

Faculty, Staff Learning How To Handle Emergencies



Bill Allen, a captain with the Town & Country Fire District, demonstrates how to tie a tourniquet on the arm of Physical Plant staff member Gene McFerron.



As recent hurricanes have demonstrated, emergency workers are not always able to arrive immediately on a disaster scene. With that in mind, **Mike Parkinson, public safety director**, has adapted for the Maryville community a free, seven-week Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) course.

"If emergency personnel cannot get to our campus for 72 hours or more, who will provide the first aid?" Parkinson said. "Set up triage? Provide light search and rescue operations? The answer is simple: Us."

The CERT course, now in its fourth week, features instruction in life-saving skills and basic emergency medical care by officers from the the Town & Country Police Department, Creve Coeur Police Department and West County EMS and Fire. Participants attending the class will receive a manual along with a disaster response bag that includes supplies they will need when responding to a disaster. The seventh, and final, class session will feature a simulated disaster drill, where class members will need to use the skills they have learned to respond to several disaster scenarios.

Upon completing the course, graduates will receive a certificate that will enable them to respond, if needed, to future disasters occurring on or off campus. Several CERT graduates from the St. Louis area, traveled to the Gulf Coast to assist emergency personnel in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

So far, information learned in the CERT course has been valuable, said **Kate Ritter, bookstore manager**. "It's amazing how much I did not know about emergency situations," Ritter said. "In this training, I am beginning to feel more comfortable in my ability to handle unexpected happenings. There is a lot of comfort in knowledge."

Paul Mack, Ed.D., assistant professor of education, said he enrolled in the course because he enjoys helping others. "It's the same reason I would take a CPR class. Service is an important part of my life."

Parkinson said he plans to offer more CERT classes in the future if there is enough interest on campus.