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October 2018

The Responder

An informational source for the Emergency Responders of Chester County

Chester County CISM Feature Article

27 Years - EMS

By: April Locke

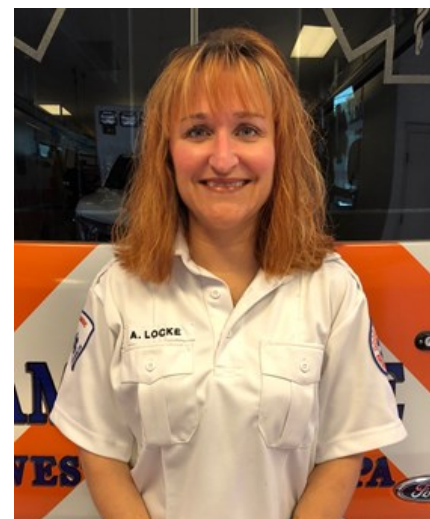
I have been an Emergency Medical Service Provider for 27 years. Hard to believe time has gone so fast. Despite all that I have seen, all that I have been through, I still genuinely LOVE what I do. It is what I was called to do, it is my passion.

One of my first calls as a provider (with no experience and no certification) was a young male who had been stabbed in the chest. He was lying in the middle of the street upon our arrival, blood everywhere. This was a “quick scoop and go” type of call. This was my first traumatic patient, my first “trauma code.” This was all because of a dispute during a basketball game. He did not make it, so he became my first “ghost.”

The years have given me many “ghosts.” But, there is much more to it...much more beyond the “ghosts.” As a provider, I am called to help people in their most critical moments, their time of ultimate need. From the moment the pagers alert, my mind begins to formulate a “plan.” I respond, I arrive. I must act based on what I see, which is not always what was initially relayed. There is this heavy burden to “fix” and “save” because we are the “heroes” and that is what is expected. What if I can’t “fix” or I can’t “save?”

Sometimes my scenes are safe and sometimes they are not. The goal is always to “go home at the end of shift.” Sometimes, that goal is simply not met. There have been many scenes through the years that have not been safe for me.

I clearly remember being stuck in a basement, tending to a patient, hearing furniture breaking and bodies being thrown on the floor above me. My radio did not have a signal and my partner had gone outside to retrieve equipment. Police had it “under control” but there were a few moments when it did not sound like it.



Pictured above: April Locke

27 Years Continued on page 4

**Chester County Board of Commissioners: Michelle Kichline | Kathi Cozzone | Terence Farrell
John Haynes, Acting Director**



John Haynes

FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR... Project Updates & Monthly Stats

Voice Radio Project

- West Chester Borough Project: Awaiting renovations of West Chester Borough Building to install consoles.
- Wayne Project: Equipment installed, coverage testing will begin once the schedule is in place.

Training Campus

- Last month we hosted 1,598 people at 137 events in the Academic Building; 523 people at 57 events in the Tactical Village; and, 385 people at 28 events in the Law Enforcement Firing Range.

Wondering what we were up to in 2017?

2017 ANNUAL VIDEO REPORT



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publiceducation@chesco.org or 610-344-5093

9-1-1, VoIP, 10 Digit Calls
22,123

Fire Incidents
1,056

EMS Incidents
3,606

**9-1-1 Operations Center
September 2018
Statistics**

Average of Quality Reviews
98 percent

Police Incidents
30,457

Average Police Dispatch
1 minute and 52 seconds

Fire/EMS Average Dispatch
1 minute and 21 seconds

CHESTER COUNTY September 2018 STATS

FIRE MARSHAL



September 2018		11	1	8	1	2
Have you checked your batteries in all smoke alarms?		NOTIFICATIONS YTD 76	UNDETERMINED YTD 36	UNINTENTIONAL YTD 82	INTENTIONAL YTD 7	NATURAL YTD 5
ASSEMBLY 2 Fires \$2,000 Loss Reported YTD: 8 Fires \$1,519,000 Loss Reported	EDUCATIONAL 0 Fires \$-- Loss Reported YTD: 1 Fire \$175,000 Loss Reported	INSTITUTIONAL 1 Fire \$35,000 Loss Reported YTD: 7 Fires \$35,000 Loss Reported	RESIDENTIAL 15 Fires \$507,800 Loss Reported YTD: 122 Fires \$8,125,415 Loss Reported	BUSINESS 0 Fires \$-- Loss Reported YTD: 10 Fires \$2,027,700 Loss Reported		
INDUSTRIAL 0 Fires \$-- Loss Reported YTD: 3 Fires \$75,850 Loss Reported	MANUFACTURING 1 Fire \$200,000 Loss Reported YTD: 7 Fires \$573,000 Loss Reported	STORAGE 2 Fires \$125,000 Loss Reported YTD: 13 Fires \$1,219,100 Loss Reported	OUTSIDE 2 Fires \$1,000 Loss Reported YTD: 31 Fires \$203,400 Loss Reported	OTHER 0 Fires \$-- Loss Reported YTD: 7 Fires \$1,060,000 Loss Reported		
RESPONDER INJURIES 0 YTD 6	RESPONDER DEATHS 0 YTD 0	CIVILIAN INJURIES 3 YTD 27	CIVILIAN DEATHS 0 YTD 1			
1	7	1	3	103		
ACTIVE ARSON CASES YTD 10	FIRE INSPECTIONS COMPLETED YTD 90	YOUTH FIRE SETTER PROGRAMS YTD 11	REPORTS SENT TO ASSESSMENT YTD 30	FOLLOW-UP WITH INSURANCE COMPANIES & INVESTIGATORS YTD 133		

27 Years Continued from page front page

There was a time when I went into a scene for an assault victim and I was protected by snipers who were on roof tops. The assailant was still at large and they needed the patient treated. Any normal person would not have went into that scene – but I did. There was a patient who needed treatment and I felt “safe” (thanks to my local SWAT team and police department). Auto accidents involving fire and death. There is nothing like watching a car fire, knowing someone is inside and you can’t do anything to save them.

I could go on, but I think you have an idea on the types of scenes that remain in my mind with my “ghosts.” While response ready, I work with the families, friends and bystanders at scenes too. I often walk into crowds where people are yelling at me to do something. I walk into homes where family members are hysterical, crying and yelling, trying to understand what is going on. Then, when the call is over, there are times that I have to return to those family members and explain why their loved one died. I have to console as the tears stream steadily down their face. The emotions are so raw, but I must stand there stoic and poised. After all, I am that “hero,” you know, the one that “failed.” Yes, the feeling of failure, it doesn’t feel great. The ghosts return and so do the dramatic scenes.

Not all outcomes are positive. I have to accept and acknowledge that I can’t “save” everyone. But, then, I wonder, did I do enough? Could I have done more? Did I miss something? How do I process all of this emotion? Do I need to process it? Is it ok that I just let it go after each call? Is it ok that I move forward without talking about it? When we (responders) are done with our day, we go home. We go home to “normal” lives. You know, we have relationships, children, family, people who rely on us for certain things. There are expectations to do chores, fix things, to just be present in the moment (sit at a table, have dinner, be involved in conversation). For some of us, when we walk in the door, the last thing we want is to have is conversation. But, we change our clothes, sit and do what is expected. The failures...the ghosts...the scenes...are all still there too.

When we try to close our eyes, we can’t. There is so much dancing in our minds that we simply can’t “turn off” the “thinking.” We think about that scene, we think about that call that didn’t go so well. We think about the argument we just had with our spouse because we don’t have enough money in the bank to pay the bills. It is all up there, oh, and those ghosts, they come back to visit too.

So how do we cope? How do we deal with it all? Some cope with alcohol. Some cope with pills. Some walk around like zombies because they just don’t sleep. And, yes, some just do not cope at all. Some end all the pain with one final act. They turn their life to eternal darkness, they will never see the “ghosts,” they will never see those traumatic scenes, they will never feel like a failure, they will never have an argument about bills. None of these are the positive ways to cope.

A positive way to cope, reach out. Push away the pride. Push away the stereotype of weakness. Put your hand out and reach. Reach out to a fellow peer, reach out to the Chester County CISM Peer Support Team (formerly known as the Chester County CISM team). This amazing group has been in existence for as long as I can remember. In my earlier years, it was not as heavily called upon. There was this stigma associated with weakness in expressing feelings. If they were called upon, it was frowned upon and you were called “weak” and “unstable” because you couldn’t handle your own feelings.

I have always been a supporter of the CISM concept and the CISM team. Why? I tend to be a deeply emotional person. While I may not always express and one may not always see me externally emotional, I understand people. I understand their emotions. I understand the need to “talk,” the need to “decompress.” I have always encouraged just that through the years.

Often times, after major incidents, I was known to come back to the station “to review the call.” I would speak to crews as a whole and, in the days that followed, I would reach out to the individuals. Not because they needed “CISM” but because I wanted them to know someone cared and related to what they had experienced. I wanted them to know they had an outlet to “talk” and “express” what their mind finally had time to process. I wanted them to know they were not alone. I also knew that people generally did not “reach out,” sometimes one had to “reach in.” So I did.

27 Years Continued on page 5

27 Years Continued on page 6

Family and friends do not always understand what we see and what we do. It takes a special person to do what we do every single day. This is the reason the CISM Peer Support Team is so important. The FREE service they provide is invaluable. The team is comprised of all types of responders; police, firefighters, EMT's/paramedics, chaplains, professional mental health providers and dispatchers. This resource is easily available, there is someone for everyone on this team. When you reach out your hand, there is always someone ready to reach back. The confidentiality of the one-to-one sessions make releasing the stress within such a relief. There is no judgement. You may speak with someone you do not know and that's ok. It's ok because they are in the profession - they GET IT, they are a peer!

With suicide increasing amongst emergency responders, now more than ever, it is important to recognize the signs of when help may be needed. We are not just responsible to our community, but we are responsible to one another. We need to be making sure we are taking care of our own. Don't look away and pretend you don't see something. You know the stressful calls, you know personal struggles, you know how stress feels. When you take note of changes in behavior or attitude, put a check on it. Ask some questions, see if you can help. If you do not know exactly what to do but you are concerned, then take the time to contact the CISM Peer Support Group. Someone will be waiting to help. We need to stop losing our own when they simply can't see the light anymore. We need to be the light.

Oh, and how do I cope? There will be more scenes, there will be times of feeling like a failure, there will be more ghosts, there will be "stress" in my "normal life" it doesn't just go away. All of these experiences are a part of me. I need to stay healthy too – spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally. My faith is my rock and my foundation. My daily prayers keep me grounded and focused on what I was called to do in caring for people. I couldn't continue to do what I do without my faith. I make sure to eat as healthy as I can and work out on a regular basis. Sleep is always a challenge, but I make sure to get as much as I can. Finally, I have a special "tribe" of people, who always look out for me. They make sure to let me know if they notice my attitude or behavior changing. When I get that notice, I know it is time for me to step back and take a little break. I need to keep myself in check to be able to stay in check for others.

This year, I was blessed to become an official member of the CISM Peer Support Team. I felt strong enough about being there for my fellow providers, my peers. It's not just about helping my patients in the community – it is about recognizing the need amongst our own. I am watching, I am observing. I care. My hand is here and I'll be waiting.

April L. Locke, Deputy Chief of Operations
Good Fellowship Ambulance & Training Institute

Need to talk?

Contact us on Facebook: "Chester County CISM Peer Support Team"

Email: cism@chesco.org

Via phone: 610-344-5100 (Radio Room Supervisors)



Upcoming Trainings

G-288 Volunteer and Donations Management	October 11th & 12th
G-205 Recovery from Disaster: The Local Government Role	October 25th & 26th
G-489 Management of Spontaneous Volunteers	November 10th
Quarterly Training	November 13th
PER-335 Critical Decision Making for Complex Coordinated Attacks	November 28th and 29th

For more information, visit:

<http://destraining.chesco.org/>



Chester County Public Safety Training Campus

137 Modena Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

Chester County Department of Emergency Services hosts TEEX Infrastructure Disaster Management Program in 2018

Over the course of the first nine months of 2018, Chester County Department of Emergency Services (CCDES) hosted Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service to offer their Infrastructure Disaster Management Certificate Program. This program is designed for professionals who are looking to enhance their knowledge and skills related to critical infrastructure disaster management and resilience. The program combines a broad understanding of Homeland Security infrastructure disaster management doctrine with an in-depth examination of key critical infrastructure sector concepts and practices in integrated risk management, capabilities-based and community-focused planning, and whole community resilience strategies.

For the candidates to receive the Infrastructure Disaster Management Certificate, they had to successfully complete all four courses within the program:

MGT-317: Disaster Management for Public Service

MGT-341: Disaster Management for Hospitals and Healthcare Organizations within the Community Infrastructure

MGT-343: Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities

MGT-345: Disaster Management for Electric Power Systems



Thank you to everyone who participated in this program, and congratulations to those who have completed the requirements for this prestigious certificate.

Left to right: John Hertler (Bucks County EMA), Rob Linnenbaugh (CCDES), Jim Reagan (East Fallowfield Township), Jeff Gouldey (Bucks County EMA), James Wilson (Windsor Township – York County), Lisa Covatta (West Goshen Township), Alison Miller (CCDES), Jeff Waltman (Penn Township – York County), Anthony Sirna (East Fallowfield Township), Andrea Testa (West Goshen Township), Rich Craig (West Goshen Township), Dan Watters (Bucks County EMA), Jim Grajewski (Ware Presbyterian Village), Stephen Barrett (PA Dept. of Corrections), Frank Sullivan (CCDES), Jerrod Belvin (Monroe County EMA), Andrew Thurston (CCDES), John Gillespie (CCDES), Michael Groover (CCDES), and Thaddeus Kavanagh (CCDES)

Not pictured: Stephen Rogers (Roxborough Memorial Hospital), Jim Bradley (Lower Bucks Hospital), Joseph Chesla (Main Line Health), and Heather Guslby-Steiner (CCDES)

National Fire Prevention Week, October 7-13, 2018

At a recent meeting, the Chester County Commissioners presented a proclamation for Fire Prevention Week, October 7-13, 2018, joining with the national observance emphasizing the importance of fire safety and prevention, and recognizing the contributions of the Fire Service.

This year's Fire Prevention theme is:

**"Look. Listen. Learn. Be Aware.
Fire can happen anywhere."**



Left to right: Commissioner Terence Farrell; Frank Sullivan, Chief, HazMat Response Team; Jeff Groves, Fire Training Coordinator; George "Beau" Crowding, Deputy Director for Fire Services; John Weer, County Chief Fire Marshal; Ron Miller, President, Chester County Fire Police Assoc.; Commissioner Michelle Kichline; Gerry DiNunzio, Vice-President, Chester County Fire Chiefs Assoc.; Commissioner Kathi Cozzone

The campaign educates people about the three basic but essential steps to take to reduce the likelihood of having a fire--and how to escape safely in the event of one:

Look for places a fire can start; identify places in your home where fires can start and eliminate those hazards.

Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm; install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and on every level of your home. Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm and when it sounds immediately respond by going outside to a designated meeting place.

Learn two ways out of every room; determine 2 ways to get out of every room in your home. Practice a home fire escape plan. The more you practice your plan the better prepared you and your family are and therefore be more likely to survive a fire.

In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Fire Prevention Week a national observance, making it the longest running public health observance in our country. During Fire Prevention Week, children, adults, and teachers learn how to stay safe in case of a fire. Firefighters provide lifesaving public education in an effort to drastically decrease casualties caused by fires.

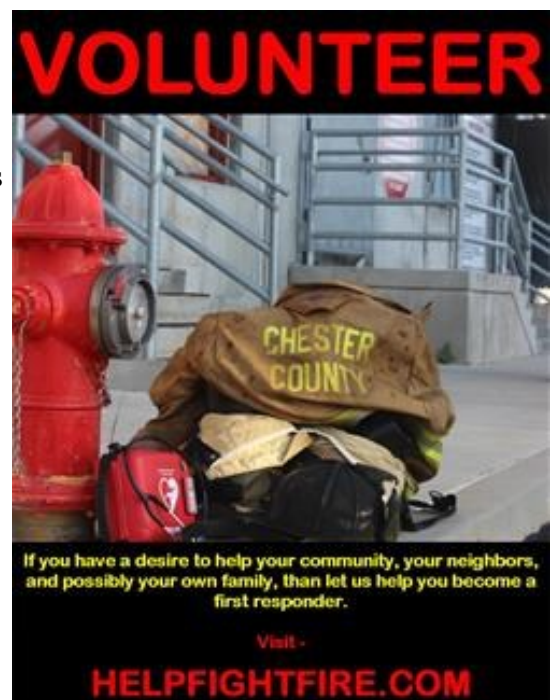
Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and caused devastating damage. This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land.

Check with your local fire department to see when their fire prevention program is being held during October and find out how you can help. Volunteer !!

Find your fire company:

<http://chesco.org/3549/Find-Your-Fire-Company>

If you have a true emergency, please call 9-1-1



National Preparedness Month Proclamation

At the September 12th Chester County Board of Commissioners' meeting, a proclamation was read for declaring September as National Preparedness Month. National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort held each September to encourage citizens to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses, and communities. Bill Turner, Deputy Director for Emergency Management in the Department of Emergency Services accepted the proclamation stating that this year's theme, "Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How." is appropriate with Hurricane Florence getting ready to make landfall in the Carolina's. This campaign is to remind us all that developing a personal disaster plan, getting a disaster kit ready, and keeping ourselves informed is important to make sure that we survive any emergency that may happen.

There are simple steps to take to prepare yourself and your family.

Sign up for ReadyChesCo; Chester County's emergency alert system so that you can be notified of the emergencies that you want to know about. This is an opt in program where you select what type of emergencies you want to be notified of; for instance, sever weather alerts, missing person alerts and notifications from your municipality

To register visit: www.readychesco.org

Develop a Safety Profile in the Smart911 program. Chester County just recently put in place Smart911 which is a program that you register for and the information you provide in your Safety Profile will automatically show on a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator telephone screen when you call 9-1-1 for assistance. The information you provide - medical information, or special circumstance information about your family, can be provided to emergency responders on their way to help you.

To register for Smart911 visit: www.smart911.com

Put together an emergency supply kit that will allow you and your family to survive for at least 3 days in the event an emergency happens. In a major disaster it may take emergency responders a while to get to you.

Plan in advance what you and your family will do in an emergency. If you are separated - you are at work and your kids are at school - have a family or friend out of the area be your contact person so you all can call them to check in.

Be informed of the different threats that may happen in your community, whether man-made or natural disasters, and learn the appropriate ways to respond to those threats.

After getting yourself and your family prepared, take the next step - get training in first aid and emergency response - then get involved in preparing your community.

For more information on how to prepare visit www.readypa.gov



Left to right: Commissioner Farrell, Bill Turner, Deputy Director of Emergency Management, Commissioner Kichline, Commissioner Cozzone

Want to strengthen your preparedness activities?

Visit: readypa.gov or ready.gov



Government Service Center
601 Westtown Road | Suite 012,
West Chester, PA 19380

Public Safety Training Campus
137 Modena Road,
Coatesville, PA 19320

October 2018

The Responder

The Mission of the Department of Emergency Services is to promote and assist in providing safety and security to Chester County citizens so they can work, live and grow in a healthy and safe community.



Questions, Comments, Concerns?
Contact us at: eoc-pio@chesco.org

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 twitter.com/ccdes

 readychesco.org