



Emergency Chaplains

Durham, NC

JULY 2014

Land of the Free and Home of the Brave!

Just a few short days ago, most of us celebrated July the 4th with some sort of leisure activity—combined with (probably) a whole lot more food than we needed. What most of us seldom stop to think about while doing this though, is the freedom from fear that we enjoy because of the ongoing sacrifices made by all of the first responders in our community.

I suspect that none of us worries about what we would do if something were to go wrong with our backyard celebrations. We know that the folks at the 911 Center would dispatch the fire department and the paramedics within moments to help us. We also know that officers from either the police department or the sheriff's department would most likely be on the scene too. Within just minutes, help would be there. All of these services are so reliable—so automatic, that we tend to take them for granted.

We should always be mindful of the fact that while we are enjoying ourselves with our family activities, a large number of first responders are on the job—away from their families—so that we can have the peace of mind that comes from knowing that someone would be there to help us if tragedy struck. That peace of mind which we enjoy so much, is the result of long hours of training and preparation on the part of all the men and women who serve as first responders in our community, but it is also the result of a great deal of personal sacrifice on their part too.

The freedom from fear that we enjoy is also the result of our first responder's willingness to undergo tremendous levels of stress on behalf of others. Take a moment to think back to some time in your life when you have been involved in a crisis situation. Remember how your heart started beating really fast and the tension in your body dramatically shot up? Now think for a moment of how you felt when it was all over. If you are like most normal folks, you most likely felt drained. Now, imagine what it must be like to go through something like that every day—multiple times!

While it is true that the response of our first responders is not going to be as dramatic as it would be for you or me, simply because they are trained to deal with those kind of circum-



stances, none of them are immune to the stress involved. Yes, they are able to continue on and do what needs to be done because of the hours of training they have been through. But no amount of training can keep them from experiencing a heightened level of stress during such circumstances—simply because they are human beings! And stress accumulates over time, taking its toll both physically and emotionally.

To illustrate this point, consider something that has been on the rise lately—the problem of suicide among first responders. We don't hear a lot about it, but this is a problem that is growing at an alarming rate. The annual suicide rate in the general population is 12.5 per 100,000. A recent study showed the suicide rate among officers of the New York Police Department to be 29 per 100,000. Nationally, twice as many police officers (300) commit suicide as are killed in the line of duty. This problem is not unique to the police either. All of our first responders are at risk. This is partly due to the stress involved due to the inherent dangers of the job itself, but it is also a result of the stress that comes with being involved in the life-altering events of others, day in and day out, combined with the sure knowledge that there will be times when no matter how hard you try, you will not be able to save the person you were sent to help.

When a medic or a fireman or police officer arrives on a scene, they have no idea what they are going to encounter. Often times, they are called to places where folks have been doing illegal activities that have gotten out of hand. The lifestyles of the people who get involved in such activities tend to indicate individuals who have little regard for others. When you combine drugs or alcohol with other things like gang violence, you end up with a situation that is extremely dangerous. And yet, our first responders go wherever they are called, whenever they are called, regardless of the circumstances.

We enjoy a tremendous amount of freedom in our lives. We have the freedom to do most anything we want, pretty much whenever we want. We also enjoy the blessing of a freedom from fear—provided to us by the sacrifice of our first responders. We should all be looking for opportunities to show our appreciation.

How Many First Responders Can You Fit in One Room?

By: Chaplain Johnny Hewett

OUR TEAM

CHAPLAINS

Grant Bennett
 Richard Brown
 Danny Bryant
 Rodney Bunch
 Robert Chalnack
 Todd Cole
 Ricardo Correa
 Jeff DeGrow
 James Dodson
 Andre Gilliard
 Jason Harris
 Johnny Hewett
 Mike Jobe
 Dan Johnson
 Steve Jordan
 Chris O'Guin
 Keith Kimball
 Chad Revelle
 Matt Rice
 Don Sharp
 Greg Templin
 Joe Thomas
 Mike White
 Phil Wiggins

CHAPLAIN INTERNS

Ebenezer Addae
 Craig Alexander
 Jason Harris
 Bert Haywood
 Art Klose
 Bill Oakley
 Floyd Pearce
 Harold Rigsbee

COUNSELOR

Carter Thompson

COUNSELOR/INTERPRETER

Pedro Valladares

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ralph Thompson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Perra
 Mike McCown
 Jay Veasey
 Kimberle Walker

AGENCIES WE SERVE

BETHESDA FIRE DEPT.
 CARRBORO POLICE DEPT.
 CARRBORO FIRE DEPT.
 CARY FIRE DEPARTMENT
 DURHAM COUNTY EMS
 DURHAM COUNTY SHERIFF
 DURHAM 911 CENTER
 DURHAM POLICE DEPT.
 FRANKLIN COUNTY SHERIFF
 KANNAPOLIS FIRE DEPT.
 LEBANON FIRE DEPT.
 NC HIGHWAY PATROL
 PERSON COUNTY EMS
 PERSON COUNTY 911 CENTER
 PROSPECT HILL FIRE DEPT.
 REDWOOD FIRE DEPT.
 ROXBORO POLICE DEPT.
 WAKE FOREST POLICE DEPT.
 YOUNGSVILLE FIRE DEPT.

CONTACT US

Emergency Chaplains
 PO Box 14762
 Durham, NC 27709
 www.echap.org
 office@echap.org
 (919) 280-8908

Sometimes when the Crisis Response Team goes on a scene, things happen which make us stop and take notice of the men and women we are called to support. This is not to say that some calls are routine or boring—none of them are. This is simply to note that some calls are more unusual than others.

A recent call comes to mind. When the 911 operator contacted me, all I knew was that a male in his mid-50's had suffered a cardiac arrest. After figuring out the best route to take to the scene, I traveled as fast as I could (observing all posted speed limits of course!) to get there. When I arrived, I knew something serious was going on because there were 2 paramedic trucks, an EMS supervisor's truck, a fire truck, and multiple police cars still at the scene. Usually when I arrive, the EMS truck is leaving and there are only a couple of police cruisers still there.

When I checked in with the officer in charge, I got information on who the various family members on the scene were. After talking with them, I went into the house to get an idea of what was going on with the patient so I could give them an update on their loved one. What I saw, really made an impression.

The house was not very big to start with, but crammed into that little bedroom, on all sides of the patient who was on the floor were 4 paramedics, 2 or 3 firemen, and at least one supervisor. If you haven't seen any of these guys up close and personal, let me tell you—most of them aren't little guys! And oh yeah, I forgot to mention that there was no air conditioning in the house and the temperature outside was well into the 90s!

I was on that scene for well over an hour while

the various medical personnel worked on this man. The sophistication of the equipment being used as well as the sheer amount of it in the room and out into the hallway was incredible. Besides all the equipment in the room with the patient, there were at least 2 or 3 large cases of equipment out in the hallway along with something like a duffel bag with more "stuff" in it.

I was also struck by the level of sophistication of the care being given to the patient. In addition to chest compressions and breathing assistance, sophisticated tests were being run, multiple IVs were in place, and the folks were in constant communication with the doctors at the Duke emergency department. At one point, one of the supervisors even contacted someone in the patient's doctor's office to get the details of his medical history.

This team worked against some tremendous obstacles but they were finally able to get the patient stable enough to transport him to Duke ED. Unfortunately, the patient didn't make it through the night.

I couldn't help but think about how far things have come for us in this city. It wasn't all that long ago that there would not have been much they could have done for a person who was as seriously ill as that patient. But today—it is a different story! The level of care one receives on scene in this community is pretty close to what one would expect to receive in the Emergency Department at the hospital.

Being on a call like this one makes me grateful for the first responders we have in this area and the dedication and commitment they demonstrate to their patients.

PLEASE CONSIDER A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TODAY

The ministry of Emergency Chaplains is made possible because of the prayers and donations of people just like you. Your gifts enable us to minister to area First Responders and to the general public as they encounter life changing events. Please know that we appreciate your generosity and we thank you for joining us in making an eternal difference.

Emergency Chaplains is a 501c3 non-profit ministry incorporated in the state of North Carolina.

UNITED WAY

We are pleased to announce again this year that you can designate a pledge to Emergency Chaplains through the United Way of the Greater Triangle. Just write in "Emergency Chaplains/Durham" on your pledge sheet.

Our United Way code is 60000731.

Save the Date!

We are busy making plans for our 2014 Hometown Heroes Banquet. The banquet will be held on Friday, October 24th at 7:00pm.