

Fighting back



Photo by Ray Rockwell

St. Charles County Ambulance District paramedic Lisa Cassidy was named Paramedic of the Year by the Missouri Emergency Medical Services Association.

St. Charles County Ambulance District paramedic honored for developing program to help with recovery for overdose victims

By Brett Auten

The rise of opioid-based overdoses makes headlines in every type of media you can find, both local and national.

In St. Charles County, paramedics responded to 426 overdose calls in 2016, which was double the amount in 2008. And unfortunately this year, the numbers have increased 20 percent year-to-date compared to 2016.

St. Charles County Ambulance District paramedic Lisa Cassidy has seen enough.

Cassidy took it upon herself to launch a prevention initiative and a treatment program all within a calendar year. Nearly one year after her efforts began, Cassidy was named Paramedic of the Year by the Missouri Emergency Medical Services Association.

"We can no longer sweep it under the carpet," Cassidy said. "Poor, rich. Great house, not-so-great house. It's in every municipality around."

On Aug. 1, 2016 Cassidy – who will reach her 19th year with SCCAD in December – kicked off #StopHeroin, a campaign aimed at educating county residents

about the severity of the opioid crisis in the community. A social media blitz, a two-month change of uniforms that trumpeted #StopHeroin, and multiple presentations were all parts of the education efforts that targeted both youth and adults. Dedicated and not deterred, Cassidy has spoken to more than 5,000 individuals throughout St. Charles County and beyond. She grabs their attention by leading presentations with raw, powerful videos that gives viewers a glimpse at what goes down during an overdose call.

Buoyed by the response to #StopHeroin, Cassidy was instrumental in the development of a collaborative program designed to match patients successfully revived with treatment options.

The Substance Use Recovery Response Team (SURRT), is a collaborative effort between the SCCAD and area treatment providers. Under the program, those who are revived following a heroin or opioid overdose are provided a packet of treatment resources and offered an opportunity for one-on-one discussion with Cassidy or an-

other of the district's paramedics, who will help them navigate the process of enrolling into an in-patient or out-patient program.

"We will start calling them within the first 24 hours because that is when they are at their most vulnerable and are also in danger of (overdosing) again," Cassidy said. "More and more, each person is in a different situation who may not necessarily need the same type of treatment."

From SURRT's inception through mid-July, 69 individuals agreed to the follow-up visit, and 48 ultimately made the decision to enter treatment.

Kyle Gaines, Director of Community Relations for the Ambulance District, said the programs Cassidy has worked to develop have caught the attention of EMS providers across the country, many of whom have reached out for advice on creating programs of their own.

"Our entire team was profoundly pleased to see MEMSA recognize the work she's put into these initiatives," Gaines said. "Paramedics across the country are truly on the

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Movie



Stars reunite in Shyamalan's 'Glass'. P.16

Weather

FRIDAY
 Sunny
 81/64

SATURDAY
 Sunny
 82/67

SUNDAY
 Mostly Sunny
 83/64

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Weather from Nick's Window

by Nick Palisch

It's all about the fronts!

Weather maps are often filled with many symbols in an effort to illustrate current and future weather conditions. Each symbol on the weather map has a purpose and is universal in weather forecasting. Weather fronts are the boundaries between areas of varying weather elements such as dry and warm weather to cold and stormy weather conditions.

There are four main weather fronts or boundaries that are often found on a weather map – including the cold front, warm front, stationary front and occluded front. When large masses of warm air and cold air meet, they do not mix. Instead, they form a front, usually hundreds of miles long. When a front passes the weather changes. Each of these fronts are associated with different types of weather conditions – so let's get ahead of these fronts and explain them.

A cold front, which is blue on the weather map and has the teeth looking triangles. A cold front is formed when cold air masses push under warm air masses – forcing the warm air to rise. A cold front helps to bring showers and storms the area along and ahead of the front. Why? Well, as the warm air rises, cools and then condenses we see the moisture build and often produces precipitation.

After the cold front moves through the area typically cooler, drier and pleasant weather follows. In the summer these cool fronts often bring relief from the heat and humidity. In winter they often bring colder weather.

A warm front, is notated by red, half mounds on weather maps and charts. A warm front forms when warm moist air slides up and over a cold air mass. Warm fronts typically bring light rain or light snow along with warmer and milder weather after it passes through the area. Warm fronts form as the warm rises and condenses into a broad area of clouds. These clouds help to bring generally light precipitation to the area.

The stationary front, which is a mix of the cold blue teeth and red half mounds, is a front that essentially doesn't move that fast, if at all. Stationary fronts indicate where warm and cold air meet, but neither are strong enough to win over the other. Where the warm and cold air meet clouds, precipitation and fog often develops. Eventually the stationary front will either be forced to move on – but can linger for days. Often where stationary fronts form we find days of unsettled weather on one side of the front, where the other side is left with calm and dry weather.

The fourth front is known as the occluded front – not as well known by many, but is the magenta looking front generally close to a low pressure system on a weather map. An occluded front is when a cold front overtakes a warm front and we often see stormy weather with heavy precipitation and winds. Once this front passes, calmer weather occurs. Cold air funnels and severe weather can often be associated with this front.

Weather symbols such as the cold, warm, stationary and occluded front are just one of many features found in weather charts and maps—so what about those big Ls and H's? What do they mean and what type of weather is associated with them? Well, that is for another column.

Nick Palisch is a meteorologist and Missouri native who understands the weather here in our area. He currently resides in Lake Saint Louis and can be reached at nick-wx@sbcglobal.net and you can always get the most up-to-date forecast from the FirstWarn Weather page at www.facebook.com/nickswx



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frontline of the heroin/opioid epidemic, responding with increasing frequency to overdose calls. While many in our field noticed the upward trend, Lisa took a bold step of bringing forth a multi-pronged approach to tackling it in our community. Thanks to her efforts, this topic is being discussed more publicly than ever before, and we're leveraging strategic partnerships to offer a variety of treatment alternatives to individuals and families."



Photo by Ray Rockwell

SCCAD chief Taz Meyer said it's Cassidy's vision and resilience that separates her from the pack.

"Traditionally, EMS is thought of as a reactive industry, but programs like #StopHeroin and SURRT are helping redefine the ambulance

district's role in the community," said Chief Taz Meyer. "We could not ask for a more passionate advocate to head this programming than Lisa – she identified needs, developed plans, and worked tirelessly to bring them online."



Submitted photo

CORRECTION

In the story titled "Making a Difference" in the Aug. 16 edition of the St. Charles County Community News, Donia Russell, (left) was misidentified as Sherri Lesch. Russell has been troop leader for Girl Scout Troop 4895 for 12 years and was with Girl Scout Alexis Lesch (right) following the Girl Scout Gold Award ceremony. The Community News regrets the error.

The Sparrow's Nest Teen Maternity Home announces new executive director

The Sparrow's Nest Teen Maternity Home, which has served young teens mothers from all over the nation, has announced the hiring of Elisa Zieg as its new executive director. Elisa is an experienced and enthusiastic nonprofit leader with over 10 years' experience in advocating for vulnerable children and youth.



Submitted photo

"Elisa will bring leadership and creativity to The Nest, and she has a breadth of perspective needed for this important role," stated Board Chair Kirk Kasicki. "We are all very impressed, not only by her deep understanding of our mission but also her obvious passion for the work."

Zieg added "I am beyond excited to have been called to the role of executive director with The Sparrow's Nest Maternity Home for homeless, pregnant,

The Sparrow's Nest Teen Maternity Home has announced the hiring of Elisa Zieg as its new executive director.

and parenting young women and their children. My passion to serve children and youth began at an early age when I had the privilege of growing up in a children's home in Texas which demonstrated that family is more than blood – family is who you love and who loves you back."



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