

Spring 2010

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MRC Volunteer Deployed on Extraordinary Mission to Haiti

A select group of MRC volunteers contributed great efforts toward stabilizing the public health, safety, and lives of survivors of the 7.0-magnitude earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Ernie Husted, Jr., who is part of the Clark County (IN) MRC and the Dayton Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) OH-5, traveled to Port-au-Prince with his DMAT team. This was the first time that DMAT volunteers were deployed outside the United States.

Preparation

Before arriving in Haiti, Husted and his team took several precautions at the airport, including receiving final immunizations, conducting fit testing for respirators, and completing paperwork. The team then took a charter flight from Atlanta, GA to Port-au-Prince. The Port-au-Prince airport was crowded and busy; only one runway existed for arriving and departing flights.

Conditions in Haiti

The team spent its first night in Haiti in small tents on the lawn of the U.S. Embassy. Husted says, "Compared to the conditions of many Haitians, we were staying at a 5-star hotel." Each day, the team attended morning and evening briefings. During the first few days, Husted worked as a security guard and later assisted at the gate in the triage area. Husted also worked with one of the strike teams, which was accompanied by military security.

The NDMS DMAT OH-5 team (Ernie Husted, Jr. is in Row 2, last person on right) and the Field Hospital at Thebaud, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Although the high temperatures and biting mosquitoes were a constant challenge for the team, Husted says, "Everyone operated like a family...there was enough food and water; staff made sure the Porta-Johns were cleaned daily; trash was picked up; and the accountability (buddy) system helped with overall security." Despite the challenging conditions, there were positive outcomes: a baby was born; a baby was saved; no patients died in the camp; and no one on the team became hurt or sick enough to be evacuated.

"Disasters are like the mountains around us. You climb one mountain and there are still more mountains. Hardships are the same way—you handle them one at a time."

Final Thoughts

The earthquake survivors' attitudes left a lasting impression on the team—in the midst of devastation and suffering, there were more smiles than frowns. Husted asked a family seeking medical help how they were able to handle being hit by two devastating hurricanes in 2008 and an earthquake less than two years later. The older lady said in broken English, "Disasters are like the mountains around us. You climb one mountain and there are still more mountains. Hardships are the same way—you handle them one at a time."

Although Husted does not plan to return to Haiti in the near future, he appreciates the opportunity to have been part of such an extraordinary mission and to have met people who have weathered so many hardships, yet still retain a measure of hope. ★



National Notes



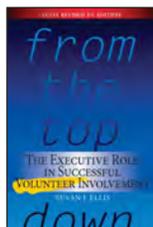
Dear MRC Leaders,
We are always looking for new resources to support and strengthen the Medical Reserve Corps network. I recently asked my staff members to suggest some books that may be of use to you. These books offer content on such topics as volunteer management, disaster management, preparedness, and decision making skills. It is my hope that these references will

be helpful in your efforts to improve the health and safety of your communities while building greater public health resiliency. Here are the OCVMRC “Staff Picks:”

From the Top Down – The Executive Role in Volunteer Management by Susan J. Ellis

<http://www.energizeinc.com/store/1-102-E-3>

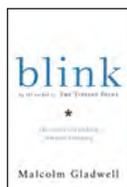
This book addresses the senior decision-maker’s role in developing strategy and resources for high-quality volunteer engagement. This book may help you to better manage and retain your volunteers.



Blink by Malcolm Gladwell

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

In *Blink*, the author explores how decisions are made, specifically those instant decisions that seem easy, but in reality are not. This book is pertinent as MRC leaders may need to make quick and informed decisions in an emergency response situation.



Disaster Medicine by Gregory Ciottone, MD

<http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/bookdescription.advertisers/706994/description#description>

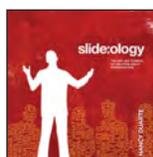
Disaster Medicine offers readers a comprehensive guidance on the preparation, assessment, and management of a wide range of disasters. Reading this book may help you to prepare and manage your response to various disaster situations in your community.



Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations by Nancy Duarte

<http://blog.duarte.com/book/>

In *Slide:ology*, Nancy Duarte applies her experience and research on visual communication in order to create effective slide presentations. The book

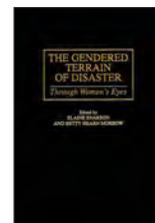


focuses on getting information across to audiences effectively, and there are plenty of examples for inspiration.

The Gendered Terrain of Disaster Through Women's Eyes by Elaine Enarson and Betty Hearn Morrow

<http://www.greenwood.com/catalog/C6110.aspx>

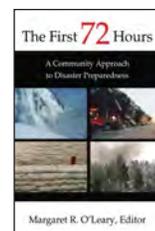
This book looks at the different ways that disasters impact women and men, and how disaster managers and crisis-relief providers must address these differences in disaster preparedness and planning. Understanding gendered differences can help planners, organizers, practitioners, and residents alleviate the effects of a disaster, as well as make the community more resilient.



The First 72 Hours: A Community Approach to Disaster Preparedness by Margaret O’Leary

<http://www.iuniverse.com/bookstore/BookDetail.aspx?BookId=SKU-000023345>

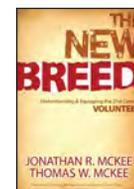
The First 72 Hours explores the creation of the Suburban Emergency Management Project by leaders in the Chicago area. The book looks at various community perspectives on community resiliency and their roles in a disaster. It is a great resource for MRC Leaders to identify and work with key stakeholders.



The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer by Jonathan R. McKee and Thomas W. McKee

http://store.grouppublishing.com/OA_HTML/ibeCCtpItnDspRte.jsp?item=791174§ion=16944

The New Breed talks about adapting to the changing world of volunteer management. It addresses the benefits of embracing both old and new school techniques that can be used to recruit and engage different types of volunteers.



These are just a few 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>). ★

Warmest Regards,

//CAPT Rob Tosatto//

CAPT Rob Tosatto
Director
Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps

Unit Prepares Students for Deployment

Members of the Seahawks, a religious youth program in the Calcasieu, LA area, were preparing students to deploy to Haiti. As part of this preparation, the Calcasieu MRC unit stepped in to teach the students about the fundamentals of public health preparedness, such as the basics of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). The MRC volunteers emphasized sheltering, mass triage, cribbing, search and rescue, fire suppression, and incident command. Before leaving for Haiti, each student received an H1N1 vaccine by MRC volunteers.

After completing the training, the students and Murry Douglas, MRC volunteer and leader of the Seahawks, traveled to Haiti on a ship. Approximately one mile from the island, the ship dropped a ramp on the stern and offloaded without cranes because many ports were still inaccessible. The group then took small boats to Haiti.

Upon arrival, the volunteers set up mobile super clinics containing 57,120 one-liter bottles of drinking water; 411,600 square feet of heavy duty shelter materials; 281,660 meals; 9,600 blankets; 150-gallon barrels filled with medical supplies; 384 tents; 432 sleeping bags; 192 duffel bags; thousands of new sandals and shoes; emergency broadcasting equipment; and portable radios. As volunteers in Haiti work to establish portable medical hospitals and clinics, other volunteers in the United States work at a warehouse, stocking food and donations to deliver to Haiti on future trips. The status of the volunteers is communicated through Douglas' wife, who is also an MRC volunteer.

Unit coordinator, Angela Jouett says, "The unit is happy to be part of such a huge and fulfilling operation, and to be working with such a great group of individuals—the kids are so willing to learn. It shows that being prepared pays off—if the unit had never worked with the Seahawks program, the students may never have been trained for this type of disaster." ★



Students learn the basics of fire suppression.



MRC volunteers teach students about cribbing techniques.

New Resources

MRC Lessons Learned and Experience Sharing

MRC lessons learned and experience sharing is a way for MRC units to share their practices, examples, and success stories. It is designed to highlight the challenges and successes of MRC units' involvement with emergency preparedness, response, and public health activities to enable MRC units and their leaders to learn from each other. To view or submit a story, visit <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/MRC/resources/mrcshare.cfm>.

Healthcare Reform Slides

On March 23, President Obama signed healthcare reform legislation to provide insurance coverage to the uninsured and reform the healthcare delivery system. To view NACCHO's Webinar on healthcare reform and to download slides, visit <http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/health-reform.cfm>. ★

MRC Spotlights

Unit Spotlight

The Nehalem Bay (OR) MRC is located in a rural area that is vulnerable to various natural disasters that place considerable strain on the community's small medical infrastructure. During most emergencies, the community is cut off from resources and left without access to a hospital for several days. The MRC was started in order to provide surge capacity and backfill to its sponsoring organization, The Rinehart Clinic. The unit has provided support by organizing and stocking an emergency medical trailer in the event that the clinic is inaccessible during a disaster. The unit is actively involved with other community programs such as the Neighborhood Preparedness program, CERT, and the Nehalem Bay Emergency Volunteer Corps.

Organization Spotlight

The Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER) Coalition is a special project funded under the Medicare End Stage Renal Disease Program. Nearly 200 volunteers nationwide contribute their time and expertise to promote disaster preparedness to patients and healthcare workers. Response teams develop audience-specific educational information and provide technical assistance to the community. KCER promotes the MRC to the renal community so that healthcare workers in dialysis and transplant can actively engage their local emergency management community, gain training and education, and reduce the number of spontaneous and unaffiliated volunteers. Anyone with interest in promoting disaster preparedness to kidney patients is welcome to join the Coalition. For more information, visit KCER's Web site at <http://www.kcercoalition.com>. ★

Pelham MRC Unit Responds During Violent Storm

In late February 2010, a violent wind and rain storm interrupted power for several days in the town of Pelham, NH. Approximately 13,000 homes were left without electricity. In response, the local Pelham Fire Department activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and sent a CERT/MRC request (radio tone) for all MRC and CERT volunteers to report to the fire station.

Eight Pelham MRC volunteers were transported in fire department vehicles to conduct door-to-door checks on residents. The volunteers faced many obstacles (e.g., poor weather conditions and roads covered in downed trees, branches, and telephones poles) and spent approximately 5 hours surveying 250 homes. Three homes had carbon monoxide (CO) levels as high as 200 parts per million due to improperly installed generators. Using portable radios, any issues found in homes were communicated to the EOC. The Pelham Fire Department sent out tones for a “well being” check and responded with appropriate equipment and apparatus. Collaborating with the local police department, the firemen gained entrance to residences, checked the residents’ and pets’ CO levels, and turned off generators. Information on these efforts was logged and stored in computer databases.

Volunteers provided homeowners with up-to-date information regarding power outages, when power would be restored, road accessibility, and details about available water at the fire station. Thanks to the efforts of the MRC volunteers, residents were provided with information to help them make better decisions about safety. ★



In the EOC, volunteers prepare to respond.



Gail Jacques and Martha Flood in MRC rehab tent.

MRC Unit Participates in *Extreme Makeover*

The local high school football coach of Greenville, GA, Jeremy Williams, received the surprise of a lifetime when his family’s home was chosen to be remodeled for the popular ABC show, *Extreme Makeover*. Williams suffers from Lou Gehrig’s disease, and his young son suffers from spina bifida. The West Georgia MRC unit was there to join Williams and his family during the revealing of their new home and the high school football team’s upgraded field house, which is named after Williams.

Twelve members of the West Georgia MRC unit spent 5 days assisting with the logistics of the *Extreme Makeover* event. The initial request for help came from the Emergency Manager of Meriwether County. The MRC unit’s assistance was requested because the *Extreme Makeover* crew needed personnel to register and maintain records of the corporate, business, and spontaneous volunteers who reported to the site to assist with the project.

The district volunteer coordinator was responsible for the check-in and check-out of all personnel who arrived onsite. The role of the coordinator was to maintain records, provide just-in-time training, and receive and stage snacks, water, food, and all personal protective equipment. In addition, the coordinator was the direct liaison to the *Extreme Makeover* supervisor onsite and the supervisor at the other main homebuilding site in Harris County. Four MRC volunteers were trained to

assist the coordinator; other volunteers worked with the building-refurbishing project; and some MRC/CERT volunteers assisted local EMS with a first-aid station and crowd control. A Mobile Command Station Trailer, owned by the District Four Public Health Services, was transported by the local fire department to serve as the check-in and check-out station for staff and to serve as a warm shelter.

West Georgia MRC unit coordinator, Vicky Chapman says, “It was a great challenge since this was a staged event with a television team, which meant that several observers had to be turned away and spontaneous volunteers showed up at anytime. We had to adapt just-in-time training to ensure everyone received the same information. Also, this was not a declared emergency, so many MRC volunteers were not available.”

In spite of these challenges, Chapman says, “Watching the team adapt to changing operational needs was refreshing; observing the team perform in less than optimal settings was rewarding. We learned a lot about the advantages and opportunities of a Command Trailer. In addition, approximately 75 MRC applications were distributed; four people signed up onsite, and others are continuing to respond.”

This episode of *Extreme Makeover* is scheduled to air in May 2010. ★

Partnership Training with Local University

Forty-two nursing volunteers of the Tacoma-Pierce County (WA) MRC unit participated in partnership training with the Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) School of Nursing. The MRC unit shares a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the university. As part of the MOA, the unit's responsibilities are to promote the course and pay the course fee for each participant.

The partnership between the university and MRC began after the Tacoma-Pierce County unit coordinator, Jim Price, was planning for the potential need of alternate care facilities. Nurses would be needed to staff these facilities; however, many nurses were not comfortable with providing clinical care because they had not worked in this sector for many years. It was determined that the planning and development of a skills refresher/enhancement course was needed; as a result, the 16-hour training was developed.

The course was taught by several PLU nursing faculty and funded by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. Both before and after the skills enhancement training was completed, a skills checklist was given to each nurse to determine his or her current skill level. The training featured interactive videos, 16-hours of course lecture, and at least 2 hours in the nursing laboratory. Participants were allowed to opt out of specific sessions based on their training needs. A certificate of completion and 16 continuing education units (CEUs) were given to each participating nurse.

Collaboration efforts have been strengthened as a result of this successful partnership between the MRC and PLU. The MRC has a higher level of readiness to support alternate care facilities, and nurses now have a stronger skill set and increased confidence to respond in an alternate care facility. Additionally, three nurses were recruited as MRC volunteers as a result of the skills enhancement course. ★



MRC volunteers Adrienne Gegg, RN and Barbara Goebel, LPN practice assessing a patient.



Cynthia Wolfer, PLU nursing faculty, teaches the nursing students about tracheostomy suctioning.

Medical Health Disaster Response in Schools

The Mental Health Response Team (MHRT) of Dane County, WI is part of the Dane County MRC unit. The MHRT has 80 volunteers certified in medical health disaster response. Typically, the MHRT provides early mental health interventions to victims of disasters or major critical events and large-scale searches for victims of homicides. Many children and families are not prepared to deal with the psychological effects related to disasters or other major critical events, and these events may affect the learning, socialization, and discipline of children.

In response to the need for mental health support during disaster situations for school-aged children, MHRT unit coordinator, Nancy Pierce, and members of the MHRT Steering Committee created a fact sheet. It was distributed to the Cooperative Educational Service Agency, which conducts trainings for school personnel; the Department of Public Instruction; countywide school safety and security groups; and hospital disaster committees. The fact sheet can help determine what services might be needed for students who are presenting symptoms of psychological distress, such as poor performance in school or absenteeism.

Pierce and the MHRT have fostered strong relationships among school districts, hospitals, towns, and cities in the Dane County area. Ultimately, feedback has been positive and school staff can now determine what services may be needed for students who experience a traumatic event. ★

News from NACCHO

Preparedness Brief E-Newsletter

The *Preparedness Brief*, NACCHO's bimonthly public health preparedness e-newsletter, features announcements, events, resources and "Stories from the Field" relevant to today's public health preparedness professional. Sign up to receive the *Preparedness Brief* at <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/AHPIP/preparednessbrief.cfm>.

Psychological First Aid Online Course Available

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is a free, 6-hour, online interactive course that uses innovative e-learning activities to check your knowledge and sharpen your decision-making. The PFA course puts you in the role of a PFA provider in a post-disaster scene and uses multimedia from the nation's trauma experts and disaster survivors. A PFA learning community is also available. To sign up today, create a free account at <http://learn.nctsn.org/login/signup.php>. ★

First Responders Public Health Emergency Preparedness Training

The South Central Regional Tennessee MRC unit was established in 2008 and is housed within the Tennessee Department of Health. The unit's leadership offers a First Responders Public Health Emergency Preparedness Training program to law enforcement, emergency responders, hospitals, the Red Cross, and others in the local community.

The MRC unit began hosting classes after the regional hospital coordinator of the unit conducted a presentation at a county health council meeting. After meeting with the county emergency management agency and fire department training officer, the unit leadership developed a 4-hour First Responders Public Health Emergency Preparedness Training program, which was then approved to offer CEUs.

In 2009, a captain with the county sheriff's department suggested that the First Responders Public Health

Emergency Preparedness Training be included in the Columbia State Community College (CSCC) training program. A meeting was held with the director of the Criminal Justice Language Academy for the college, the First Responders Public Health Emergency Preparedness Training was approved, and CEUs were granted.

During 2010, the First Responders Public Health Emergency Preparedness Training was modified and incorporated into the CSCC 40-hour police in-service. To date, more than 400 people have been trained. Unit coordinator, Christine Hamm says, "The training allows agencies to increase their understanding of public health's role in emergency preparedness. It also enhances the cooperative effort among agencies in attendance and the Tennessee Department of Health." ★

Maryland Defense Force MRC Assists with National Guard

The Maryland Defense Force (MDDF)-MRC, sponsored by the Military Department of Maryland and Towson University, has a statewide mission of providing professional medical support to the Maryland National Guard. When not activated for emergency state service, the medical and mental health professionals in MDDF-MRC provide assistance, as requested, to several units of the Maryland National Guard.

Two major health missions have been conducted over the years: the Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) for returning guardsmen and the assessment of soldier readiness through the Department of Defense mandated Periodic Health Assessment (PHA) program. Both assessments are required for all soldiers and are intended to boost the National Guard's readiness and retention. The first step of the assessments is the soldier's self-assessment questionnaire, and the second step is a professional examination that serves as a follow-up. The results are entered into a Federal database via computers provided by the U.S. Army.

In the last 3 years, more than 6,000 National Guard soldiers have been reviewed for their physical and mental health status at the Beacham Clinic Camp, located at the Camp Fretterd Military Reservation. Recently, approximately 600 soldiers were processed for a pre-deployment review before they were scheduled for active duty in Iraq. Assisting with the examinations

are more than two dozen MRC volunteer physicians, physician assistants, and mental health providers who perform these examinations under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Krisanda (MDDF-MRC), who has organized the missions as the Officer in Charge.

In the future, the MDDF-MRC may assist the Maryland Army National Guard in organizing and staffing a continuing care clinic for service members who have neither health insurance nor a private care provider. ★



Training Management Through MRC-TRAIN

One of the tools available to MRC leaders on the MRC-TRAIN Web site is the Training Plan module. This module allows MRC leaders to assemble multiple trainings into a single, direct course of study. Training plans can incorporate both required and optional courses. Classroom-based trainings, unit orientations, and Web-based trainings, such as the National Incident Management System courses, can be combined into one training plan.

Unit leaders have the authority to assign training plans to their volunteers and monitor progress. Moreover, the training plan feature on the MRC-TRAIN site allows for the use of deadlines, reminders, and completion tracking. This information can be easily read to determine the training levels of volunteers.

This tool serves as a functional aid for volunteers to complete courses of study on their own time. It provides linkages to the trainings recommended and required by the unit while simultaneously allowing unit leaders to manage the training.

The MRC-TRAIN Support Desk is available to provide assistance and field questions at mrcsupport@train.org or (202) 218-4426.

Additional resources on training plans are available on the MRC Web site at <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/TRAINResources> and the MRC-TRAIN Web site at <https://www.mrc.train.org>. Remember, MRC-TRAIN is free (including many CEUs), available 24/7, and on track! ★

★ ★ ★ A Look Ahead ★ ★ ★

June

Home Safety Month

6–12 Sun Safety Week

6 National Cancer Survivors Day

July

UV Safety Month

14–16 NACCHO Annual 2010

<http://www.naccho.org/events/nacchoannual2010/>

August

National Immunization Awareness Month

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

save the dates



July
14–16

NACCHO
ANNUAL
2010

www.naccho.org/na2010

Memphis Cook Convention Center • Marriott Memphis Downtown • Memphis, Tennessee

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We Want to Hear from You!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. Send us your interesting stories, news, best practices, and photos. Stories accompanied with photos are more likely to be included in the newsletter.

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

