange County (ACCOC) for their work in the area of mental health awareness and the HEART program. The ACCOC awarded the department the 2014 Golden Hub of Innovation, a noteworthy recognition for the Orange Police Department's ongoing efforts to better serve the community.

In 2015, the Orange Police Department was named as the recipient of the James Q. Wilson Award for Excellence in Policing by the Regional Community Policing Institute.

The Orange Police Department has received widespread recognition for the mental health training videos and continues to receive requests to distribute the videos throughout the nation. The 24-hour mental health training curriculum and H.E.A.R.T. model continues to evolve. It is used for Orange police officers and has been shared with agencies throughout California and the United States.

**Nomination Form: POST Excellence in Training Award
Application for 2015 Nominees****Section 4. Support Documentation – REQUIRED****17. Provide a brief list of any supporting documents included with this application.**

One complete set of (5) videos.

- Video #1: Close Encounters- Managing Field Encounters with Persons with Mental Illness (Run time is 15:02)
- Video #2: Autism- A Different Way of Viewing the World (Run time is 16:58)
- Video #3: Schizophrenia- Listen to My Voice (Run time is 17:38)
- Video #4: Hoarding- Understanding Their Possessions (Run time is 17:27)
- Video #5: Bipolar- Managing the Highs and Lows (Run time is 11:00)

Orange County Register article reporting on the Mental Health training curriculum (Dated August 28, 2014)

Mental Health Training Outline (24-hours) Program created by Orange Police Dept. in conjunction with St. Joseph Hospital.

To complete your application:

- 1) Make sure you have filled in all applicable sections.
- 2) Print and sign form.
- 3) Attach all supporting documents.
- 4) Send your completed application to:



**Excellence in Training Screening Committee
c/o California POST
Executive Office
860 Stillwater Road, Suite 100
West Sacramento, CA 95605**

Application questions: 916.227.2808 — Janice Bullard