



# MRC In Focus

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

[www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov)

## MRC Patriotism and Service at the Sailabration

To celebrate the “Star Spangled Sailabration” in Baltimore, nearly two dozen tall ships of sail and 30 modern vessels docked at the inner harbor. Meanwhile, the U.S. Navy flight demonstration squadron, the Blue Angels, coordinated impressive air maneuvers. The Royal Marines marched up and down a street by Fort McHenry, where 200 years ago, the first Star Spangled Banner flew in the “dawn’s early light” to show that Baltimore had withstood the British invasion.

This impressive patriotic event was hosted and sponsored by the city of Baltimore and the U.S. Navy to celebrate the 200-year anniversary of the War of 1812. It

**“...volunteers assisted 103 attendees who were treated for a variety of issues including minor acute illnesses and injuries; dehydration; removal of splinters; suturing; and one...arterial hemorrhage...”**

was attended by hundreds of thousands of people, with an estimated inflow of one million visitors. To support this large-scale event, 103 Maryland Defense Force Emergency (MDDF-MRC) volunteers provided more than 1,028 hours of service. The MDDF-MRC Emergency unit is unique because it is one of only three military-based MRC units and is co-sponsored by Towson University. Its volunteers are all state defense force military personnel.

The MDDF-MRC unit was requested by the fire department to provide support for two inflatable Baltimore City Fire Department medical tents, which served as the main medical facilities at Fort McHenry

and the inner harbor throughout the week. Working 4 to 5 days in varying shifts, the volunteers assisted 103 attendees who were treated for a variety of issues including minor acute illnesses and injuries; dehydration; removal of splinters; suturing; and one patient who suffered from an arterial hemorrhage and had to be stabilized and transported to a hospital. The volunteers had fair weather in their favor—it was a mild day, which reduced the number of patients suffering from dehydration and other heat-related illnesses.

Non-medical personnel provided support as MRC recruiters, radio operators, and command and control. The fire department provided the medical equipment, tents, and radios, as well as the EMTs and ambulances that transported patients. Col. Wayne Nelson, 10th MDDF Medical Regiment Executive Officer and MRC Coordinator, said there was “great cooperation between the MRC unit and MDDF Fire Department personnel.” The MRC provided most of the hands-on medical care and the fire department was on standby to transport patients as needed.

Reflecting on the MRC unit’s ability to work cohesively under various circumstances at the Sailabration, Col. Nelson added, “These types of community support activities are a great recruitment opportunity and it drove home the importance of having excellent working relationships with other community partners. Cooperation during these community service events also enhances disaster readiness, which is now based on the whole community approach to crisis mitigation.” ★

### THIS ISSUE:

- Unit Spotlight ..... 2
- Health Services at Mohegan Sun Casino ..... 3
- Dogs Provide Therapy During Traumatic Events ..... 3
- MRC Provides \$1,675 in Services at Festival ..... 4
- The MRC Network and the Integrated Training Summit .... 5
- Zombie Educators Loose in Napa County..... 5
- CNYMRC Saves Hundreds of Animals from Rabies ..... 6
- Cape Cod Jr. MRC’s Garden Helps to End Hunger ..... 7



*The MDDF-MRC unit at the Sailabration.*

*MDDF-MRC personnel setting up the inflatable medical tent.*

# National Notes



Dear MRC Leaders, Volunteers, and Colleagues,

In July, we celebrated our nation's Independence, as well as the 10-year anniversary of the original announcement of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) demonstration project. As we celebrated our country's freedom and reflected on our own patriotism, we also celebrated our successful first decade of service.

Our newsletters highlight a few stories that show the efforts that MRC units have made to respond and prepare their communities throughout the year. Yet MRC units and their volunteers are involved in many more activities. In recent months, MRC volunteers have responded to wildfires and tropical storms, assisted with local search and rescue efforts, supported cooling shelters, and provided first aid at public events. In addition, they have provided health education, clinical care, and other public health services for community members.

Our 10th anniversary year is a great opportunity to recognize the efforts of the MRC network and the contributions of individuals. In April, many of you celebrated by participating in events during National Volunteer Week to support your local communities and also recognize the impact of MRC volunteers. Our office also recognized units, leaders, volunteers, and partners during our annual awards ceremony during the Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response Training Summit in May.

We hope you will continue your efforts to raise awareness of 10 years of the MRC and of your efforts to support your community. As always, do share information about your activities with us by including them on the MRC unit profile. Please remember to visit our 10th year anniversary page on the MRC web site for information and resources at <https://medicalreservecorps.gov/page/ViewFldr/10YearAnniversary>.

The Medical Reserve Corps has evolved since the Federal Register Notice in July 2002 that led to the establishment of the first 42 units. We are now almost 1,000 units strong with over 200,000 volunteers nationwide. Of course, the accomplishments of the MRC network would not be possible without all of you. ★

Warmest regards,

//CAPT Rob Tosatto//

CAPT Rob Tosatto  
Director

Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps



# Unit Spotlight

The Clark County MRC (OH) has been active since 2004 with the mission of assisting its community's public health efforts in the prevention of illness and the promotion of health, throughout the year and in the event of an emergency. The MRC has supported its mission by promoting public health through conducting vision, hearing, and body mass index screenings for school children this past spring and supporting its community's health fairs and immunization clinics. Most recently, the Clark County MRC was activated to support residents affected by massive power outages due to a severe thunderstorm in June. MRC volunteers supported a functional needs shelter and served in canvassing teams to check on residents without power, provided information to residents, and distributed bottles of water. At the end of July Clark County MRC volunteers

supported the Ohio Army National Guard for Guard Care Weekend, providing free medical services to residents in need through a partnership with the Clark County Combined Health District, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Army National Guard, and Springfield Regional Medical Center. ★



*Clark County MRC volunteers, Lynn and Gene Hern, provide hearing screening.*

## Health Services at Mohegan Sun Casino

To help combat heart disease and diabetes among Native Americans, the Uncas Health District MRC (CT) unit assisted with a Million Hearts free screening and education event at the Mohegan Sun Casino for employees, tribal members, and patrons. The Million Hearts Campaign strives to prevent one million heart attacks over the next 5 years.

Four Uncas Health District MRC volunteers, along with the unit's coordinator and health educator, provided a variety of services to 143 patients including blood pressure education and screenings. The volunteers distributed 270 brochures about nutrition, heart disease emergency preparedness, assistance for individuals without health insurance, and the Affordable Care Act. Participants were also encouraged to take the Million Hearts pledge to live healthy.

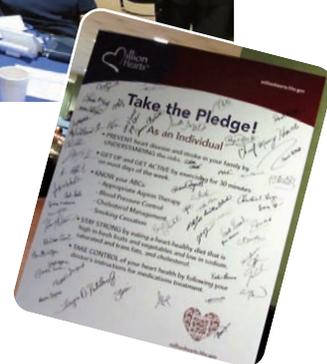
The MRC unit's long-standing collaborative relationship with the Mohegan Tribal Health Department helped make this event possible. Allyson F. Schulz, MPH, unit coordinator of the Uncas Health District, looked toward the future and said, "We hope to train a few nurse volunteers to serve as unit leaders for these types of outreach events. Blood pressure screening is a very

popular service and draws in the public very effectively. The population screened was predominantly employed and already under the care of a physician, so while this event did not identify any new cases of hypertension, we provided a valuable health check for these patients and reminded them of what they can do to stay healthy." ★



Volunteers and patrons at the casino.

Signatures of support for the Million Hearts Pledge.



## Dogs Provide Therapy During Traumatic Events

During and after major disasters like 9/11, the Oklahoma City bombing, and Hurricane Katrina, victims and responders have found comfort and strength in man's best friend. Disaster Stress Relief dogs are critical to emergency response after either large-scale disasters or personal tragedies such as someone losing their loved one in a tornado. Both victims and responders experience trauma and a variety of emotions, and dogs have been known to provide solace to individuals on the scene and long after the emergency response has ended.

Disaster Stress Relief dogs are specialized therapy dogs that must undergo additional training and are able to perform their duties in noisy, chaotic environments. Therapy Dogs International (TDI) is a nonprofit volunteer organization that regulates, tests, trains, and registers therapy dogs and their handlers for visiting nursing homes, hospitals, and other institutions. Recently, Oklahoma MRC volunteers were requested to assist TDI with the testing process. Volunteers were asked to play the role of individuals in a waiting area after a major disaster, dealing with a variety of situations such as awaiting news of a loved one; receiving news that they lost a loved one; and pretending to be afraid of, allergic to, or disliking dogs. Drawing on MRC volunteer

knowledge of disaster scenarios, the volunteers tested the animals' reactions to a range of visible human emotions.

Oklahoma MRC state coordinator, Debi Wagner, says "The Disaster Stress Relief dog testing process was extremely interesting and the dogs were all very impressive... Therapy dogs are a very valuable asset. Our MRC needs to incorporate these dogs into MRC disaster responses; if not for the victims, for the responders. Our plan is to include them as part of our Statewide Stress Response Team. I'd encourage any response organization interested in Disaster Stress Relief dogs to partner with TDI." ★

For more information about TDI therapy dogs visit:

<http://www.tdi-dog.org/OurPrograms.aspx?Page=DSR+%28Disaster+Stress+Relief%29>



# Creating Your Unit's Training Plan on MRC-TRAIN

MRC-TRAIN ([www.mrc.train.org](http://www.mrc.train.org)), the optional learning management system available for all MRC units through the Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (DCVMRC), provides a number of tools to track volunteer training and education. One important feature is the training plan. It allows each MRC unit to create their own training plan, visible only to their volunteers, which outlines the training expectations for unit members.

TRAIN's library of courses connects to 25 TRAIN affiliate organizations, including 22 state health departments and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This collaborative model allows unit leaders to create training plans that simultaneously track progress in nationally-available Web-based courses; update leaders on offers from CDC, FEMA, and others; and notify leaders of locally-led unit orientations or classroom-based trainings. Once ready, the training plan

can be assigned to volunteers, who can access it via the My Training Plans link on the MRC-TRAIN homepage.

Additional resources and information on MRC-TRAIN training plans are available on the MRC Web site (<https://medicalreservecorps.gov/searchFldr/TRAINResources>) and MRC-TRAIN (<https://www.mrc.train.org>). The MRC-TRAIN Support Desk ([mrcsupport@train.org](mailto:mrcsupport@train.org)) is available to provide assistance and field questions. ★

Remember, MRC-TRAIN is FREE  
(including many CEUs),  
available 24/7, and on track!

## MRC Provides \$1,675 in Services at Festival

The Nebraska/Western Iowa MRC unit provided onsite first aid at a large 3-day Cinco de Mayo celebration in Omaha, with an estimated 35,000 plus attendees present. With a crowd this large, the 12 MRC volunteers were a vital asset and tended to the injuries of attendees, including a broken nose, cuts, dehydration, eye irritation, and a seizing pregnant woman. According to the Points of Light calculations, the volunteers had an economic impact of \$1,675.

The Cinco de Mayo event was an opportunity for the MRC to receive more visibility for its response to attendees, especially the care provided to a pregnant woman with AIDS, who suffered from a seizure at the event. While the victim was seizing, vomiting, and waiting for the local rescue squad to arrive, MRC volunteers tended to her and cleaned up the area.

### History of the Event

For the past 3 years, the South Omaha Community Care Council has been requesting the assistance of the Nebraska/Western Iowa MRC at the Cinco de Mayo event. The South Omaha Community Care Council is an organization that serves Omaha's Latino community on health and other issues. The MRC unit received a small donation from the Cinco de Mayo event to help support the unit.

### Challenges

The MRC volunteers worked through the potential language barriers with the help of interpreters, who were accessible to help translate medical issues. The weather during the 3-day event was extremely hot,

which led to many heat-related issues including dehydration, heat exhaustion, and sunburn.

The noise level posed an even greater challenge during the event. The MRC was positioned for maximum visibility but was placed close to the main stage where music was playing, so volunteers and patients had difficulty hearing each other. In future years, the MRC will ensure that they are positioned further away from the music but still in a visible location.

Nebraska/Western Iowa MRC unit coordinator Tom McMahon said, "This is a great opportunity for the MRC to partner with agencies serving Omaha's large Mexican-American community. It allows volunteers to experience parts of this culture and work together to provide a needed service." ★



An MRC Volunteer provides blood pressure screening at the Cinco de Mayo event.

# The MRC Network and the Integrated Training Summit

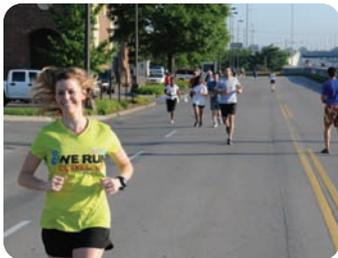
The 2012 Integrated Training Summit (ITS) was held during May 21–25 in the nation’s “Music City”—Nashville, TN. The conference was held at the beautiful Gaylord Opryland hotel for a collaborative learning experience of public health and emergency response professionals.

Expert faculty focused their discussions on topics like healthcare systems, leadership, public health, resource management and patient movement, and response integration/operational medicine. The ultimate vision of ITS is for attendees to leave the conference both well-trained and integrated in public health and emergency response and to have all responders understand their roles and missions (and those of their response partners) to best serve communities nationwide. During various interactive sessions and networking events, attendees were given opportunities

to network and share lessons learned with each other. Workshops were also designed specifically for MRC leaders about topics such as volunteer retention and recruitment, unit leader transition planning, sustainability, and others.

One of the main highlights at ITS was the MRC Awards Luncheon Ceremony, which was held to recognize MRC units, volunteers, and organizations who have demonstrated excellence and perseverance in categories such as community resiliency, mentoring, response, and more. To view the complete 2012 list of recognition awards and awardees, please visit <https://medicalreservecorps.gov/pageViewFldr/2012RecognitionAwards>.

Be sure to congratulate your fellow MRC units and volunteers on their awards and learn from their successes. ★



Attendees participate in the 5K Walk/Run event.



MRC leader asks a question during the MRC Townhall Luncheon.



Plaques for MRC Awards Luncheon Ceremony recipients.



Tennessee MRC Volunteer with attendees at the MRC blood pressure station.

## Zombie Educators Loose in Napa County

Following in the footsteps of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “Zombie Apocalypse,” four volunteers of the Napa County MRC (CA) dressed up as zombies at a local wellness fair to educate the community on how to prepare for disasters and prevent the “zombie flu.” The Annual Wellness Fair was held in honor of National Public Health Week at the Napa County Health and Human Services Agency campus with the theme, “A Healthier Napa County Begins Today. Join the Movement.”

To engage the 200 fair attendees, MRC volunteers created a zombie challenge that included three steps: (1) identifying the different types of emergencies common in Napa County; (2) spinning the “WHACK the flu wheel” to learn tips on preventing the spread of illness; and (3) practicing hand washing underneath a black light. Once participants successfully completed these steps, they could be “turned into” a zombie by a face painter and moulage expert.

The MRC found that the zombie challenge was a successful way to engage participants and begin talking

about emergency preparedness. However, some attendees were not sure what zombies had to do with public health, so the Napa County MRC will clarify their message in the future to demonstrate how zombie preparedness is actually flu and emergency preparedness during a “zombie pandemic” scenario.

To view photos from the fair held during National Public Health Week 2012, “like” Napa County H1N1 on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/napacountyflufighters](http://www.facebook.com/napacountyflufighters). ★



MRC zombi educators at the Annual Wellness Fair.



# CNYMRC Saves Hundreds of Animals from Rabies

The Central NY MRC (CNYMRC) unit helped vaccinate nearly 900 animals in Onondaga County from rabies in just four clinics this year. This is an ongoing challenge for pet owners in the county, which has a high concentration of bats and other rabies susceptible wildlife in the area.

The Onondaga County Health Department's Bureau of Environmental Health has usually relied on health department volunteers to support rabies vaccination clinics; however, volunteers have dwindled, so the CNYMRC stepped in during 2011 to assist the health department. Volunteers provide medical services such as filling vaccine syringes and clerical support and traffic control to individuals who bring in dogs, cats, ferrets, and the occasional rabbit or goat. These services are different from the medical assistance typically provided by the MRC, but CNYMRC volunteers are thrilled to be working with animals and keeping families' pets safe from rabies. These vaccination clinics also provide an opportunity for the CNYMRC to showcase their

volunteer spirit to the other seven county health departments in the CNYMRC region and educate those departments on how MRC volunteers can assist them in pet preparedness.

With 11 CNYMRC volunteers filling 13 positions at the 4 different clinics, processing 200–300 pets during a 2-hour period, the rabies vaccination clinics have been a huge success for the CNYMRC. Unit coordinator Bobbi Alcock said, "It's a challenge to get this many pets vaccinated in 2 hours— it's a minimum of 25 pets every 15 minutes—there is no down time."

Volunteering at the rabies vaccination clinics is very important to both the unit and the community because pets that would not normally be vaccinated are now safe. These clinics are kept open by donation only. In the near future, the CNYMRC will add pet preparedness to each clinic and volunteers will provide information on how to prepare pets for a disaster. Once this activity's effectiveness has been evaluated, it will also be offered to other counties in the CNYMRC region in 2013. ★

## News from NACCHO

### Share Your Budget Cut Impacts

In January 2013, budget cuts totaling 8% of spending across federal departments are set to go into effect due to an agreement between Congress and the White House made in the debate over raising the debt ceiling. NACCHO is compiling information on how an 8% cut will impact communities across the country.

Your voice is needed to make the case for why these cuts are too extreme. ★

Share your story on how budget cuts have or will impact your health department and community at:

[www.naccho.org/advocacy/fy13-sequestration.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/fy13-sequestration.cfm)

### Health Reform

Are you interested in learning more about health reform and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act? NACCHO has a webpage with tools and resources, including webinars, dedicated to educating individuals about the impacts of health reform and what it means to you and your local health department. ★

To access this information, visit:

[www.naccho.org/advocacy/healthreform/aca.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/healthreform/aca.cfm)

## NACCHO Resources

### A Brief History of the Medical Reserve Corps

After the life-altering events of 9/11, the volunteer physicians of the Stuyvesant Triage Center recognized the need for an organized group of medical volunteers who would be trained and prepared to provide supplemental medical and public health support in response to emergency operations in New York City. The group submitted a proposal to the city, requesting that a cadre of trained medical volunteers be established; the proposal was later expanded to suggest a nationwide group of volunteers be developed—a concept that eventually reached President George W. Bush and Congress. ★

To download this fact sheet, please visit:

<http://eweb.naccho.org/prd/?NA409PDF>

### Stay Up-to-Date with NACCHO via Social Media

Want the latest news from NACCHO? Start tweeting with us, or follow us on Facebook today! ★

For more information about the different ways you can stay connected with NACCHO online, please visit:

<http://www.naccho.org/communications/socialmedia/>

# Cape Cod Jr. MRC's Garden Helps to End Hunger

The Cape Cod Junior MRC shares the vision of active living and healthy eating with Barnstable County in Massachusetts, which supports a Mass in Motion grant that promotes wellness for residents in the community. This grant provides funds to purchase equipment used in the MRC unit's vegetable garden. The unit has been donating the produce to the Cape Cod Hunger Network, which serves local food pantries in three nearby towns.

Thirteen MRC volunteers have provided several donations so far this summer including lettuce, radishes, and bok choy. Other vegetables will be provided later in the season, such as cucumbers, peas, tomatoes, and beans.

The creation of the garden was a community effort. The seedlings were initially grown in a Cape Cod Junior MRC volunteer's basement with a grow light, and they were moved outside to the garden during May. Wood

was salvaged from old construction materials and built into a garden boundary by junior MRC volunteers and their families, manure was donated by a volunteer, and soil was donated by the Barnstable County Health and Environment Department.

Unit coordinator Jean Roma said that the garden was a team-building experience, and volunteers recognized that affordable food choices are limited for those in the area who access food pantries. She added that the garden provided "the ability to make a difference and perhaps, some lessons in social responsibility." Roma has even more ideas for next year, including attaching recipes to the vegetables, having the junior MRC volunteers cook vegetables for the homeless, and expanding the garden to include unusual vegetables for more variety in produce. ★



*MRC Volunteers working together in the garden.*

## We want to hear from you!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. We are always accepting stories and best practices on the MRC. Remember that stories with photos are more likely to be included. We look forward to your submissions.

### For the upcoming newsletter...

We are specifically requesting stories that focus on preparedness and prevention. Please submit stories and photos for consideration by **August 27, 2012** to [mrcnewsletter@naccho.org](mailto:mrcnewsletter@naccho.org).

### Submission Guidelines

- Please include contact information (e-mail and telephone number) for follow-up.
- If you include photos, please send as high-resolution JPEG, TIF, or EPS attachments.
- Digital cameras should be set for high-quality images using the maximum megapixel setting available.
- Photo submissions should also include a caption or description of the event.



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## NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

1100 17th Street, NW, Seventh Floor, Washington, DC 20036



## Facebook and Twitter Like/Follow the MRC!

The Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps is sharing important information on upcoming MRC events, initiatives, activities, and resources on Facebook and Twitter!

We encourage you to connect with us by liking us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/medicalreservecorps> and following us on Twitter at: [http://www.twitter.com/MRC\\_OSG](http://www.twitter.com/MRC_OSG)

## A Look Ahead

### September

- National Preparedness Month
- Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
- 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance
- 29 National Prescription Drug Take-Back Initiative

### October

- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- 7-13 National Fire Prevention Week
- 7-13 Mental Illness Awareness Week

### November

- Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- 15 Great American Smokeout
- 14-18 Get Smart About Antibiotics Week