



HealthONE EMS ICARE Program Fosters Ideals



HealthONE EMS Instructor Jeri Price discusses ICARE with her EMT class

A cloud of students wearing brown shirts chat before the start of Jeri Price's EMT class. At 8:00 AM Price kicks off class welcoming students and gives the day's agenda. She asks the students if they'd like to recognize a peer for ICARE (Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Empathy). Matt Nelson raises a hand and says, "I'd like to recognize Amy Burdick for integrity." Matt, very appreciative, shares that Amy has organized early study sessions at a local Denny's and after class reviews at the Southglenn library. Price asks if there are others to recognize, before continuing class.

Later, Price will add a certificate to the classroom wall, a practice she instituted earlier this year. Nelson, Burdick and students in the HealthONE EMS EMT and Paramedic classes are participating in HealthONE EMS's second year ICARE Program. The program has experienced growth and accolades since a staff workshop was presented by national ICARE co-founder Chris Le Baudour, an EMT Instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College in California.

compassionate patient care. Price and Catherine O'Hagan, EMT instructors, prime students for ICARE in their first day of EMT class. In Price's daytime EMT class, students sort through note cards containing 30 value statements. Eventually, they prioritize and categorize items to fit within the ICARE values. Price believes that this exercise and ICARE core values encourage respect and recognition of unique qualities in one another. O'Hagan asks her class to come up with a group mission statement based on professionalism and responsibility. The students brainstorm, refine and use the statement to guide them during the program. "We discuss ICARE ethics and I tell them that ICARE is for them. They have to develop rules and how they want to utilize the ICARE program," said O'Hagan. In contrast to Price's class, O'Hagan's students privately contact her when recognizing an ICARE act. Both approaches have been successful. O'Hagan believes that the private contact allows more reserved students a pathway to recognize peers without standing before the class. O'Hagan says since the start of ICARE, students appear more responsible and accountable to one another.

At HealthONE EMS, what starts as a pat on the back is quickly building camaraderie and will lead to

Students view the certificates and ICARE favorably, too. "I think the ICARE program encourages people to think about their actions and how they affect others. It may seem like a simple piece of paper, but the recognition one gets from classmates really feels good. It feels like you're doing something right," said O'Hagan's Danielle Beasley, when asked about ICARE.

Moving Beyond Certificates

While certificates and ICARE posters provide visibility to the program's success, student attitude and acts are its greatest outcomes. EMT graduate, Michael Ghods was at the Englewood campus last week volunteering. With moulage lacerations on his arms and face, he served as a patient victim for the HealthONE EMS Paramedic class. He described students moving from valuing certificates to actively giving of themselves. "In the first month of class a lot of ICARE certificates were given out. The spirit of the ICARE acts changed. In the last month of class, half of the class would arrive early to study or work together on projects," said Ghods. "Students really went out of their way to assist one another," said Ghods. He cited students sharing laptops and providing detailed notes for solving complex EMS scenarios.

ICARE Spreads Beyond Classroom



HealthONE EMS Instructor Catherine O'Hagan with Michael Ghods

Ghods saw ICARE certificates on the classroom wall from other EMT classes and was able to better associate names and faces from other EMT classes. Price shared that one of her students went out of his way to help a classmate get to school after a car breakdown. In O'Hagan's class one student regularly phoned a struggling student with encouragement the night before exams. Price's students have presented ICARE awards outside of class to local merchants and restaurants exhibiting exceptional service and compassion.

Recognition has provided a base for ICARE standards. The mindset is being adopted by students. Kimberly Spuhler, another O'Hagan student said, "The ICARE system is a fabulous way to bring attention to small actions that help promote team work, accountability, and higher standards in EMS. We found ourselves competing to have our name recognized and therefore promoted the ICARE standards throughout the entire class term. It is a great motivational system and helps to build caring habits for the future." While treating one another with respect, compassion, and empathy are great values for the classroom, the students are transferring the empathy in ICARE to patient care. Noah Kline, another O'Hagan student said, "The ICARE principles help facilitate the golden rule your mother may have taught you. In a moment of tragedy or panic, would you rather have an EMT or Paramedic treat you with cold indifference, or tactful poise and reassurance? The students that go through HealthONE for EMS training will be better equipped to deal with patients due to the focus on the ICARE program, and ultimately, the patients will benefit from superior care."

To date, over 100 individuals have been recognized with ICARE awards at HealthONE EMS. ICARE is teaching

students to recognize and value individuals in and out of the classroom. Kline summed up ICARE by saying, "Integrity is not as easily learned as human anatomy from a book. Compassion is not as easily applied as a bandage to a wound. Accountability is not as easily defined as knowledge of pharmacology. Respect is not as easily earned as a good grade on an exam. Empathy is not as easily demonstrated as the proper way to take a pulse. Paramount to the success of any EMS professional is the understanding and demonstration of the ICARE principles."