

# Village Ambulance Service Spring 2011 Newsletter



## Spring is here...technically!

Welcome to the Spring 2011 edition of the Village Ambulance Service EMS & Community Awareness Newsletter. This publication is aimed at keeping you updated on the progress of Emergency Medical Services in Berkshire County.

## Employee Spotlight



### Pamela Costine EMT-Basic

Pam began employment with Village Ambulance Service as a full-time EMT-Basic in 1993.

Pam came to us with a background in business management and has contributed this expertise over her lengthy tenure.

Pam always goes the extra mile. She is diligent, hard-working, intelligent, an expert source, and she also has a big heart.

Pam's favorite part of the job is helping people, whether it's a patient in need or a co-worker.

She is always willing to lend a hand and will not quit until things are done right—there is no such thing as an incomplete or "half way" job when Pam is involved. She touches every area of our organization, whether it is



working on the ambulance, providing accounts payable assistance or simply cleaning the facility.

In Pam's spare time she enjoys working at her jewelry store, DiLego's, in North Adams, watching the Red Sox, tending to the family horse farm and spending time with her boyfriend, David.

Thank you, Pam, for being a part of the Village Ambulance Service team!

## Spring Cleaning Safety Tips

With the arrival of warmer weather, many of you are looking forward to spending time outdoors. This is the time of year when many citizens are eager to put the winter season behind them and begin their spring cleaning. Although these activities are beneficial, they may also involve a variety of health and safety hazards that can be avoided with the proper precautions.

The following spring safety tips will assist you in keeping your family safe this spring and summer.

- When cleaning up hazardous chemicals wear rubber gloves and follow the safety directions on the packaging. Never mix chemicals in the same container. If you don't know how to dispose of them, seek outside advice. Never put them into the trash or pour them down the drain.
- Cleanup work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches, or other work items away from children's reach.
- Check your barbecue grill for leaks and cracks, and be sure to store any propane tanks away from your house and garage.
- Remove all fire hazards, including stacks of rags, newspapers, and magazines. Pay special attention to the spaces around your furnace, hot water tank, fireplace, space heaters, and dryer, as well as under the stairs.

## Giving thanks, giving gifts and giving BACK!



The results are in from our 2010-2011 coat drive to collect apparel for Berkshire County residents in need of staying warm this snow-heavy winter. More than 300 winter coats and jackets, along with dozens of gloves, scarves and other winter apparel were collected. The coat drive was spearheaded by Village Ambulance Service in cooperation with Williamstown's Council on Aging.

Many of us take the basics of life for granted. For the unemployed or those in need, food, shelter and clothing are often quite difficult to come by. This is especially true for seasonal items, such as winter coats and jackets, which is why Village Ambulance Service started this worthy endeavor. Fortunately, support has been very strong. "We were pleasantly surprised at the support we received," said Brian O'Grady, Williamstown Council on Aging's Director. "These generous clothing donations demonstrate that ordinary people truly care about those in need," O'Grady added.

For more information about our coat drive or other community outreach endeavors, please call our office at (413)458-4889 or visit our website at [www.villageambulance.com](http://www.villageambulance.com).

## ICE SAFETY

### When is ice safe?

There really is no sure answer. You can't judge the strength of ice just by its appearance, age, thickness, temperature, or whether or not the ice is covered with snow. Strength is based on all these factors -- plus the depth of water under the ice, size of the water body, water chemistry and currents, the distribution of the load on the ice, and local climatic conditions. **There is no such thing as 100 percent safe ice!**

### What if you fall in?

What should you do? **First, try not to panic.** This may be easier said than done, unless you have worked out a survival plan in advance. Read through these steps so that you can be prepared.

1. **Don't remove your winter clothing.** Heavy clothes won't drag you down, but instead can trap air to provide warmth and flotation. This is especially true with a snowmobile suit.
2. **Turn toward the direction you came.** That's probably the strongest ice.
3. **Place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface.** This is where a pair of nails, sharpened screwdrivers or ice picks may provide the extra traction you need to pull yourself up onto the ice.
4. **Kick your feet and dig in your ice picks to work your way back onto the solid ice.** If your clothes have trapped a lot of water, you may have to lift yourself partially out of the water on your elbows to let the water drain before starting forward.
5. **Lie flat on the ice once you are out and roll away from the hole** to keep your weight spread out. This may help prevent you from breaking through again.
6. **Get to a warm, dry, sheltered area** and re-warm yourself immediately. In moderate to severe cases of cold water hypothermia, you must seek medical attention. Cold blood trapped in your extremities can come rushing back to your heart after you begin to re-warm. The shock of the chilled blood may cause ventricular fibrillation leading to a heart attack and death!

## STAY SAFE

A simple tool that can save your life - yet one that so many people fail to keep in a functioning state.

Now that you've set your clocks forward, we recommend you change the batteries inside that little device on the ceiling of your homes - that's right, the smoke detector.



A fire captain in Berkshire County says you should check on these at least once a month - and replace them altogether every 10 years.

# TRAINING/ADVANCEMENTS

## Spring 2011 Continuing Education Programs

### Capnography – Advanced Concepts

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

6 PM to 9 PM

3 Credits Pending for Basic/Intermediate/Paramedic

Speaker: TBA

### Dealing with the Violent Patient

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

6 PM to 9 PM

3 Credits Pending for Basic/Intermediate/Paramedic

Speaker: John Candilaro, LICSW

## 2011 Company Advancements

### Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) Grant Funds New EKG Machines

Thanks to an Assistance to Firefighters grant (AFG), written in part by Rick Richer, a Village Ambulance Service paramedic, and Amalio Jusino, an EMT-I employed at North Adams Ambulance Service, Village Ambulance Service has been able to equip its three ambulances with state-of-the-art LIFEPAK 15 heart monitors.

The LIFEPAK 15s provide both therapeutic and diagnostic functions all in one device that can easily be carried to the patient's side to monitor heart rhythms and assess 12 lead ECGs for impending heart attacks. The LIFEPAK 15s also add some important new technology such as detection of carbon monoxide in the blood (which is one of the leading causes of poisoning death in industrialized countries and among firefighters) and methemoglobin (to detect chemical exposures and certain drugs), as well as adaptive defibrillation (the device senses the resistance of the body based on size and body fat contact and modifies the defibrillation energy accordingly). The LIFEPAK 15 also monitors blood pressure and oxygen saturation in the blood, along with defibrillation and external pacing.



The three Lifepak 15s cost about \$90,000 with a total agency match of about \$4,000, or 4 percent. These new cardiac monitor/defibrillators will replace the service's three Lifepak 12 machines.

### Village Ambulance Service Adds LUCAS Device to Cardiac "Toolbox"



Northern Berkshire County residents who suffer cardiac arrest may benefit from the new LUCAS chest compression system recently purchased by Village Ambulance Service.

The LUCAS chest compression system is an external, mechanical device that provides chest compressions during cardiopulmonary resuscitation. It was designed for use by paramedics, emergency medical technicians and hospital staff in emergency care situation for an adult patient in cardiac arrest. The system is simple to use and apply, interrupting manual chest compressions for less than 20 seconds. The system also increases the operational effectiveness of emergency medical teams and enhances opportunities to improve the outcome of cardiac-arrest patients.

The total cost of the LUCAS was about \$15,000. The service plans to equip all three of its ambulances by year's end.

## Explorers Help "Save" Pittsfield Winter Carnival

The Village Ambulance Service EMS Explorer Post 911 was credited in the Berkshire Eagle's Letters to the Editor on Saturday, March 5, for helping to "save the Pittsfield Winter Carnival."

The Winter Carnival is an annual event to provide winter activities, mostly outdoors, for people of all ages.

Activities include snowshoe races,

a snowman building contest, horse-drawn wagon rides, ice-fishing and golf-on-ice competitions.

According to Jay Anderson, the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank president and CEO, "many do not know that when news of the attempt to save the Pittsfield Winter Carnival became public, both The Co-op and Vox's radio stations were besieged with calls offering additional support."

The Explorer Post provided assistance by constructing the Snow Shoe Race obstacle course, building the Treasure Hunt snow mounds, and performing tasks necessary for other carnival activities to occur.

Anderson added "we tip our caps to The [Village Ambulance] Explorers. It is because of our community's uncommon passion and these unsung heroes that, despite a past that includes the hosting of national championships and Olympic trials, this may well be remembered as the most important carnival of all-time. We are already looking forward to The 67th Annual Pittsfield Winter Carnival!"



## Explorers Become First Responders

The Spruces Recreational Center, Williamstown, was a happening place last weekend. Sixteen students from the Williamstown Fire Department and VAS Explorer Post embarked on a four day long Emergency First Responder Course.

During the 24 hour course, sponsored by Village Ambulance Service, this students were trained to provide efficient and

accurate pre-hospital medical care. Students learned how to assess patients for trauma, shock, burns and obstructed airways, and how to address these issues by bandaging wounds, stabilizing the victim or administering oxygen therapy. In addition, the students were taught the fundamentals of spinal immobilization and how to address common emergency medical issues using basic life support treatment modalities.

When asked what he thought of the course, one student responded: "I do this because if I don't, who will? Even if I don't become an EMT, I will be able to retain this knowledge for future situations and maybe help a lot of people."

**Raffles  
& Prizes!**



**Interactive  
Demonstrations!**

Emergency Medical Services of Berkshire County  
Is pleased to announce the

# **Berkshire County EMS Expo 2011**

**Sunday**

**May 22, 2011**

**11 AM – 6 PM**

**Vehicle  
Demonstrations!**

**Car Seat  
Checkups!**

# **Berkshire Mall**

**Lanesborough**

**Come see your local EMS providers in action!**

