

THE SPECTATOR



EMT Appreciation Week Honors Student Volunteers

by Kara Labs '09

Last week Hamilton student Emergency Medical Technicians were honored as a part of EMT Appreciation week. This is a nationally recognized week to recognize and thank college EMTs across the county. The National Collegiate Medical Service Foundation (NCEMSF) designates this week for colleges, even though the nationally recognized day to celebrate Emergency Medical Services is in May. This is because many colleges are not in session in May, so the NCEMSF decided to choose a week during the academic year.

Student EMTs volunteer time to ensure the safety of Hamilton students when classes are in session. Most of the EMTs have two shifts per week and the weekend shifts rotate. The shifts during the week are 10 p.m. to noon and noon to 10 p.m. Weekends are 7 p.m. to noon and noon to 7 p.m.

New York State EMT certification is good for three years and since most of the EMTs take the course spring semester of their freshman year, the certification does not expire until after they graduate. "In order to recertify, the EMT has to take a refresher course and exam or they can recertify by continuing education. We have weekly quizzes and skills trainings every three weeks," said Hamilton College Emergency Medical Service (HCEMS) Coordinator Diann Lynch. These count toward continuing their education. She added, "In addition, some of the EMTs go to EMS conferences or EMS education days in the area." Some of the EMTs choose to recertify through the continuing education while at Hamilton; this year three will do so.

The application process to become an EMT is very selective because HCEMS looks for students who are dedicated and committed to their duties. Information meetings are held during the fall for first-year and sophomore students. As Lynch revealed, "applicants have to submit a written application and two recommendations. In addition, the interview process involves a one on one interview with me, a one on one interview with an EMT, and two group interviews."

Once a student is accepted as an EMT, he or she goes through an intense training process in the spring and begins service the next fall. During EMT appreciation week, group

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interviews with the class of 2010 and 2011 applicants were conducted. HCEMS is currently in the process of selecting students to put in the spring training class.

The EMT program at Hamilton dates back to the 1980s, when Hamilton had a 'rescue squad.' There was no set level of certification, but the students still volunteered their time to help out with medical emergencies. It wasn't until 1993 that HCEMS became a NYS EMS certified agency. Now the agency has grown considerably, and the only real difference between HCEMS and a real agency is that we do not have our own ambulance. EMTs call in an emergency for transport after they have assessed and treated the patient.

Lynch commented on the number of calls Hamilton has received so far this year: "the EMTs have had 108 calls. Contrary to what most people think, the majority of their calls are not for alcohol. They see a variety of illnesses and injuries."

The EMT roster at Hamilton College consists of 21 members who dedicate their precious time and energy to helping the Hamilton community. The members are as follows: Megan Brousseau '08, Ruth Duggan '08, Max Falkoff '08, Ellen Griffin '08, Ryan Messier '08, Denroy Thomas '08, Nicholas Berry '09, Ashley Bourgeois '09, Megan Herman '09, Shane Knapp '09, Jared Leslie '09, Ben Saccomano '09, Amanda Schoen '09, Alexa Schwarzman '09, Emma Trucks '09, Sujitha Amalanayagam '10, Christina Clark '10, Erin Evans '10, John Lofrese '10, Ryan Seewald '10, and Kendra Wulczyn '10.

There is an honorary dinner in the spring to recognize those who are graduating as well as honor the Rookie of the Year. There is also a special award each year that goes to a senior who meets specific criteria to become EMT of the Year.

"They volunteer so much of their time, and often it is during the middle of the night that they get calls. It can sometimes seem like a thankless job, but they are all very dedicated to being an EMT and do a fantastic job," Lynch said of her EMTs. Make sure to take the time to thank the EMTs when you see them on campus, as the EMTs devote so much of their time to ensuring the safety of the Hamilton Community.

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