



VILLAGE AMBULANCE SERVICE FALL/WINTER 2013 NEWSLETTER



A Message from our General Manager:

As we begin the 32nd year of service to our community, I would like to take a moment and share a few thoughts with you.

Whether you're a patient VAS has transported, a member of one of the many public service agencies we work with, a staff member at one of the extended care facilities we serve, or a citizen in one of the towns we provide 9-1-1 service for, I want to say thank you for letting us serve you over the past 31 years.

We feel our success is the direct result of the outstanding employees we have. There is no other factor that has had such a direct impact on our company.

The employees of VAS are the "Best of the Best" and are our most important asset; they are VAS. To all VAS employees, past and present, I thank you.

In light of the many changes occurring within our organization, we have remained focused on providing quality ambulance service to the community. We take great pride in doing whatever it takes to exceed your expectations and we vow to continue offering a wide range of exceptional medical transportation services from pre-hospital emergency care to non-emergency services for a variety of consumers, including healthcare clinics, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and YOU, our most valued customer.

Thanks again and stay safe!

Shawn P. Godfrey

Welcome to the Fall/Winter 2013 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

Dean Stockley EMT-Basic



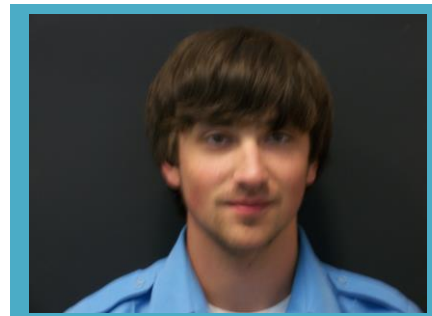
Congratulations to Dean Stockley for being in this quarter's Employee Spotlight!

Dean started working full-time at Village Ambulance Service in late 2012 immediately after earning his EMT-Basic certification through VAS's accredited EMT program.

When asked how he learned of the emergency medical services trade, Dean said "since as long as I can remember I've always wanted to be a flight [Aero] Paramedic."

"The thrill of emergency medicine, while at the same time helping someone, has always intrigued me," he added.

Dean, who works part-time at Action Ambulance Service in Pittsfield, is currently enrolled in Hudson Valley Community College's Paramedic



program and, when time permits, also works as a teaching assistant for Village Ambulance Service's Spring and Fall EMT-Basic programs.

In his spare time, Dean enjoys playing hockey, studying, honing his skills as an EMT and spending time with his girlfriend, Mollie.

He currently lives with his parents and younger brothers in Pittsfield, MA.

Good luck with your studies, Dean; all the hard work will pay off!

SAFETY TIPS



Winter is a wonderful time of year. Spending time with your family, the many holidays, the New Year, snow and the warmth from a fireplace all remind us of the upcoming season. But, as with any time of the year, there are specific things we need to be aware of to keep our family safe and injury-free.

- Home [fires](#) are more prevalent in the winter months than any other season. Cooking is the leading cause of all winter residential building fires. Other winter fire hazards include space heaters, fireplaces and candles.
- The cold weather increases your chances of getting frostbite or hypothermia. Between the years of 1999-2004, an average of 647 people died each year from hypothermia.
- In 2009, over 16,000 Americans were treated for head injuries in emergency rooms because of playing winter sports (skiing, sledding, snowboarding, snowmobiling).
- Fatal crashes were [14%](#) more likely to happen on the first snowy day of the season than on days following. It takes drivers a few days to regain their sense of [driving](#) in this weather.
- According to the CDC, most carbon monoxide poisonings happen in January; the second most in December. Carbon monoxide detectors save lives, but less than one-third of American homes have one installed.

Prepare your vehicle

Have your vehicle serviced regularly (check the owner's manual for the recommended interval) to ensure better gas mileage, quicker starts, faster response on pick-up and passing power, and to prevent major problems.

- You need to check the concentration level of the antifreeze in your vehicle's engine. This is done by using an antifreeze tester which is inserted into the water reservoir of your car. Do not open the radiator cap!
- Add a stronger windshield cleaning/de-icer fluid solution to keep the spray from freezing. (It is best to use a product that has a cleaner as well. This allows you to dislodge the road grime from the windshield.)
- Check air pressure in your tires (including the spare) and replace any worn tires. (Having proper wheel alignment will lead to a longer life for your tires)

Vehicle Checklist for Winter Weather

Before winter starts, check these in your vehicle:

- Heater and windshield defroster
- Battery
- Brakes
- Brake fluid
- Ignition system
- Lights and emergency flashers
- Tires
- Exhaust
- Fuel
- Oil
- Radiator
- Power steering fluid

Keep your fuel tank full or near full to avoid being caught on the road in long lines of slow moving traffic. (This also is a reserve to be able to run the engine and heater if you become stranded).

Endowments Pay for Safety Equipment



Donations from [Dion Money Management](#) and two anonymous donors allowed VAS to outfit all personnel with ANSI compliant – Class 3 winter jackets. Over thirty-eight employees will now be safer on the roadways thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

VAS Launches 2014 Membership Campaign

Village Ambulance Service has launched its 2014 Membership Campaign.

Staffed and operating 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week by paid personnel, the organization relies largely on contributions from community members.

Donations enable the service to continue providing high-quality emergency medical care to the greater Williamstown area. Contributions also help fund the ongoing training EMTs must undergo to maintain certification and to purchase and maintain essential equipment and supplies.

To learn more or to donate, please visit:

http://villageambulance.com/mxroot/page_10781.html



WILLIAMSTOWN -- Village Ambulance Service took delivery of a new ambulance Wednesday morning, Oct. 16, and plans to add an additional vehicle by the year's end.

The new vehicle, a 2013 Ford Supervan XL, will replace a 2007 Ford modular-style ambulance nearing mechanical attrition and closing in on 165,000 travel miles. Delivery was made by Keith Walker, president of Yankee Fire and Rescue of Palmer, Mass., and accepted by Shawn P. Godfrey, general manager of Village Ambulance Service.

Adding a van-style ambulance or Type II model as it's commonly called, will afford the organization better functionality of its fleet while at the same time keeping overhead down. Advantages of a van ambulance include better fuel efficiency, easier maneuverability and lower repair costs.

"Although the van-style ambulance is smaller than a modular, it can effectively function in primary emergency responses and accommodate critical care transports as well meet the needs of non-emergency transfers," Godfrey said.

"After extensive strategic planning, we found operating three modular ambulances and one van-style ambulance is the best approach for our organization in terms of fleet utilization and fiscal responsibility. We already have a deployment plan for how the ambulances will be utilized," he added.

In addition to the replacement rig, financial and organizational preparations are being made to augment the current fleet by adding a fourth vehicle, a 2014 Ford modular ambulance, sometime in January 2014.

"Village Ambulance Service has witnessed an increase in call requests, both from an emergency and non-emergency perspective," Godfrey said.

"Our mission is to continue offering a wide range of quality medical transportation services for a variety of consumers, including hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, healthcare clinics and, of course, the community. Having four ambulances will better allow us to serve all of these demographics," Godfrey said.

The replacement ambulance came just as the ambulance service is gearing up to launch the non-profit's 2014 Membership campaign to the residents of Williamstown, Hancock and New Ashford (towns which depend on the ambulance service for emergency medical transportation).

In addition, the ambulance service is in the exploratory stages of a major capital campaign to replenish funds depleted by the fleet augmentation and by the downward spiral of the national economy in general and the health care system in particular.

"The service had been using the income from capital funds to buy new ambulances, but in the last few years that income has dwindled and the fund needs to be built back up," Godfrey said.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



It Takes a Village of Elves

If you are like many of us, then you've never worked a day in your life. We do what we do not for the money, or the glory, but for the inherent reward that comes from knowing you truly make a difference in people's lives every day.

The fact that our communities allow us to serve them is indeed an honor; one that we should routinely be thankful for. The holiday season offers a perfect opportunity for us to give back in a number of ways.

One way Village Ambulance Service is giving back is through the Berkshire Community Action Council's "Holiday Elf" program. Village Ambulance Service has again offered to sponsor and provide gifts to four children of a single family.

Donations from employees will be used to purchase suitable toys, clothing and wrapping materials for the family. The gifts will be anonymously delivered to the family just before Christmas day.

EMTs Are Pretty In Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month

WILLIAMSTOWN, Mass. — For the second year in a row, Village Ambulance employees are garnering a lot of attention for looking pretty... in pink.

EMTs and staff are again wearing pink uniforms to show their support for breast cancer awareness month.

Last year, the staff designed embroidered polo shirts — with a pink ribbon on the right side and their logo on the left — to wear for the month of October.

"Based on the success of last year, we wanted to show our support again," said Angela Swistak, who was one of the employees behind the idea.

Swistak and her co-worker Sean Peltier thought it up three summers ago and had Cheshire-based Grapevine Embroidery & Design embroider the shirts. When the shirts came in last month, nearly all of the staff jumped on board to don the pink.

"We've had an overwhelming response last year and an even bigger one this year," Swistak said.

The polo-shirts have not only been highly supported by staff but everywhere they go they are hearing compliments. From emergency room staff in multiple hospitals to nursing homes, the shirts are gaining attention.

"We've been getting a lot of feedback from emergency room staff and the community," Village Ambulance Service Operations Manager Michelle Sawicky said. "We got an amazingly positive response the first year however this year it seems more people are noticing. That's the idea; to make people think about the importance of early recognition when it comes to not only breast cancer, but all types of cancer," Sawicky added.

The support is another level for the ambulance company which already has rainbow ribbons on their vehicles in a sign of support for all types of cancer.



VAS has adopted the community program, 'FILE OF LIFE.'

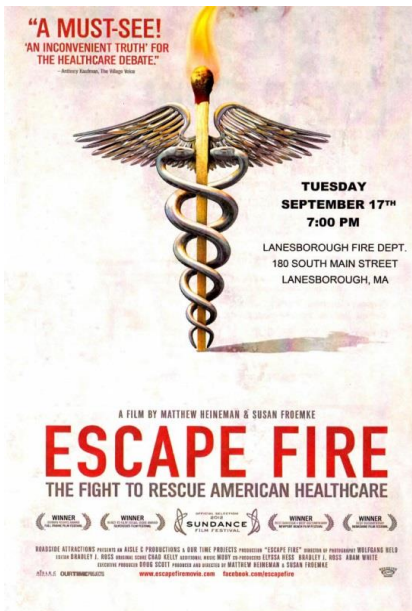
The FILE OF LIFE program enables EMTs to obtain a quick medical history whenever the patient is unable to offer one.

Information cards are kept in a red plastic envelope labeled 'FILE OF LIFE', and contain information regarding the patient's name, emergency contacts, health status, medications, allergies and health care proxy information. The back of the envelope is magnetic so it can be placed on the refrigerator.

Call 413-458-4889 for your free File of Life!



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



ESCAPE FIRE

THE FIGHT TO RESCUE AMERICAN HEALTHCARE



6:45 PM : DOORS OPEN
7:00 PM : FILM SCREENING
8:40 PM : PANEL DISCUSSION
moderated by Dominica D'Avella
9:15 PM : CONCLUSION

FEATURED PANELISTS

Judy Gawron, DPT, MSPT, LMT
Professor, Berkshire Community College
Shawn Godfrey, NREMT-P, I/C
General Manager, Village Ambulance Service
Bobbie Orsi, MS, RN, CCP
Director of Community Health, Home Instead Senior Care



ESCAPE FIRE IS SPONSORED BY:



Village Ambulance Service Co-Hosts Film Screening

Lanesborough Fire Department, Village Ambulance Service, and I.D.E.A.L. Health & Wellness Solutions hosted a screening of the award-winning documentary [ESCAPE FIRE: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare](#). The screening was held on Tuesday, September 17 at 7 p.m. at Lanesborough Fire Department. The screening was followed by a panel discussion where film-goers had the opportunity to ask questions. Approximately 20 people attended the event.

Village Ambulance Service Awarded CPS Grant

VAS was awarded \$2000.00 under the 2013 Massachusetts FFY Child Passenger Safety grant. The grant will subsidize the purchase of forty-five (45) new car seats, which will then be dispersed throughout the community on an as needed basis.



Massachusetts state law requires all children under the age of 5 and less than 40 pounds be properly secured in a federally approved car seat or booster seat. Further, they must be secured according to the manufacturer's instructions. Children ages 5 - 12 must wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt at all times.

Village Ambulance Service's goal is to protect the children of Berkshire County by providing free car seat safety checks.

To make an appointment, please call 413-458-4889 or stop by our office at 30 Water Street, Williamstown, MA 01267.

Tip: Car seats have an expiration date. The date can be found on the body of the seat.

2013-2014 9-1-1 Coat & Can Drive

Village Ambulance Service (VAS) has begun its annual 9-1-1 Coat and Can drive for 2013-2014. Please consider donating any jacket (clean and in usable condition), as well as any non-perishable food item to our endeavor. Gift cards are welcome, too!

VAS is excited to report that we have again joined forces with the Berkshire Mall and the Berkshire Young Professionals for our upcoming drive.

Items can be dropped off at the following locations:

- **VAS Ambulance Headquarters**
30 Water Street
Williamstown, MA.
- **The Berkshire Mall - Food Court**
Rte 7 & 8 Connector Road
Lanesborough, MA.
- **Any Berkshire Young Professionals event**
www.berkshirechamber.com



For more information or driving directions, please contact Village Ambulance Service, (413)-458-4889. Need a pickup? We'll send a team to collect your donations.

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?



SPRING 2014 PROGRAM

WHERE

Berkshire Mall – Route 7 & 8 Connector Rd., Lanesborough, MA 01237

WHEN

Classes begin on March 6th and run until June 19th every Monday and Thursday evening from 6:00 pm-10:00 pm. (Saturday classes TBA)

COST

Program Cost: \$750.00 (\$150.00 non-refundable deposit with application; balance due first night of class) Cash, Money Order, Bank Check, or Agency Check Accepted

CONTACT

To obtain an application packet, please visit our website, call our office, or scan the QR code with your smartphone

FOR A CAREER THAT COUNTS!

*EMT PROGRAM

The Emergency Medical Technician Course teaches initial evaluation, treatment and transport of patients with medical problems and/or trauma. Students learn to recognize and provide initial care for ailments including, but not limited to, shock, heart problems, breathing problems, strokes, burns, diabetes, drowning and accidents.

EMTs are the foundation of American pre-hospital emergency medical care. For medical emergencies, they provide rapid response, initial

evaluation and transport to an appropriate medical facility. They also provide non-emergency transportation for patients who are bedridden and/or require continuous monitoring and basic-level care.

*This class teaches the new National EMS Education Standards.



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