

PUBLIC SAFETY

OUR COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

The Plainsboro Township Police Department is now actively recruiting citizen volunteers to be trained in basic disaster response.

“After September 11, 2001 people across the United States asked, ‘What can I do?’ and ‘How can I help?’” explains Cliff Maurer, Director of Public Safety. “So the U.S. Department of Homeland Security developed a series of programs that would enable people to volunteer in time of a community crisis.”

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program will help train people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in our community. CERT members can give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site. Members can also help with non-emergency projects that help improve the safety of the community. Using their training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event and can take a more active role in preparing our community.

CERT training will include disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, and light search and rescue operations. Traffic direction/control and Emergency Management Operations will also be part of the training.

CERT teams are forming all over New Jersey and in communities across the United States. They are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, and The New Jersey Office of Emergency Management. The Plainsboro Police Department will be facilitating the training, and the goal is to train several teams over the next two years. According to Maurer, “We are looking for volunteers from all over the community, as well as from businesses located in Plainsboro.” To become a CERT member you need to either reside or work in Plainsboro.

If you are interested in becoming a CERT member please call Lt. Tom DeSimone at 799-2333. Classes will be forming in January 2005.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: HELP IS AVAILABLE

Did you know:

- Domestic abuse is the #1 health risk for women in the United States?
- Only half of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police?
- Domestic violence claims the lives of more than 4 women each day?

Although there is no typical victim — domestic violence happens to all ages, races, and socioeconomic and educational backgrounds — abusive relationships do share similar characteristics. In all cases, the abuser aims to have power and control over the partner. Domestic violence is a part of a repetitious cycle that’s difficult to break, but possible with help.

The Plainsboro Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) is a team of volunteers trained to assist victims of domestic abuse and provide them with information, options, and assistance. Services include a 24-hour on-

call service, domestic violence intervention, emergency shelter for victims and their children, information regarding legal rights, telephone hotlines, and assistance in developing a safety plan. To speak to a DVRT member, contact the Police Department at 799-2333. Many times victims suffer in secret and silence; take the time to break the cycle.

The Plainsboro DVRT is looking to build upon the Team by recruiting additional volunteers from the community. Applicants must be 18 years old and reside in Plainsboro. The purpose of the response team is to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence immediately after the incident in the form of supportive counseling. All volunteers work in cooperation with the Police Department and must attend and successfully complete 40 hours of initial training. For more information please contact the Community Policing Unit at 799-2333, extension 619.