



FALL 2008

This Issue:

- ★ Hurricane Response
- ★ National Notes
- ★ Unit Focus – Oklahoma: Community Engagement Campaign
- ★ Unit Focus – Missouri: Dog and Jog
- ★ MRC Spotlights
- ★ Unit Focus – Florida: Back to School Bash
- ★ Unit Focus – Maryland: Post-Deployment Health Reassessments
- ★ Live Events and MRC-TRAIN: Utilizing All Your Resources
- ★ Save the Date
- ★ MRC★In Touch
- ★ New Resources
- ★ National Preparedness Month Activities
- ★ Unit Focus – Texas: Water Rescue
- ★ A Look Ahead
- ★ Workshop Scholarships

Hurricane Response

Units throughout Regions IV, V, and VI responded to hurricanes and tropical storms that struck the United States this season. States that activated units include Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Florida.

Calcasieu (LA) MRC

The Calcasieu (LA) MRC ran two shelters and was in charge of triage for individuals with special needs in evacuations for both Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Volunteers also coordinated donations and served as backup personnel at shelters throughout the state, Zackary Hospital, the local Emergency Response Center phone bank, and assisted with the general evacuation. Angela Jouett, Unit Coordinator, says “this was the Calcasieu MRC’s first disaster response; however, we have had ongoing trainings. In fact, we had just had our evacuation drill 3 weeks prior to this and trained specifically on triage.”

Jouett says although the biggest challenge during the response was working together successfully with multiple government agencies, the unit proved themselves to be a huge source of assistance. After this response, they are exploring additional partnerships with volunteer agencies in the

community and are receiving a surge in interested volunteers. A total of 103 MRC volunteers worked more than 2,000 hours during responses to both hurricanes.

Plaquemines Parish (LA) MRC

Plaquemines Parish (LA) MRC also was involved in responses to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The MRC unit assisted with nursing home evacuations, Emergency Operations Center activities, de-watering activities, and debris cleanup. This also was the first disaster response for the unit. Benny Puckett, Unit Coordinator, says “local emergency responder organizations were very pleased with the level of involvement, experience, expertise, training, and professionalism of Plaquemines Parish MRC volunteers. Comprehensive CERT training helped prepared us for these responses.” Approximately 30 MRC volunteers were involved in response efforts.

“...the high point of the responses was the ability to reduce damage and increase recovery speed for businesses and residents...”

Puckett says the high point of the responses was the ability to reduce damage and increase recovery speed for businesses and residents in the community, while a major challenge was the lack of proper equipment to assist special needs patients with evacuation. ★

A Calcasieu MRC volunteer worked on an electric wheelchair at one of the special needs shelters used during evacuation.



National Notes



Dear MRC Leaders,

Welcome to Rob's Book Club. At the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps, we are always looking for new resources to draw from as we work to support and strengthen the Medical Reserve Corps network. I have recently read four books that I found to be particularly useful, and I hope they may be helpful for

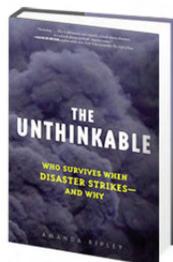
you, too. These books offer varying content that can assist you in your efforts to improve the health and safety of your communities while building greater public health resiliency.

The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes—And Why

By Amanda Ripley

<http://www.amandaripley.com/book>

This book explores the various ways people react to disaster—as individuals and as members of a group. As many MRC units seek to help prepare their communities for disaster, it is important that MRC leaders and members have a good understanding of disaster dynamics. Reading this book may help you to have a better understanding of how people respond in the face of catastrophe and can help you to better train your MRC volunteers and educate your community.



Made to Stick

By Chip Heath and Dan Heath

<http://www.madetostick.com/thebook/>



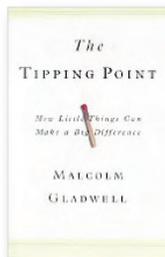
In *Made to Stick*, the authors investigate what makes some ideas and concepts stay with people longer than others. The book details ways to make messages “sticky” so that your desired audience will retain what you are wishing to convey. With people getting information from so many sources, it is often difficult for MRC leaders to find the best ways to promote awareness and understanding of the

MRC in their communities. This source will help you to identify new ways to communicate your initiatives, goals, and messages of all kinds with your volunteers, partners, and community members.

The Tipping Point

By Malcolm Gladwell

<http://www.gladwell.com/tippingpoint/index.html>



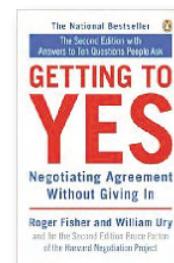
Malcolm Gladwell explores why and how change happens, and at such great speeds, using the concept that changes are like epidemics. This book can help you learn how to influence change in those around you to make an impact on your community. Whether you are looking to encourage preparedness, healthier lifestyle choices, or both, this

book can assist you in approaching the topic in a way that spreads your message like a positive epidemic—one that travels quickly, reaches many, and can affect all it touches in a way that benefits their health and safety.

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In

By Roger Fisher, William L. Ury, and Bruce Patton

In *Getting to Yes*, the authors provide advice on how to get to “win-win” agreements using principled negotiation techniques, instead of traditional positional bargaining approaches. As MRC leaders, you are often in the position of informing, and sometimes persuading, community leaders, partners and potential supporters. It is vital that you understand how to get the best result from these interactions.



These are just a few of the great books that can help us all to improve the MRC network. I encourage you to not only take advantage of these books, but to share your favorite resources with each other on the MRC Leaders listserv (<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/MRCListservs>). The more we educate ourselves and each other, the better able we are to serve and prepare our communities. Keep the conversation going! ★

Kind regards,

/CAPT Rob Tosatto/

CAPT Rob Tosatto

Director

Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps

Unit Focus – Oklahoma: Community Engagement Campaign

“MRC empowers you to be ready the next time people in your community need you.”

This is the brand promise that undergirds the Oklahoma Region 7 – Tulsa County MRC’s community engagement campaign. This campaign uses advertisements, public relations, and a redesign of the unit’s Web site to recruit new volunteers by promoting the MRC and dispelling popular misconceptions.

When recruiting volunteers, the Tulsa County MRC has found that many people both with and without medical experience feel unqualified to participate, are unsure how to contribute, and are concerned about being deployed away from home. Throughout Tulsa, the MRC also has a relatively low profile. To combat this, the unit decided to create a community engagement campaign designed to recruit volunteers “who are compelled to be there helping other human beings during a crisis situation and want to

feel prepared for those inevitable moments.”

The campaign includes emotionally appealing television commercials, radio public service announcements, and a public relations push during National Preparedness Month including story placement, gaining access to morning television and radio shows, and distributing brochures at events. Volunteers also provided information to and spoke at meetings of organizations the MRC currently has relationships with. The unit also strived to create new partnerships with major employers and schools in the area and decided to redesign their Web site with separate sections for medical and non-medical volunteers for easier navigation. More detailed descriptions of volunteer opportunities within the MRC also were added to the site. To recruit more medically trained volunteers, the unit also provided local hospitals, education programs, medical Web sites and associations with additional promotional materials. ★

Unit Focus – Missouri: Dog and Jog

The Saline County (MO) MRC held a Dog and Jog 5K this summer. The event, consisting of a one-mile fun walk for dogs and their owners, as well as a USA Track and Field sanctioned 5K run, raised funds that the unit used to purchase emergency response items for pets. In addition to the funds raised from registration, the unit also sold event T-shirts and received donations of pet carriers/crates.

MRC volunteers staffed all aspects of the event, including registration, timing, water stations, and security. Gayle Thomas, Unit Coordinator, says “our involvement provided the Saline County MRC with excellent exposure, not only at the event, but also in newspaper and radio advertisements leading up to it. It was also an opportunity to distribute preparedness information both for pets and families.”

Also this summer, the Saline County MRC conducted a call-down drill as part of their Summer Heat Exercise.



Saline County MRC volunteers staffed registration tables at the Dog and Jog event.

This drill allowed the unit to assess their response capabilities and the call-down process in advance of a real emergency. Sixty percent of volunteers were reached during the call-down and stated that they were available to participate. ★

MRC Spotlights

Volunteer Spotlight

Debbie Everts, of the Region IV (Southwest Washington) MRC, began a community Volunteer Mobilization Center that coordinates with the MRC and other agencies for emergency response. Both an MRC volunteer and AmeriCorps VISTA member, Everts assists with volunteer recruitment, promotion of the MRC, administrative support, exercises, and trainings. Everts says she is “delighted to see the cooperation of emergency preparedness programs in the community when it comes to resources and support, because their unity builds a stronger community.”



Debbie Everts, Region IV (Southwest Washington) MRC.

Unit Spotlight

The Massachusetts Region 4A MRC has approximately 3,300 volunteers and includes 34 cities and towns just outside of the greater Boston metropolitan area. Recently, the unit provided support for runners of the Boston Marathon and for the Boston 4th of July Celebration. Upcoming events include the PANMASS Challenge, Jimmy Fund Walk, and Walk for Life events. Along with supporting community events, the Massachusetts Region 4A MRC offers 19 different trainings and coordinates with hospitals and fire and police departments. Unit members say that although it can be challenging to collaborate with so many communities, their tiered organizational approach aims to promote local community ties and regional collaboration. ★

Unit Focus – Florida: Back to School Bash

The Santa Rosa County Health Department hosts an annual “Back to School Bash,” where children can receive free physicals and immunizations prior to the start of the school year. Due to the popularity of the event and the new varicella “chickenpox” vaccination guidelines for students in grades K–5, the Santa Rosa County MRC was asked to assist with the event this year.

MRC volunteers were able to provide services for more than 700 Santa Rosa children. Unit Coordinator Jennifer Terry says “the MRC’s goal was to alleviate the school rush on our county health department’s staff, and despite an increase in the amount of immunizations provided, we were very successful in doing so. The health department noticed a marked decrease in the number of families waiting until the last minute to obtain the required vaccinations and/or school physicals.” The Bash was held on two Saturdays on opposite sides of the predominantly rural county and provided information about Florida Kid Care, affordable health insurance for children without coverage.

Eighteen MRC volunteers were involved in the Back to School Bash, including medical staff such as physicians and nurses who conducted physicals and provided immunizations, as well as non-medical support staff who registered patients, controlled the crowd, provided refreshments, and offered face painting.

In the future, the Santa Rosa County MRC plans to coordinate with the school system to offer scoliosis, vision, and hearing screenings in local schools. The unit also provides preparedness coloring books for children, pedometers to encourage physical activity, and promotes the “Save for 30 Days” initiative, which encourages seniors to keep 1 month’s worth of prescription medication on hand during hurricane season. Specialized training in survival medicine is also being planned. ★



Rhonda Cowan, RN; measured the height of a child.



Jeff Naggatz, ARN; and Sandy Park, ARNP; of the Santa Rosa County MRC at the Back to School Bash.

Unit Focus – Maryland: Post-Deployment Health Reassessments

The Maryland Defense Force-Baltimore County MRC, jointly sponsored by Towson University and the State Military Department’s Maryland Defense Force, is one of only two military-linked MRC units in the nation and is comprised exclusively of volunteer state military personnel from the Maryland Defense Forces 10th Medical Regiment.

The MDDF MRC’s primary function is to provide health support to Maryland’s National Guard by conducting periodic health assessments, combat life-saving recertification training, immunizations, medical support, basic disaster life support training, and ongoing clinical support to the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment Program (PDHRA), which is required for all Federal soldiers. These physical and mental health assessments must take place about 6 months after a National Guard unit returns to Maryland from deployment. They are typically held at the Baltimore Veteran’s Administration Medical Center during a formally scheduled weekend.

More than 40 specially trained MDDF MRC volunteer doctors, physician assistants, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and others have been trained to identify lingering health and socio-emotional problems in individuals returning from stressful deployments, including combat tours in Iraq and disaster relief efforts such as those associated with Hurricane Katrina. More than 2,000 soldiers have been reviewed by MRC volunteers since the onset of the program in December 2006. The most recent assessments were conducted this summer for soldiers from Maryland’s 58th Infantry Brigade Combat Team returning from Iraq.

MRC volunteers also have provided sick call services to Maryland teenagers seeking their high school diploma in the National Guard Sponsored Free State Challenge program; participated in humanitarian service missions to Bosnia, South Dakota, and during Hurricane Katrina; and participated in a joint mass casualty field training exercise. Another joint preparedness exercise is planned for Spring 2009. ★

Live Events and MRC-TRAIN: Utilizing All Your Resources

Many of you are aware that MRC-TRAIN is host to webcasts and online trainings, all linked to a central transcript unique to each volunteer. But did you know that each MRC unit also has the ability to set up their own live events (i.e., meetings, trainings, tabletop exercises, classroom sessions, conferences, etc.)? These events can also be tracked in the same unique transcript as the Web-based and online trainings.

There are some extraordinary benefits to utilizing this robust feature. Orientations, meetings, and other live events can be set up once, and new sessions can be added as they become available without having to re-enter basic information. Visibility can be limited to just one unit or expanded to a wider audience if

applicable. Additionally, course providers can post pre- and post-tests to gauge knowledge learned and provide unique certificates for completing live trainings. Finally, all data is able to be tracked and is accessible via the reports module, which allows administrators to see who attended which trainings and when.

The MRC-TRAIN Support Desk (mrcsupport@train.org), the MRC Web site (<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/TRAINResources>), and the MRC-TRAIN Web site (<http://www.mrc.train.org>) provide MRC leaders with an invaluable source of information regarding live events and course postings. Remember, MRC-TRAIN is FREE (including many CEUs), available 24/7, and on track! ★

SAVE the DATE!

2009 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness, and Response Training Summit

April 4-8, 2009 • Dallas, Texas

The 2009 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness, and Response Training Summit will be held April 4-8 in Dallas, Texas. This will be a joint conference, including the following Department of Health and Human Services' program offices: the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP), and the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD). This conference is taking the place of the MRC National Leadership and Training Conference.

The vision for the conference is to have a robust, well-trained, and integrated pool of public health and medical responders in which all members understand their own roles and missions, as well as those of their response partners. The Training Summit is being specifically designed to reinforce relationships between response partner organizations, focus on all-hazards approaches, and enable facilitated, interactive learning opportunities.

Abstract submission is closed, but poster presentations can still be submitted through February 6, 2009 at <http://teams.hhs.gov/conference/>.

Stay tuned for more information about this exciting event! ★

MRC★In Touch

Want more information about what MRC units across the country are involved in and tips on how to handle common situations? Looking for another way to make your volunteers feel involved at a national level?

Unit coordinators and volunteers are strongly encouraged to sign up to receive MRC: In Touch, a monthly e-newsletter distributed via the MRC One-Way Listserv which includes stories from the field, tips, ways the MRC can connect with NACCHO projects, announcements, and upcoming events.

Past themes have included Capacity Building Award applications, National Preparedness Month activities, and Deploying Outside of your Jurisdiction. Possible themes for future editions include MOUs and Successful Partnerships, Volunteer Recognition, Liability, and Youth Involvement/Junior MRCs.

Interested in signing up? Visit <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/MRCListservs> and join the MRC One-Way Listserv.

Have something you'd like to see in an upcoming edition? Contact Sarah Wood at swood@naccho.org or (202) 507-4276. ★



New Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Families Fighting Flu, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the flu vaccination rate for children, has a 6-minute video, “Why Flu Vaccination Matters,” available on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/cdcflu>

NACCHO, in cooperation with the CDC, recently released the report *Leveraging Community Outcomes: The Interconnectedness of Emergency Preparedness and Daily Essential Public Health Services*. This report addresses challenges, gaps, and the elements of a comprehensive, integrated public health system and is available for free download at:

<http://www.naccho.org/na237pdf>

“Introduction to Mental Health Preparedness” videos and workbooks are now available in English and Spanish for free from the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness. To order materials, send an e-mail to:

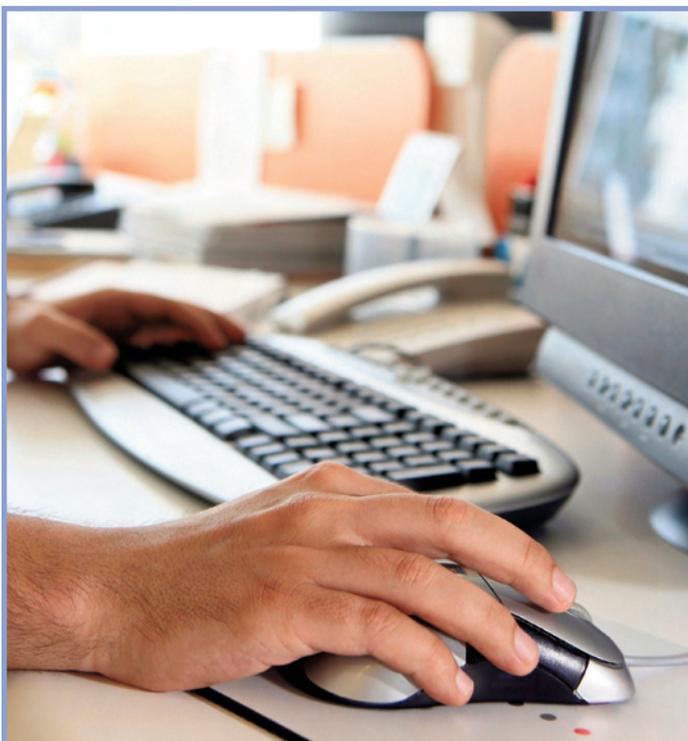
nccphp@unc.edu

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network has compiled resources for assisting children impacted by disasters at:

<http://www.nctsnet.org/nctts>

The Humane Society has compiled disaster plans, evacuation tips, and other information for pets and livestock. These guides for before, during, and after a disaster are available at:

http://www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center ★



National Preparedness Month Activities

Frederick County (MD) MRC

To coincide with National Preparedness Month celebrated in September, the Frederick County MRC launched its Plan 9 Campaign. This campaign trains social service and volunteer agencies' representatives on the nine essential steps to sheltering in place. In turn, these representatives are encouraged to train agency staff, who then will train their clients on an individual basis. Each individual is provided with a checklist to help evaluate their progress on the preparedness process. Volunteers then follow up after 30 and 90 days to track progress. More than 80 individuals attended the train-the-trainer program by the end of September. This ongoing program is expected to expand to the general public in its second year.

MRC volunteers have been involved in the planning process for this program since the beginning, and a specific training class for volunteers will be held in the near future. Volunteers also are involved in promoting the campaign throughout the community.

Albany County (NY) MRC

During the summer, Albany County MRC volunteers assembled 1,000 family preparedness information kits using material from the Ready.gov Web site. These kits included family planning tips, templates, MRC brochures, and more. In September, they launched a distribution campaign using Boy Scouts to help deliver the kits. Promotional materials were sent to employees of the 10 largest employers in the area and three hospitals. Faith-based organizations and town and city government offices were asked to include articles in their newsletters. MRC volunteers spread the word through personal and professional connections, and the unit was featured on an hour-long radio show hosted by a local medical society that focused on preparedness. The campaign was so successful that volunteers had to assemble more kits. In all, 2,500 preparedness kits were distributed in the local area during September.

Jill Dunkel, Unit Coordinator, says “this was the first public education campaign that our unit had conducted, and it was much more successful than we anticipated. We expected to have trouble distributing the first 1,000 kits we assembled, but ended up having to call in volunteers to create more. It also was a great way to raise recognition and awareness of the MRC, as well as promote that preparedness is not just the government's responsibility, but every individual's.” Approximately 50 of the unit's volunteers were involved in the campaign, and more than 20 individuals have expressed interest in joining the MRC since the campaign launched. ★

Unit Focus – Texas: Water Rescue

The FORCES MRC unit, primarily serving South Texas, was established in July 2008 with the goal of increasing response capacity in the vicinity and assisting pre-existing emergency response units, specifically responding to water rescues. The South Texas region, located on the Gulf of Mexico, includes multiple rivers, lakes, creeks, and other bodies of water. The region also is low-lying, and this combination makes the area flood-prone, especially during tropical storms. The FORCES MRC provides adjunct medical/rescue capability and is specifically trained to respond to water rescues. The unit includes medical directors, merchant mariners, paramedics, swift boat rescue-trained firefighters, and remote environment medical specialists.

Dr. Michael Kotler, Louisiana Medical Director of the FORCES MRC, states that water rescues are typically more problematic than those on land because of logistical issues, including the remote area, chemicals, sewage, and bacteria found in flood water, as well as the possibility of displaced wild animals and submerged objects. He adds that people are frequently scared and may be at risk of drowning or unable to assist their rescuers due to panic.

Along with water rescues, the unit also provides water safety, safe boating, and emergency preparedness information and activities to area residents, including at the Corpus Christi Fourth of July celebrations. Future plans include purchasing a medical airboat capable of operating in shallow water in which their current fiberglass rescue boat cannot travel. The FORCES MRC also has been recognized as a U.S. Department of Transportation Interstate Operating Authority and believes they are the first non-profit rescue organization to receive this distinction. ★

★ ★ ★ A Look Ahead ★ ★ ★

December

1 World AIDS Day

9–10 Disability and Special Needs Technical Assistance Conference
<http://www.disabilityinfo.gov>

January

National Blood Donor Awareness Month

February

American Heart Month

18–20 Public Health Preparedness Summit
<http://www.phprep.org>



Miguel Cano, Seaman, and Captain Michael Clark prepared the unit's boat for launch.



FORCES MRC volunteer Joe Henry with the unit's mascot, Beagle Beau.

We Want to Hear from You!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. Share news, ideas, interesting stories, and best practices, or tell us about outstanding volunteers.

Submittal Guidelines:

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

E-mail us at: MRCnewsletter@naccho.org



MRC ★ In Focus

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

www.medicalreservecorps.gov



This Issue:

- ★ Hurricane Response
- ★ National Notes
- ★ Unit Focus: OK, MO, FL, MD, & TX
- ★ National Preparedness Month
- ★ A Look Ahead

And More...



Workshop Scholarships

Scholarships to the 2009 Public Health Preparedness Summit and Psychological First Aid Train-the-Trainer Workshops are available through November. For more information, visit:

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/scholarship.cfm>

