

Volunteer Connection

El Paso County Sheriff's Office



Volume I Issue 3

Winter 2007

442 Stories

There are 442 volunteers with the EPSO; sometimes a few more, sometimes a few less. The thing with volunteers is that they are frequently the unsung heroes in any organization and there is rarely any fame or glory in the work they do. Despite the lack of fame and glory, the reasons for volunteering are, I'm sure, as varied as the number of volunteers we have.

As you read the stories in this issue, you may think of a story that needs to be shared, your reason for volunteering, an exemplary effort by another volunteer you know, more about the group you volunteer with, a very special member of the community which you helped, even an event in which your group participated, contact one of the staff members of the Volunteer Connection or Cathryn Richards, the Volunteer Coordinator. We're here to help you write your story or write the story for you.

There are 442 stories out there; help the Volunteer Connection share yours with the rest of the volunteer corps!

Kathy Oakey ... Citizen's Advisory Council

A Friend in Need

Amy (name changed for her protection) was attacked by a violent intruder in January of this year. Amy survived the brutal knife attack, called for help when the assailant left, and was then rushed to the hospital.

In many law enforcement jurisdictions, Amy would have next become more of a strategic witness than a wounded citizen. Often the investigating officer is the only law enforcement contact for the victim. Due to the necessity of careful investigation required for justice, such an officer must focus on "The facts ma'am, just the facts." As those facts are gathered, the officer then moves on to solve the crime. If this were some other jurisdiction, Amy might not know if her attacker was caught until she received a subpoena to appear and testify in court. In some places victims first learn information about their attackers through public news sources.

But because of a special group of volunteers in the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, any time Amy woke up in the hospital that night (still horrified), she would find someone sitting there with a calm smile and tender heart, just to make sure she didn't wake up alone. As the investigation continued, Amy's new friends kept her up-to-date on her attacker's arrest, incarceration, and upcoming trial dates. They even helped her hide her new address, as she still fears his escape and return.

Amy's new friends are from the EPSO *Victim's Advocate Program* (VAP). Anyone who has helped a friend through rough times has experienced the compassion of these special people. The VAP is composed of 20 volunteers, led by 3 passionately dedicated staff coordinators. Susan McAfee-Acre (we know her as Sam) and two other staff (Katie Polavin and Connie Bryant) coordinate this incredible team.

VAP volunteers support those affected by the unattended death or suicide of loved ones and victims of violent crimes, such as Amy. This team has seen it all. Equipped by experience and driven by compassion, they assist victims and survivors through these most difficult times.

The significance of their contribution is objectively measurable. Each hour worked by a VAP volunteer justifies grant money injections into the EPSO. A typical year's accumulated VAP volunteer time approaches 18,000 hours of time spent in direct contact with victims, accounting for approximately \$250,000 of annual financial support for the EPSO.

Their greatest value is in the immeasurable contribution of human compassion. This group finds themselves in the midst of the worst of the worst. When EPSO sworn officers, who work crime after crime, come upon a victim needing a real friend, they call for "Sam's Squad."

When fire rapidly engulfed the 135-unit Castle West Apartment complex in the early morning hours of January 16th, many lives were changed forever. Local relief agencies were overwhelmed and called in the EPSO VAP.

VAP volunteers Ginger Browning, Barbara Davie, Cora Davis, Della Griffin, Diane King, Pete Medina, Jeff Newton, Cindy Thatcher, Sara Yackley, and Robyn Velasco responded with the interpersonal skill and consideration they have exercised so often. Their professional involvement gained the attention and respect of the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and CSPD. Experiences like this oil the machinery of interagency partnerships, strengthening our community's ability to respond to major disasters.

To lose a home to fire is traumatic for anyone; many who lived in these apartments literally lost everything they owned and had limited resources for bouncing back at a new location. One little girl living there had lost both her parents in Katrina. Behind every major emergency like this, Sam's people are prepared to deal with the persons affected, knowing that, like this little girl, there are always stories behind the story.

This tragedy, like any crime, took the victims by surprise and left many not even knowing what questions to ask. The VAP team moves in that circle frequently. They understand victims.

Whether it is a crime affecting an individual like Amy, or a tragedy affecting a group, they know how to be a friend indeed.

Carl Chinn ... CERT

Heroes in Training

On Saturday, April 28, the El Paso County CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) facilitated the 2007 "CERT-O-REE" with the Ute Boy Scout District. Approximately 200 Boy Scouts camped for the weekend at Fort Carson to participate in the CERT training program. The event facilitators consisted of multiple teams focused on various aspects of the training. These teams created training outlines, equipment needs lists, and participated as instructors and facilitators. The objective of the exercise was to expose the scout troops to numerous elements of CERT training.



The day began with the scouts rotating through six CERT training modules. Each of the training modules was designed to incorporate a safety precautions overview, an instructional period, and hands-on learning. The scouts divided into manageable team sizes and rotated to each of the training stations on a 45 minute rotation schedule. The training modules included Lifts and Carries, Triage Techniques, Basic First Aid, Fire Prevention and Fire Extinguisher Use, Emergency Preparedness, and Search & Rescue Basics. An obstacle course was designed for the scouts to practice how to lift and carry an injured victim. American Red Cross volunteers created moulaged victims that were used at both the triage and first aid stations. Scouts used fire extinguishers to put out actual fires under supervision of the Black Forest Fire Department. Emergency preparedness supplies were used to educate scouts about critical items to pack into crates, backpacks and hip packs. Victims and manikins were scattered among light debris inside a fog-filled mock mess hall (2 attached GP Medium tents) to allow scouts to practice effective search and rescue techniques. All scouts were very involved in each of the six training modules. When all had completed the rotation cycles, they gathered for the main disaster scenario.



The main disaster scenario was divided into two separate site locations in an effort to accommodate the large number of scout participants. Each of the disaster sites incorporated a school bus that had been involved in a vehicle accident. The buses were filled with moulaged victims screaming for help (with some laughing) as responding scouts organized into emergency response teams. Scouts used

the techniques learned during the training sessions to search for victims, relocate victims to the triage area, and provide first aid. Event volunteers served as scenario safety officers, acted as on-site advisors, and provided final evaluation commentary

following the event to enhance what the Scouts learned from their participation in the event.

Based on the participant feedback received following the CERT-O-REE, the objective of the exercise was met and the expectations of the Ute District Boy Scout leadership were exceeded.

Thanks to the focused and dedicated efforts of CERT volunteers, EPSO Emergency Operations Center staff, Black Forest and Fort Carson Fire Departments, and the American Red Cross, the Boy Scouts were able to demonstrate understanding of CERT operations. This event highlighted the importance of the CERT program to many youths in the Southern Colorado area and was an effective, educational and fun event for everyone that participated.

Jim Hughes ... CERT

Volunteer Engagement

The opportunities to engage in volunteerism within the EPSO are both varied and distinctive. Should you know of anyone that might be interested in learning more about any of these opportunities, please have them contact our Volunteer Coordinator at 520-7216 or visit our website at www.elpasoco.com/sheriff. The italicized areas are currently taking applications.

Administrative/Clerical
Al-Anon
Alcoholics Anonymous
Cadet/Explorer Program
Chaplain-Detention & Patrol
Citizens Advisory Council
C.E.R.T.
Concealed Handgun Permits
Court Notification Call Center
Emergency Rehab
Emergency Services

F.E.A.T.
Fire Investigations
Haz Mat
Inmate Classification
Intake & Release
Investigations
Language Services
Mailroom
Narcotics Anonymous
Newsletter Committee
Programs - CJC

R.A.C.E.S.
Range
Rescue Mission
Reserve Deputy Unit
Search & Rescue
Stout Street
Training
Veterans Resources
Victim Advocate
Wildland Fire

*** The Newsletter Committee is actively seeking new members. We meet once or twice a quarter and you will learn a great deal about the volunteer program. Please come join the fun. ☺*

2006 Update:

35	Areas in Which to Volunteer
460	Average Number of Volunteers
63,000	Total Service Hours Provided
\$1.2 Million	Dollar Value attached to Service Hours

2007 YTD Update:

36	Areas in Which to Volunteer
460	Average Number of Volunteers
65,000	Total Service Hours Provided
\$1.25 Million	Dollar Value attached to Service Hours

Applause....

Putting Their Best Hoof Forward



Congratulations to the El Paso County Search and Rescue (EPCSAR) Mounted Team for winning their second consecutive First Place trophy in a competition held June 22–24 near Pagosa Springs, Colorado, at Baldy Mountain in the Beaver Meadows area. Competing against 10 mounted teams from Colorado and neighboring states, they distinguished themselves in the difficult trials designed to test the riders' abilities and their horses' stamina. Each team was scored on the events completed and out of a possible score of 440, EPCSAR's Mounted Team scored the highest with 355 points.

J. R. Betts (pictured above with Jode McLaughlin), mounted team leader, said the first day was a timed event where they were tested on land navigation. Using maps, compasses, and GPS units, they were tasked to find 10 stations in the mountainous terrain. Once these were located, the team then performed tasks following instructions found at each spot, answering mostly Incident Command System (ICS) related questions. Another task was to search an area to find hidden mannequins representing injured subjects. When these were found, the team compiled a report for the command station that provided information on their location so other teams could locate the area quickly and bring the necessary equipment to aid in the rescue.

One of the most challenging events was held the second day, a search for people, called a fox hunt. The foxes were given a head start to get in the field, place clues, leave tracks, and hide from the teams. When the EPCSAR Mounted Team arrived at the area of interest, they quickly found the subjects' vehicle, then set out to find the people, who were taking evasive action to make the search more difficult. Using clues the foxes left, they found the foxes in 3 hours. Following procedure, the team compiled a report for Incident Command that provided information relating to their location.

Because the team found the foxes so quickly, they were given a new mission. This turned into a real rescue when a call came over the radio summoning the closest medic to aid one of the foxes who was experiencing a real-life medical problem. Following protocol, J. R. determined the fox was not having a heart attack but was suffering the consequences of eating a can of sardines that he had left in his truck for a year, thereby requiring a transport from the area by ATV.

A mounted team can move faster than someone on foot and carrying more equipment, such as litters, medical kits, and other items vital to the mission. Each pack horse frees up rescuers to do other tasks. Horses have keen eyesight: they

spot movement, even at great distances, before the rider can. The rider is on a higher platform, which gives him a better view of the search area and helps him track a subject on the ground.

The horses are also used in the Pikes Peak Ascent and Marathon. Of course, horses can be used only under certain conditions and not in snowy weather, since efforts to train horses to use snowshoes or skis have proven unsuccessful. The team has also joined forces with the Sheriff's Office Mounted Unit to conduct evidence searches in criminal cases. Jode McLaughlin is pictured at right asking questions of people he met on the trail.



The team was started in 1999 and is at present composed of five members: one doctor, one EMT, and three first responders. The high level of expertise this dedicated team has achieved is evident in the work that they do. The citizens of El Paso County are fortunate to have such capable people ride to the rescue of those who get in serious trouble in the back country.

Pat Krieger ... CJC Programs

The Citizens' Academy

Are you looking to broaden your knowledge of the Sheriff's Office? Twice a year, the Sheriff's Office offers the Citizens' Academy, an 11-week evening program covering all aspects of the Sheriff's Office.

During the 11 weeks, you have an opportunity to learn about various topics, such as the use of force continuum, traffic and DUI stops, narcotics and methamphetamine labs, and crime scene investigation. Tours of the 911 dispatch center, the firing range, and the Criminal Justice Center are included in the class, along with observing the members of the K9 team as they work their magic, and riding along on a shift with a patrol deputy.

The instructors are employees of the Sheriff's Office and definitely subject matter experts. You learn about traffic stops from Deputy Scherb, who teaches the incoming patrol deputies. Chief Breister is entertaining as he shares his knowledge about narcotics. The presentations from Inspector John San Agustin on crime scenes and the use of computers to solve and present crimes are always fascinating.

As volunteers for the Sheriff's Office, it's easy to become familiar with the area in which you volunteer. The Citizens' Academy provides an opportunity to learn more about the many varied and different responsibilities of the Sheriff's Office, giving you a glimpse into the full range of services provided to our community.

The Citizens' Academy is offered twice a year, one night a week for 11 weeks in late spring and fall. The next session is scheduled to start in early 2008. For more information or to obtain an application, contact either Sgt Jeanette Whitney at 520-7275, JeanetteWhitney@elpasoco.com; or Deputy Jake Abendschan at 520-7101, jacobabendschan@elpasoco.com.

Kathy Oakey ... Citizens Advisory Council

A Date to Remember

In 2005, Sheriff Maketa, working with the 4th Judicial Court judges, decided to try an experiment. Many people who are issued a summons forget their court date, which results in a Failure to Appear (FTA) bench warrant. Issuing and managing these FTA warrants is expensive and time consuming. The experiment was to set up a volunteer-staffed call center to call people with upcoming court dates to remind them of their court appearance.

In November of 2005, the first calls were made. Since then, approximately 12,000 calls have been made and 8900 contacts have been completed to defendants. The call center is currently staffed with 5 members from the Citizen's Advisory Council, Paul Stevens, Carol Stanton, Martha Laye, Bob Demling, and Ed Kelly. Each member typically volunteers for about 2 hours a week, usually completing about 60 phone calls during that time, volunteering during the day as well as in the evening hours. Three separate attempts are made to contact each person.

In addition to reminding people of their upcoming court dates, the volunteers also provide information such as where to park or the phone number to call to find out what fines they may need to pay. For the Spanish-speaking members of the community, the scripts used by the volunteers have been translated into Spanish.

During their phone calls, the members have encountered some interesting stories. Volunteers typically make local calls only; however, one volunteer was surprised when the person she was calling answered in Iraq. The volunteer had no idea the number she was calling would connect to a military base overseas. The serviceman said his wife would take care of the ticket.

An awkward call occurred when a parent expressed shock to find out her son had received a ticket, only to discover that Grandma had been keeping this little piece of evidence under wraps. One can only guess what took place in that household after the call.

Sergeant Jeanette Whitney oversees the Court Notification Call Center, providing the information on who should be called and tracking the disposition of each call: whether the call was successful, a wrong number, no response, etc. Because of the success of this program, Snohomish County in the state of Washington has contacted the Volunteer Coordinator requesting information on how to start a call center in their area. All the volunteers who have participated in the call center deserve much credit for making this venture so successful.

Pat Krieger ... CJC Programs

Volunteers in Action

Dates to be Announced	<i>EPSO Citizens' Academy</i> – 11-week course, Wednesday evenings, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm, various locations
December 5th	<i>American Eagle/Angel Awards</i> – Law Enforcement Bureau
January 18th	5 th Annual Awards Dinner – Location/Times to be announced

Cat's Corner

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." Ralph Waldo Emerson

Remembering all that 2007 has brought; the good times and the bad, the days filled with joy and those with sorrow, this is the time when we reflect on what has been and look forward to what will be. As we give thought to these things, I would like to pause and share with you what I have seen; that which lies below the surface and carries significant importance to those living in your community. Within each of you lies the gift of sacrifice; giving your time, dedication and energy to a cause that offers no reward, no recognition, and oftentimes, no thanks. Whether communicating through a ham radio, or teaching a female inmate the intricacies of Shakespeare; beating back the flames of an insistent wildland fire, or passing on a granola bar to a firefighter; training a scout the ins-and-outs of emergency response, or playing the drunk in a dui exercise for new recruits, these gifts are received day in and day out in El Paso County. A word of hope given where there is no hope, or the gentle touch of the advocate reaching out to a victim of crime; the relief felt when the language barrier is broken and communication is built between an officer and a citizen, or a suspicious fire is deemed arson through the diligent work of an investigator, these are all examples of what I see when I look beyond the surface. You each contribute much more than the task itself. You exemplify hope, relief, calm, security, wisdom, experience and true love for your fellow man. You make our volunteer corps great; therefore, on behalf of those you serve, thank you.

In gratitude,



Cathryn Richards
Volunteer Coordinator