Dear OKMRC Members,

I would like to take the opportunity to tell you this is the last printed MRC Monitor Newsletter that will be published in its current form. Since the first publication of MRC Newsletter in 2006, the OKMRC program has grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. The MRC Monitor in Summer of 2006, the OKMRC program had grown and evolved. 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Hello! I’m Lezlie Carter – your new OKMRC state coordinator. I am excited to be joining such a strong and dynamic organization. It is inspiring to work with individuals who are clearly living out the OKMRC mission to “contribute their skills and expertise to emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts during times of community need and in ongoing public health efforts.” While this is my first time to write in the MRC Monitor’s State Coordinator’s Corner, it will be the last printed version distributed through the mail. In the future, a digital version of the MRC Monitor will be sent to you by e-mail and available on the OKMRC website. I look forward to working with and getting to know OKMRC volunteers across the state.

The OKMRC has a strong base of volunteers. I want to continue the work of helping the volunteers be trained and prepared to respond in an emergency or to help their community become more resilient.

Since it might be a while before we have the opportunity to meet, I’d like to share a little about myself. I’m proud to say that I am a lifelong Oklahoman, first living in Antlers in the southeast, then moving to the Oklahoma City area, where I was raised and still live. I enjoy exploring this great state, trying new restaurants and having entertainment recommendation, so let me know where I should go when I’m in your part of the state!

For the past 4 ½ years, I was the Program Manager for the Oklahoma City office of the non-profit Junior Achievement of Oklahoma. I recruited and trained volunteers delivering programs that introduced the business world into the classroom by teaching financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work readiness to kindergarten and high school students. Following the tornados in May 2013, I coordinated volunteers for the Disaster Relief ministry at my church and realized my passion for preparedness and response. I’m thrilled to now be working in a position in Emergency Preparedness and Response Service (EPRS) that will contribute to the well-being of the communities of Oklahoma.

I was quickly welcomed into the world of disaster response with tornados in Creek and Tulsa counties on the evening of my third day on the job! Thankfully, Carrie Suns was ready to expertly manage the statewide transition year from the Oklahoma City to the Bridge Creek Multi-Agency Resource Centers (SRT) deployed for seven days both to the shelter as well as the Oklahoma City and the Bridge Creek Multi-Agency Resource Centers. Ten SRT team members provided a total of 146 hours of professional service at these three sites. The American Red Cross expressed its gratitude for the OKMRC volunteers who helped with this response, and the shelter residents themselves were greatly appreciative of the kindness, empathy, and support they were shown. As always, OKMRC volunteers demonstrated the Oklahoma Standard in another time of need – THANK YOU!

Volunteers Provide Service Support to 400+ at Norman’s 39th Annual Medieval Fair

The 2015 Medieval Fair of Norman was held March 27-29. The city of Norman Emergency Management, Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps (OKMRC) and Norman Emergency Response Volunteers Team (NERVT) participated during this event. There was an estimated 425,000 people in attendance.

This was a transition year from mainly providing historical medical information to now providing service support. Emergency Medical Services had previously asked for additional assistance and our volunteers stepped up. Emergency Management, OKMRC and NERV spent the event working out of a large tent with three golf carts to aid in their mission.

Both medical and informational supplies were kept on-hand to distribute to the public. Volunteers spent their time passing out safety information, distributing sunscreen, bandaging scrapes and giving many a ride back to their vehicles due to the heat. We documented assisting over 400 fair visitors. Although there were a few wrinkles to iron out, we feel that the emphasis on service support worked out well. Next year, there are plans to add an area where breastfeeding moms can sit in the shade. We also want to increase our signage so that those in need can find us easier. We look forward to participating in the 40th Annual Medieval Fair in April 2016.

Tornado, Flooding Hits Oklahoma County May 6 – Multiple Teams Deployed

Tornados and flash flooding impacted the Oklahoma City metro area May 6. In response to the severe weather events, the American Red Cross established a shelter in south Oklahoma City to house those affected. The OKMRC was requested to provide both medical and mental health care to residents of the shelter, which ranged in population from 35 to 75, for several days.

For the medical side, nine volunteers served a total of 47 hours. That provided a cost savings of nearly $1,700 after seeing 27 patients over four days! The OKMRC Stress Response Team (SRT) deployed for seven days both to the shelter as well as the Oklahoma City and the Bridge Creek Multi-Agency Resource Centers. Ten SRT team members provided a total of 146 hours of professional service at these three sites. The American Red Cross expressed its gratitude for the OKMRC volunteers who helped with this response, and the shelter residents themselves were greatly appreciative of the kindness, empathy, and support they were shown. As always, OKMRC volunteers demonstrated the Oklahoma Standard in another time of need – THANK YOU!
25,000 Mark the Run to Remember 20th Anniversary Memorial Marathon

On April 26, exactly one week after the 20th anniversary of the bombing of the Murrah Building, more than 25,500 runners from 46 states and 7 countries participated in the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon. The race itself has been taking place for 15 years, but this year was one of the biggest and most emotional events yet. With so many runners and spectators (an additional 25,000), the importance of providing both physical and mental health care was clear.

Once again, the OKMRC was requested to help support the Medical Facility, and, because of the size of the large event, it was made a statewide activation. A total of 22 volunteers responded to this event: 1 Staging Liaison, 7 Stress Response Team members, and 14 Medical Volunteers, including physician assistants, nurses, and EMTs (emergency medical technicians).

The volunteers provided a total of 86 hours of service, with an estimated cost-savings of $2,510.97! The Marathon Medical Leadership was greatly impressed by the skills and professionalism of the OKMRC volunteers, as they plan on requesting our services again next year! Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with this special event!

TULSA UNIT ANNOUNCES SUMMER SCHEDULE

The Tulsa OKMRC Unit has been very busy this spring in anticipation of an even more action-packed summer season of gardening, festivals and preparedness training, among others. We’d love to see you at the pending events, so check your calendars and mark these dates! Call Carrie Suns for event details at (918) 595-4034 or logon to okmrc.org.

- **Community Gardening**
  - Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - Call Carrie Suns beforehand to make arrangements (918)-595-4034

- **Community Garden Youth Program: “From The Ground Up”**
  - June 9, 16, 23 & 30; July 7 & 14

- **Asian American Festival Emergency Preparedness Booth**
  - June 6

- **World Refugee Day Emergency Preparedness Booth**
  - June 19

- **Staging Liaison Training**
  - July 11

OCCHD ANNOUNCES MOORE’S SIRI DIGNETY AS NEW VOLUNTEER & PLANNING COORDINATOR

Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) named Moore’s own Siri Digney as its new Volunteer and Planning Coordinator. Siri replaced Julie Looper, who relocated to Washington, D.C. as a Senior Program Analyst in Public Health Preparedness for NACCHO (National Association of County & City Health Officials).

As the OCCHD Coordinator, Siri leads more than 1,500 volunteers and collaborates with dozens of partners across the state. In 2010-11, she worked for the Oklahoma Department of Health as the Statewide Capabilities Assessment in Emergency Preparedness and Response Service.

“After being away more than three years, it’s wonderful to be back home pursuing a career that lets me be so directly involved in the community and regional public health,” said the self-described cat lady and weekend river team rower, who also holds a Ham Radio Technician Class License.

“Working with the volunteers and partner agencies after that absence shows me how the area has changed and grown. Together we’ll expand volunteer leadership roles, implement strike teams and develop more advanced training options.”

Siri graduated with a master’s in Health Promotions Sciences from the OU Health Sciences Center College of Public Health. She is currently finishing her Ph.D. in Social and Behavioral Science from the University of Memphis School of Public Health.

“It’s exciting to be back and such a privilege to team with so many incredibly dedicated volunteers and public health professionals,” she said. “Partners like the American Lung Association (Fight for Air Stair Climb) and American Red Cross (fire/smoke alarm canvassing and installation) as well as the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon and Open Streets OKC are just a few of the many important health promotions and community events we work with, in addition to preparedness and emergency response. Siri added that pending events such as June’s Volunteer Appreciation and scheduled quarterly meetings to enhance communications and keep unit activities cohesive will also bring opportunities for more volunteer opinions and input.

30,000 ATTEND OPEN STREETS OKC 2015

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, the Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) and partners closed nearly a mile of one of the busiest streets in Oklahoma City for Open Streets OKC. This was the second year for the event, which promotes public health through active transportation as well as local business. More than 30 vendors lined the streets offering various activities to visitors, including pickleball, hopscotch, zumba, etc., and several food trucks were on-hand offering at least one healthy option.

Approximately 30,000 people attended Open Streets OKC, and the OKMRC was there providing First Aid to those who needed it. Eight volunteers served more than 40 hours, providing a cost savings of nearly $1,000! Due to the success of the events so far, OCCHD will start hosting two per year in different parts of the metro, and OKMRC will be there to offer both medical and general support!
COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT:

The Tulsa County OKMRC Unit is excited to announce that we have been awarded a $15,000 Medical Reserve Corps Challenge Award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), in partnership with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will be utilizing these funds by partnering with the Tulsa Health Department on the Community Garden located at the North Regional Health and Wellness Center, 5635 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., in Tulsa. This area is in desperate need of this community garden.

This Community Garden initiative is a conceptually designed community garden consisting of raised beds used for planting fresh vegetables, herbs, and fruits. Through our partnership with Tulsa Health Department’s North Regional Health and Wellness Center, community members, and other agencies, the purpose of the garden is to educate the community, encourage healthy eating, and allow the experience of having access to fresh foods. Additionally, portions of the harvest will be donated to the local community food bank, low-income senior living centers, and other agencies serving those in need.

The garden is located in an area that has a clinic, basketball courts, playground equipment, and walking trail. Sadly, however, this area is also economically depressed and is an identified food desert. A food desert is a geographic area where affordable and nutritious food is difficult to obtain, particularly for those without access to transportation. Individuals living in this area die 14 years sooner than those in other parts of Tulsa. They also experience increased incidences of diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses.

Tulsa’s role as a local MRC unit has evolved beyond disaster relief to becoming involved in long-term, hands-on, sustainable community projects geared to capacity building, improving local infrastructures and improving public health. The MRC Challenge Award funds MRC units to carry out innovative projects in their communities that can be replicated on a national level and align with one of four focus areas: disaster risk reduction; chronic disease prevention; partners for empowered communities; and mental and emotional well-being.

The mission of the Community Garden is to educate the community, encourage healthy eating, and allow the experience of having access to fresh foods. Specifically:

- Educate and empower citizens of North Tulsa to eat fresh produce from a community garden.
- Educate families, students and schools about the relationship between gardening & cooking.
- Empower MRC volunteers to promote the Community Garden and teach others about healthy food choices.
- Recruit MRC volunteers who are passionate about improving the community health status.
- Provide more opportunities for MRC volunteers to participate in long-term sustainable public health projects where they can see tangible, positive change in their community.
- Increase access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and healthy food options.
- Increase access to education for kids about community gardening.
- Encourage community members to utilize the garden and to take advantage of the nearby healthy lifestyle assets to promote healthy behaviors, moving more, and making healthy food choices.
- Provide a Garden Coordinator with horticultural expertise to oversee and manage the physical gardening operations.
- Create a space that can be utilized by individuals with functional and access needs.
- Provide a space for MRC volunteers and community members to experience horticultural therapy.
- Increase public awareness of the MRC’s involvement in public health initiatives.

By Carrie Suns, Tulsa Health Dept./OKMRC Coordinator

Unfortunately, Oklahoma’s tornado season started early this year when Tulsa County experienced a devastating tornado on March 25, 2015. Sand Springs and West Tulsa were greatly affected, but as always, the Oklahoma Standard shined through. Our OKMRC volunteers from around the state assisted the American Red Cross, not only with the Shelter Operations, but also at the Resource Center. In addition we set up a First Aid Station on-site at the mobile home park that experienced devastating damage. At all sites we were able to provide medical, mental health and animal response services.

The OKMRC Humane Emergency Animal Response Team (HEART) did an AMAZING job! Not only did they deploy their large RV to the Shelter to house Shelter residents’ animals, but they were at the disaster site helping to rescue displaced animals. In addition, they handed out food, food and water bowls, leashes, collars, harnesses, litter, litterboxes, and event treats to affected pets and their people.

HEART continued to solicit, collect and distribute donations daily at the Shelter, on-site and even at the Resource Center. This was such a blessing to the victims and to the OKMRC! They allowed us to be able to assist the whole family, two-legged and four-legged. I don’t know what we or the affected Tulsa County residents would have done without them! OKMRC volunteers worked 652.45 hours during this response, for a cost-savings of $21,172.60! Thank you so much!!! You continually prove the Oklahoma Standard. You are all truly AMAZING! Thank you for all you have done, are doing, and will continue to do in the future. OKMRC ROCKS!!!

“From the Ground Up”

Sand Springs Tornado Prompts Collaborative Response

By Carrie Suns, Tulsa Health Dept./OKMRC Coordinator

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