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MIDDLEBORO - In the wake of the devastating attacks on 9/11, the federal government founded a national system called the Medical reserves Corps. This is a nation-wide system that "brings together people who have skills related to health care as well as citizen volunteers." In the event of an emergency such as a hurricane, tornado, or a pandemic, these volunteers are called upon to help their communities in a variety of ways.

All volunteers are trained on emergency response procedures to help in the event of a public health crisis and are utilized as a supplement to the Red Cross and other national public health agencies. In addition to this volunteers also help with public outreach and education in regards to emergency preparedness. Each MRC is geared towards the area in which they serve, so different MRCs may have different programs based on the emergency needs in the area as well as the the skill sets of the volunteers.

Middleboro's own MRC was registered two years ago by Health Officer Jeanne Spalding. She also acts as the director and co-coordinator of the Middleboro MRC.

"It ties in so well with public health I thought it was important to bring this program to Middleboro," Ms. Spalding said.

There are approximately 40 volunteers in town ready to assist the community in the event of an emergency. Prior to the MRC Middleboro had a similar program called the Citizens Emergency Response Team. Once the MRC was registered the two organizations were consolidated and the Medical Reserve Corps became the primary emergency response system of the town.

The Middleboro Medical Reserve Corps was awarded an \$8,000 grant by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. This grant paid for emergency equipment, nursing supplies, CPR dummies for the Fire Department, safety clothing, flashlights, as well as many other necessary items. These are expected to be delivered at some point next month. Ms. Spalding said she applied for the grant in the hopes the MRC could obtain some of the essential supplies necessary for proper emergency preparedness as well as items to help with emergency training.

Ms. Spalding has also set up educational workshops on a variety of subjects in regard to emergency preparedness as well as general public health. In January the MRC ran a workshop on the flu. There the MRC discussed how to be prepared for flu season, how to identify the flu, as well as how to help reduce the spreading of the virus. On March 27 another workshop was held at the Burkland School to discuss animal safety in an emergency. It was conducted by Middleboro's animal control officer.

In May the scheduled workshop will be on behavioral responses in an emergency.

The MRC provides a mercury collection program at these workshops so that people may safely dispose of their household waste which contains mercury.

MRC volunteers help with everything from natural disasters to the Boston Marathon. "The whole concept behind this is to have a core group of volunteers in a community to come out and assist to promote public health," Ms. Spalding said.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Middleboro Reserve Corps can visit the state website at [www.mamedicalreservecorps.org](http://www.mamedicalreservecorps.org) or contact the Middleboro Public Health Department at 508-946-2408. Volunteers are needed with a wide variety of skill sets. Everyone from ham radio operators to motorcycle clubs can be of use in the event of an emergency. Training is free and will provide the knowledge necessary to help the community as well as one's own family in the event of a public state of emergency.

The MRC is also looking for someone with a knowledge of web design to volunteer their time to set up the Middleboro Medical Reserve Corps website. Contact Ms. Spaulding at the public health department if interested.