

NENA CONFERENCE 2017

JUNE 4TH – 7TH

SAN ANTONIO, TX

By Shelley Burkhart

This was my first NENA conference. Thank you to my supervision for sending me. Just a couple of notes to start about the actual conference. I do feel there was some disorganization. Starting with the kick off party on Sunday night. They changed the location of the event and there were no signs or information to tell us where to go. We went to the location listed in the brochure, and there were no signs that it had moved. There were multiple people wandering around the area looking for the event. We finally had a person, who was on a cell phone, say it was at a saloon about 3 blocks away. We did eventually find the place where the kick off was held.

Also a couple of the classes I had picked out to go to in the original brochure were changed, and another class was listed in it's place. All of the classes I attended were outstanding. It was just a little frustrating to have to choose a different class.

All of the Keynote speakers were excellent and motivating. The first was Alex Sheen. He is the founder of the "because I said I would" movement. He talks about the importance of a promise. He made a post on social media and it went viral. He had no idea his personal statement would have the impact it did on so many people. He made promise cards to give out. Basically, you write a promise on the card and give it to someone you want to fulfill a promise too. Or you write a promise down to yourself that you want to keep. Another important point he makes is, no matter if you are rich or poor, educated, uneducated, you "do what you can with what you have". That's pretty much what we do at our department.

The next Keynote speaker was, Theresa Payton. She was the first female to serve as White House chief of information officer, under George W Bush. She talked about cyber security. She spoke all about internet security both at work and at home. A lot of what she talked about was way over my head. But it was eye opening as far as how vulnerable we are at work and at home to internet attacks. I made notes to look up how to secure my home wifi connection. But I have yet to look into it.

The last Keynote speaker was, Coach Ken Carter. They made a movie based on his life story. He was very energetic and enthusiastic. I think his message was stay positive and work as a team, and there isn't anything that you can't accomplish.

I did learn what (ENP) stands for, Emergency number professional. It's a certification you can obtain through a test issued by NENA. I also learned what NENA stands for, National Emergency Number Association. One might think I already knew these things, but I did not.

I will give a brief synopsis of the classes I attended. A note, I felt as though there were not a lot of classes to attend. It seemed as though they wanted us to spend a great deal of time in the Expo hall. We did spend some time looking at the booths and new technology available. But neither of us have purchasing power at our department. I would have liked to spend more of my time attending classes.

Classes:

Leave your ego at the door:

This class was given by Nathan Lee - the Denise Amber Lee Foundation

Nathan is the husband of Denise, who was abducted and murdered. Basically, he feels that if the dispatch center had handled things differently his wife would still be alive. They can bring this class to our agency and teach it. It's an 8 hour class, they reduced it to just one hour for the conference. Some very good points were made:

- Always assume it's something on every call
- Do not hand write notes. Put the information into the computer!
 - o The dispatcher that took one of the calls hand wrote the information. Forgot about it and units in the area never got the information
- Train your dispatchers
- Use quality assurance
- Have proactive supervision
- Be perfect

There were very many mistakes made by the dispatch center on every call that came in. When Denise/the victim was actually able to get the suspects cell phone, and place a call to the dispatch center, she was very hysterical and was just screaming. The dispatcher was heard just saying, hello, hello, hello, hello in a monotone voice. There was no variation. Then another dispatcher received a call from a woman that heard screaming from the actual suspect's vehicle. This call was the one that was received by the dispatcher that just wrote the information down. She never entered the call for broadcasting to units in the area. After investigation, they determined there were units in the area that could have seen the suspect vehicle if they were given the info.

My thoughts: I left with mixed emotions after this class. I agree that mistakes were made. Maybe even mistakes that would require dispatchers being fired. But ultimately the final responsibility lies with the suspect. Amber would not be dead if the suspect did not kill her.

Communicating in the communications center:

Class by Leslie Whitham - Chino PD

The class was about communications styles. We don't all communicate the same way. We communicate in more ways than just verbally. We also communicate with tone and body language. This was similar to our class given by our HR, ergonomics. We took a quiz and she grouped us into colors, Blue, Green, Gold and Orange.

- Blue: are the care takers. They want to know how everyone feels
 - o You are supposed to let them make your day
- Green: are the people who question everything.
 - o Let them solve your problem
- Gold: are your organizers and they prepare themselves for everything.
 - o You can count on them
- Orange: are your take charge, passionate people.
 - o Let them entertain

By learning the different ways we communicate, we create a deeper understanding of each other, and are better able to work together more cohesively.

Character: The most important perishable skill:

Class by Kimberly Miller

A reminder of our ethics, and to do the right thing when no one is looking. Reminding people of their moral character, helps them be better people. She said we all come from different cultures. We all have different characters based on how we were raised our culture. We need to define an Organizational Culture, within our department. Everyone within our agency needs to be on the same page.

- Steps to accomplish this:
 - o Create a character based identity
 - o Decide who you want to be as an organization
 - o Obtain buy in from employees
 - Survey/assessment
 - o Training
 - Pick things to practice

Employee evaluations should include character and if the employee is being ethical.

- Do a personal checkup
 - o Would my parents be proud
 - o What if what I did was on MSN

Not in our house: preparing for an active violent event in your PSAP

Class by Scott Fulton – Mt Juliet PD

Definition of mass murder: Is when 4 or more people are killed. Events usually last 10min .

University of TX: August 1st, 1966

- Event was 96 min
- 16 were murdered/30 wounded
- This event created what we now call SWAT

Columbine: April 20th, 1999

- Event was 47 min
- Hitler's Birthday
- 13 murdered/12 wounded
- Active shooter response created from this event

Virginia Tech: April 16th, 2007

- 32 murdered/17 wounded
- This event created the, Go in, response

Chardon High, OH: February 27, 2012

- 3 murdered/3 wounded
- This suspect got confronted and he left

Sandy Hook, CT: December 14, 2012

- 20 children murdered/6 adults murdered

96 % of active shooters are male, and 15 to 19 years of age.

The average response time:

- 911 call takes about 2 minutes
- 1 min to dispatch
- 3-5 min police response
- 1 min until entry
- 1-3 min to suspect

1st responders are the people that are there: steps to take

- Get the word out
- Get people out
- Block the doors
- Fight it out

Dispatch essentials: Don't be afraid of text to 911

Class by John Korman - Fairfax County 911

All cell carriers can us 911 texting now.

We should have a policy for Text 911

Why text 911:

- Primary reason is people with disabilities
- Contact directly rather than relay service

Some agencies still don't have text to 911. I was actually shocked about this!

Planning for it to come:

- Talk to other community services for assistance with policies
- Everyone has to be trained in operation of text 911
- We need to establish a marketing plan and put information out to the public

How to get the word out:

- County intranet
- News letters
- Social media
- Pod casts
- Video/PSA

Fairfax County 911 text slogan: "Call if you can, Text if you can't"

We can obtain the industry standard from Nena's website.

Every day Super Hero's: the resilient frontline

Class by Adam Timm

Resilience, is the ability to bounce back and perform at your best on a consistent basis.

He said 97% will not make it to full retirement.

- This is interesting because I think I have only seen 2 dispatchers from my agency retire in the 22 years since I have been here.

Facts of resilience:

- How to cope with stress in a healthy manor
 - o Exercise
 - o Hobbies
- High level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence
- Seek feedback
- Seek help when we need it
 - o Use peer counseling
- Optimistic and confidence
- Have a social support system
 - o Open up to others
 - o Connection to others

On the last day I went on the PSAP tour, which lasted 3 hours. We went to the existing Baxer County dispatch center. They had about 20 call takers on shift! Then we went to the new Baxer County metro complex that was built. No one is occupying the building yet. They are still working out the kinks. It was one of the most awesome buildings I have ever seen. The building can withstand an F4 tornado. It has separate utilities coming in different sides of the building in case one side is taken out. I think it costs something like \$55 million dollars to build. They can accommodate all the dispatch centers in the tri county area, if they are willing to relocate.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference. It's always stimulating getting to go to a new City and meet dispatchers from other states. The classes were interesting and the guest speakers were motivational.

2017 NENA Conference
By Maureen Dyette

This year's NENA conference was held in San Antonio, TX June 3rd through June 8th. I had the opportunity along with a co-worker to attend this conference. An important part of attending this type of conference is being able to further my own public safety knowledge and choose classes that will help me in my career. The conference has an expo hall where I was able to see some of the industries newest technology.

Our first keynote speaker was Alex Sheen who is the Founder of "because I said I would" which is an International social movement dedicated to the betterment of humanity through promises made and kept. His speech was excellent and focused on personal accountability – if you say you are going to do something then make sure you follow through. He radiated not only on a professional level but also personally in our dealings day to day and keeping your word.

The conference afforded me the opportunity to take the PSAP tour which included the San Antonio Police Department, Fire Department and the Bexar Metro 9-1-1 Quarry Run Regional Operations Center. What stood out with these centers was the size of the facilities and the state of the art equipment. The Fire department has their line personnel (fire fighters, captains etc) work in the dispatch center and they are selected through a competitive interview process. The Regional Center was completed in 2017 and is hoping to open its \$40 million, 81,500 square foot facility by October. This center will be able to house several agencies along with the different EOC personnel.

Our second guest speaker was Teresa Payton who covered Combatting Cybercrime. She was the first female as White House Chief Information Officer. Her insight into cyber-underworld threats, breaches and insider risks were both intriguing and frightening. She showed how easy it can be for someone to obtain information about you and access personal information. She then illustrated how her co-worker had actually set up a wifi hot spot even named them as "fake wifi" and how gullible people were to actually use it and how quickly they were able to access individuals accounts.

Preparedness & Resiliency was a class I took that involved the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood. Lessons learned from this incident was the inability for 9-1-1 to collaborate with military personnel. 9-1-1 personnel had no contact information or alert protocols for military base incidents and military leadership was learning of the shooting via news broadcasts. They have since set up a call system that can be activated to alert military personnel if a nearby base has had an active shooter incident or high priority incident. Another class in preparedness was the 2015 tornado that struck Rowlett, TX during Christmas. This class explored the challenging events that took place not only for the PSAP but field response coordination and citizens/animal needs. The failure of the phone/radio system and receiving help from outside agencies. The overall lesson was being prepared for long term incidents and practicing for critical incidents before they occur.

Enhancing Accessibility covered creative communications in the NG9-1-1 environment. This is especially true for the hearing-impaired community and their ability to communicate with police/fire/medical. The TTY system is being phased out and offering real-time texting, video as a means for the hearing impaired to reach help. Educating the hearing- impaired community on new technology and being comfortable to use the resources and also funding to help with the cost of equipment.

Hiring and Retaining the Best covered the three most pressing problems facing public safety which are staffing, hiring and retention. This class was interactive and discussions that were covered ranged from hiring/training to policy/procedures. It seemed universal the issues being addressed hiring the younger generation and the expectations that are needed in an environment that is 24/7, the use of cellphones and personal devices. Conversations also covered work schedules using 8, 10 and 12 hour schedules and the pro/con related to each of these schedules.

Compassion Fatigue: When the Job is Too Much. High stress, dealing with the worst of society and witnessing human tragedy can reduce an employee's mental and physical health. This offered agency-wide intervention tools to help build resiliency and healthy coping skills in employees. This class was not only a reminder for Supervisors but also line personnel to check in with co-workers especially after a critical incident and making sure that personnel have resources available to use.

Our final key note speaker was Coach Carter who made national news when he locked out his undefeated Richmond High Varsity basketball team for failing to honor player contracts and maintain GPA levels. Coach Carter believes in being all you can be and using your passion to succeed. Overall, his content of accountability, integrity, teamwork and leadership to lead productive and successful lives was motivating I'm not sure that other areas was pertinent to our role as 9-1-1 dispatchers.