



Your latest news from the Vermont Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

FROM BEAUTY TO DEVASTATION

Heather Rigney, MRC State Coordinator

This summer started off with idyllic weather and a record number of community events supported by the MRC. After a number of years slogging through COVID, I think we were all refreshed and thankful to be getting back into engaging our local partners and serving communities with events that were, well, *fun*. It was great to be enjoying local festivals, teaching classes, supporting our partners with misting tents, first aid stations and more during parades and races. It was great to simply be a volunteer engaging one on one with community members just like us who appreciate everything Vermont has to offer.

And then came the flooding, which keeps on coming. As I write this, we are preparing for the remnants of Hurricane Debby, and our volunteers are on deck for yet another week. Ready to staff Flood Recovery Centers, or to stand up round two of sheltering, I can only admire the resilience and adaptability of MRC to handle this pressure despite personal loss. The incredible part? Our units are still shouldering their 'blue skies' community work, even in the midst of the rain and wind.

I stand in awe of our volunteers' dedication. However, I want to remind you all that despite being super heroes, you need to create space for yourself. Take care of your physical and mental health, hug your families, schedule time to get those repairs and inspections done. It's okay to take a step back.

Our Employee Assistance Program 800 number welcomes volunteer calls. Their contact info is below, as well as a link to other available resources.

www.investeap.org
866-660-9533

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MRC Engagement Survey



TAKE THE MRC
ENGAGEMENT
SURVEY! WE WANT
YOUR FEEDBACK
ABOUT ALL THINGS
MRC.



EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN THE MRC

Steps MRC Units Can Take to Promote DEI:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. What does that mean in terms of a truly inclusive MRC? So often we stay in our comfort zone. We participate in events where people look like us, act like us, and live like us. But the people we serve are not carbon copies of us. How do we engage with prospective volunteers from all walks of life, and where do we begin?

Recruit for diversity when engaging community partners. How better to serve a community than to have volunteers in their midst, who make them feel heard and appreciated?

- Look to ethnic and cultural groups
- Varying socioeconomic statuses
- Those with diverse languages
- Representatives from the LGBTQIA community
- People from geographically isolated areas or marginalized places
- Those with different abilities
- People whose skills broaden the depth of your work

Find who makes your community unique. Chances are, they'll dive at the chance to be involved, if you make your unit welcoming.

A Champion For Equity

JACQUIE KELLEY, NORTHWEST
MRC UNIT COORDINATOR

Our own Jacquie Kelley was featured on ASPR's MRC website in June during Disability Awareness Month. Thanks, Jacquie for your ground-breaking work on equity and inclusion in Vermont, particularly related to those with physical accessibility needs.

<https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Meet/Pages/MRC-Network-Jacqueline-Kelley.aspx>

Breaking Down Barriers to Participation:

We have interest, but still no one participates? What is going on?

If your efforts don't work, examine what your unit can do to boost access:

- Vary meeting times
- Offer virtual and in person options
- Rotate venues
- Offer childcare or make meetings family friendly
- Consider communication needs
- Open meetings to the public so people learn who you are

MRC STTRONG UPDATE



STOP THE BLEED

Number of students taught Stop the Bleed this quarter: 196

Types of venues offered: Schools, public events, In-house for volunteers, Conferences, Businesses

Kits given away: 144

BE BRIGHT AT NIGHT

Number of Be Bright events offered this quarter: 4

Audiences: Youth events, Healthcare, General Public

Reflectors given away: 468

E-911 CARE

- Made recommendations on equity language to existing questionnaire, which E-911 is turning into an online process.
- Linked UVMHC's Green Mountain Emergency Preparedness Guide for individuals with disabilities to CARES to aid in personal preparedness planning.
- Rolling our MRC Standard Operating Procedures so volunteers can assist with helping individuals create personal preparedness plans upon request. *

*Interested in helping individuals create a personal preparedness plan? See upcoming trainings on the last page of this newsletter!





IN MEMORIAM

DR. ARCHIE

MRC OF SOUTHWESTERN VT




It is with much sadness I share that our dear Dr. Archie passed away on Sunday, August 11.

Dr Aurunas Budnikas, or Dr. Archie, as he liked to be called, was a lovely man of 6 feet some 4 inches and gentle as a giant. He could get a little gruff at times, especially about logging into computer platforms, but always had a smile and a kind word for his patients. He especially liked the very young and the very old. Dr. Archie became an MRC member in 2020 at the height of COVID.

After a long career as an MD in upstate New York, Dr. Archie retired to VT, where he immediately looked to find other ways to serve using his expertise. He signed up for the MRC and immediately advocated to get some clinics going. He participated in every clinic, and he was usually the earliest and the last to leave. He volunteered with many organizations and continued using his medical expertise and license. He was always looking for more ways to serve. He loved seeing the patients and helping them in their time of need. During his three years with the MRC, Dr. Archie won many awards for his service, but he really didn't care about the awards. He cared about the people. He was a person who worked humbly and tirelessly to do what he loved, and that was reward enough.

Says Dee Myrvang, SWMRC Coordinator, "One of my favorite memories of Dr. Archie was him sitting out in our parking lot giving away COVID test kits last year. I went out to check on him sitting on Main Street giving out kits and health education. He said to me, "The condoms are much more popular than the kits, and that is a good sign." He had a dry but witty sense of humor, and he will be greatly missed in the many communities he touched."

Thank you, Dr. Archie, for your years of service. Vermont's MRC appreciates Dr. Archie's dedication to serving our community. 

MRC MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Every quarter, we will be recognizing and celebrating MRC volunteer(s) who have gone above and beyond to serve their communities. Sound like a volunteer you know?
Submit a nomination to Heather.Rigney@vermont.gov

FRAN TOUGAS, NORTHWEST MRC

“I want to nominate Fran because she has done so much work to help our unit and surrounding units prepare for emergencies. She went through the Red Cross CPR train the trainer course and trained members of the NWVT MRC, NEK MRC and Chittenden County MRC in CPR and AED. She also provided Red Cross training to the units in splinting, Anaphylaxis / Epi, Asthma, and Bloodborne Pathogens. Finally, she worked with our volunteer Helen Short to provide STB training to our unit and surrounding units. Fran is always up for offering more training to our unit and often comes to me with ideas. Outside of training, Fran is an incredibly active volunteer who regular volunteers at tabling events and attends MRC activities around the state.”

Jacquie Kelley, NWMRC Coordinator



Fran teaching a splinting class to MRC members.

How long have you been volunteering with the MRC? What drew you to volunteer?

I started with MRC around 2016 or 2017, I believe, after meeting a few people in the NW MRC group. I liked the idea of MRC, and with my chiropractic physician background and sports medicine, it just fit!

What has been your favorite MRC experience(s)?

My favorite experiences with the MRC are: POD activities, MRC Summitt meetings, the first aid booth at the Maple fest, and experiencing the EMS conferences. The numerous trainings that I have received have been invaluable. I also love teaching Stop the Bleed and ARC classes to our members.

What's your favorite summer activity?

My favorite summertime activities are biking and swimming. I also love camping.

Where's the MRC?



MRC leadership at a staff development retreat in July, enjoying the beauty of Bradbury State Park. Left to right: Nancy Kreis, Karl Stein, Dee Myrvang, Becky Petelle, Helen Wilson, Martha Cornwell, Eric Pulver, Matt Ward, Misha McNabb, Jacquie Kelley, Moriah Keat, August Toynton, Wanda Walkowiak, Heather Rigney..



Volunteer Jessica Doos teaches Stop the Bleed to clients at the Orwell Library.



Volunteer Helen Wilson helps a client build an emergency go-kit' at Neighbor Up Night in St Johnsbury..



Joe Burke stands with MRC volunteer Wanda Walkowiak at the Deerfield Blueberry Festival.

UNIT ACTIVITIES AROUND THE STATE

MRC OF SOUTHWESTERN VT

Our Geriatric Outreach and Assessment Team has been working with seniors in the Northshire to identify gaps and areas of need. We have been providing assistance with food insecurity, medical assessments, climate change impacts and identifying gaps in funding resources.



SOUTHEASTERN MRC

We distributed COVID test kits at 5 VeggieVanGo food distribution sites and the Blueberry Festival. Our unit also assisted VDH Brattleboro in the conduct of two refugee vaccination clinics. Ongoing conduct of Foot Clinics continues at the senior center. Members attended the virtual Hot Weather Safety training. Currently, we are working with VDH Brattleboro on planning for Oral Health Pop-up clinics.

CENTRAL VERMONT MRC

On May 19, we participated in the Rainbow Bridge Community Center Outreach Event and Vaccine Clinic, followed by the Mexican consulate vaccine clinic on June 22. During the recent floods, volunteers assisted with emergency sheltering in the Barre Auditorium, as well as a Tetanus vaccine clinic for flood clean-up, and staffed Flood Recovery Centers multiple days in July and August. We hosted Stop the Bleed Training for MRC volunteers on July 26.

Northwestern MRC

Our unit attended the St. Albans Pride Festival. We distributed 100 hot weather preparedness kits that included cooling towels, sun screen, hand sanitizer, bug spray, SPF lip balm, tick kit, and first aid kit. We supported the North Hero Community Hall cooling center during the June heatwave. We provided Red Cross training to the NWVT MRC and surrounding units in Anaphylaxis, Asthma/Epi and Bloodborne Pathogens. Finally, we staffed a water station and first aid station at the Church Street Festival in St. Albans.



UPPER VALLEY MRC

UVMRC provided Market on the Green tabling in Woodstock, VT. We have hosted classes teaching STB, Bystander CPR, and Fall prevention. We have done Be Bright at Night presentations. We also hosted three MRC recruitment events in May and June. Upper Valley MRC also conducted Flooding Preparedness & Heat Preparedness Training on May 28, 2024 & July 23. We provided first aid at the Woodstock Scenic Circuit Dog Show in Tunbridge, VT in July, The Prouty in July, Lace up for Laura in June- all medical standby.

MRC OF THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM

We hosted multiple classes on Stop the Bleed, Personal Preparedness, CPR Skills, and Tick Talks, and had volunteers represented at Hot Weather Preparedness and Opioid trainings conducted virtually. We supported community events at the Bike Rodeo, Pride Fest. Kids' Day, and Peacham Farmer's Market, plus participated in a number of evacuation exercises at NVRH. Not to mention our flood response work, which included supporting the Lyndonville shelter and area Flood Recovery Centers.

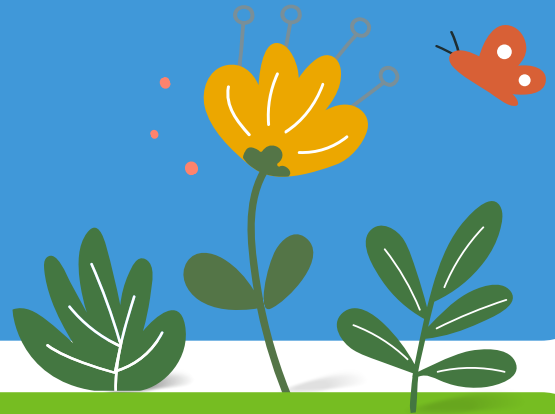
LAMOILLE VALLEY MRC

LVMRC supported area STB and Be Bright training. We have also staffed Flood Recovery Centers during the recent flood response/recovery. LVMRC has been active this summer building up and onboarding its advisory board.

RUTLAND-ADDISON MRC

We continue to participate on the Rutland Outreach Care Team. The Emergency Preparedness Community Needs Assessment Report for Rutland/Addison Counties will be released at the end of August. We partnered with Rutland County Pride to support a first aid area for the Rutland Pride. Our misting tents were used at the Brandon Carnival, Addison County Fair, and at the State Fair. One volunteer developed a STB train-the-trainer model for local school nurses in Rutland County. All schools in Addison County School District have received STB kits. All of the nurses will receive training to be STB instructors in October of 2024 and continue programs for schools. STB training is planned for Orwell Free Library and Mary Johnson Child Care Center in Middlebury and other sites this month. Volunteers also supported area Hepatitis A clinics.

UPCOMING TRAININGS



Vermont Emergency Management Conference, September 10-11, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee VT. Register here for two free days of training on everything emergency preparedness and emergency management. Go to <https://vem.vermont.gov/conference> for more information.

* **DE-ESCALATION**

Sponsored by SEMRC. Join Director of Mental Health Programs for DPS, Mourning Fox, as he provides critical training on de-escalation.

Date: Monday, Sept. 9, 2024

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Location: Brattleboro Fire Dept, 103 Elliot St., Brattleboro, VT

Email pamela.corbett@vermont.gov if interested

PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Virtual training for any volunteer who'd like to learn more about personal preparedness for individuals with Disability, Access and Functional Needs (DAFN.) We are setting up a project team for volunteers willing to help create plans for persons requesting assistance.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTERS PART 2

For those who took the May or July Part 1 training, or need a refresher from a previous year. Learn the family interview forms and practice mock interviews on your peers. Each session will be offered in a different region.

Dates TBA. Locations will be in Burlington, Middlebury, Morrisville and Windsor.

Info will be sent via email in late September.

NEW/PROSPECTIVE MEMBER ORIENTATION

Learn more about the MRC program, its history, its national mission, and how we do MRC here in VT. This orientation is ideal for new and prospective members.

Email heather.rigney@vermont.gov