



Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Service In Sonoma County

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Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Annual Report 2009.

The Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Service in Sonoma County was called out to scenes of tragedy by law enforcement, fire and emergency services 145 times in 2009. By way of comparison, we had 172 call outs in 2008 and 162 callouts in 2006. We had 40 call outs in the first quarter of 2009. In the second quarter we had 30 call outs; including one funeral. The third quarter had 39 call outs for LECS and in the fourth quarter of 2009, we had 36 call outs; which is about our average per quarter. We served approximately 550 victims at scenes of such tragedies in 2009.

We had 8 to 10 chaplains participate in the Every 15 Minutes program at Rancho Cotati H.S. in early October, Back in March, we assisted the Petaluma chaplaincy to do the Every 15 Minutes program at Casa Grande High School. On April 22 & 23, LECS participated in E15M at Montgomery High School: 10 chaplains put in over 253.5 hours. Then on April 29th E15 M was at Elsie Allen H.S. and 11 chaplains put in over 263 hours. We also helped at Ursuline and Cardinal Newman High Schools, 7 chaplains for 20 hours. E15M, is a program designed to create awareness among high school students of the dangers of drinking and driving, We feel it is a great program that saves lives and so we support it every year; last year we were at 4 local high schools and in 2007, we served at 7 local high schools; each high school runs the program every 3 to 4 years.

We held our eighth annual Pasta Feast on September 12, outside at Ursuline High School. We learned a lot and have some ideas about changing things, doing it earlier and making it more family friendly. The Sheriff's Canine Unit, Bomb Squad, SWAT Team and the Sheriff's helicopter; gave tremendous demonstrations much to everyone's delight. We appreciate the support from the Sheriff's Office. And of course, the SRPD kitchen crew did a wonderful job cooking the meal. Thanks to the Chief, Tom Schwedhelm and board member Karen Weeks and their crew for the hard work; even retired SRPD officer, now Santa Rosa City Councilman Ernesto Oliveras was helping. Overall, the event was a success; we had revenues of just over \$7,750, with expenses

at \$1,650 for a profit of \$6,100. Thanks to all the chaplains who served and of course to SCSO and SRPD.

We held our annual chaplains appreciation dinner on December 3, ninety four people attended, including most of our board of directors. We had good food and fellowship, handed out 1 year pins to our new chaplains and 5 year pins to the class of Academy VI. Then we did something that LECS has never done before: we recognized two very much deserved "Distinguished Service Awards." The first one went to Assistant Senior Chaplain Ginger Bonner who has been one of our law enforcement chaplains for 9 years. Ginger has been instrumental in making the chaplaincy so well received by the law enforcement community. She serves at the Sheriff's Office chaplain's desk, she visits on a regular basis at the main jail and the Coroner's Office. She has served with the helicopter unit of the Sheriff's Office and the Retired Deputy Sheriff's Association. The second Distinguished Service Award went to Assistant Senior Chaplain Gayle Shirley, who has served as one of our chaplains for 8 years. Gayle serves faithfully at Santa Rosa Police Department, is invited to attend briefings and does regular ride alongs with SRPD. She visits regularly at the North County jail facility and takes a turn at the chaplain's desk in the Sheriff's Office,

A chaplain may be awarded the Distinguished Service Award if he or she meets or exceeds the following: exemplifies the LECS mission, goes above and beyond the required two days of on call duty, helps mentor new chaplains, makes herself or himself available to other chaplains for debriefing and for on call schedule changes, regularly attends LECS meetings, and has been a chaplain for 5 years or more.

Most of our call outs are for natural deaths or to do death notifications but we had one unusual call out this fourth quarter, one of our chaplains was called upon by SRPD to comfort a driver who had accidentally hit a Santa Rosa police officer on foot in an intersection, who was chasing a suspect. It just so happens that several years earlier that chaplain had accidentally hit a pedestrian with her car. Neither accident involved a fatality but it is a stressful and unnerving situation and our chaplain could say to this person, "I think I know how you feel."

We did have a chaplain called at 0615 hours on November 29, to the horrendous traffic accident at the intersection of Lakeville Highway and Highway 37, where a family of four were killed. Police were unable to locate any family members right away, so our chaplain spent most of his time, there at the scene of the accident, being with the firemen and Highway Patrolmen. One of the Highway Patrolmen had a young son the age of the young boy who was killed. The first priority of our mission is to be with, serve and comfort law enforcement personnel and we must always be ready to do that.

Sincerely,

J R Young

**J. R. Young
Executive Director**