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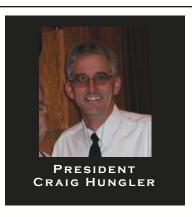




"Developing Professional Chaplains Through Dynamic Education and Support"

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE....

A message from Craig Hungler, President of the International Conference of Police Chaplains.



reetings to each of you as we move quickly through the start of 2006. It seems that each year goes by faster and faster. Often times I think this leads to the tendency of not slowing down and enjoying each and every day as a gift. The other phenomenon that this hustle and bustle lifestyle leads to is one where we fail to take care of ourselves. Whether our full-time ministry is within a congregation or police department, we spend our entire time caring for others. That is a good thing; we are called to care for one another in this very specialized ministry. It is a good thing until we come to the point where we neglect ourselves and my fear is that many of our members are in that situation.

It is out of that concern that I have been in consultation with our Executive Director and many others, trying to figure out a mechanism to address this situation. After much thought and prayer we are creating a Chaplain Health & Wellness Committee. This committee will focus upon Peer Support for our membership. In the past at our Annual Training Seminar various committee's have done an admirable job providing this service, however my concern lies in the other 51 weeks of the year. This newly created committee will be charged with these responsibilities not only during the ATS, but throughout the year. During the ATS in Indianapolis this July the committee will be meeting to create the logistics to guide how their committee will work. I have asked Chaplain Bob Cornelius to chair this important effort. With Bob's background in counseling, extensive career in chaplaincy and his caring heart he was the logical choice. Bob has graciously accepted this challenge and I invite you to join him if you feel called to do so. If you would like to be considered for appointment for this committee please send me your contact information and a short statement of qualifications. It is my desire to appoint a committee of people who are experienced and credentialed in this line of ministry to assure the best possible services to our membership. Our membership deserves nothing less.

Last month your Executive Committee held our Mid-Winter Board meeting at the site of this year's ATS in Indianapolis, Indiana. During our time together we were also able to visit with members of the Indiana Region during their Regional Training Seminar. In an effort to stay proactive in communication, the minutes from the Executive Committee meeting are being forwarded to the Regional Directors for review. The site of this year's ATS is outstanding. I think you will find the hotel amenities and staff superb. Your local ATS committee in Indianapolis has done an outstanding job of planning each and every detail. The committee is very diverse and well organized with job responsibilities so that nothing is overlooked. I am confident that you will find the experience to exceed your standards and urge you to

The ICPC Ournal

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Publisher Dr. Charles R. Lorrain Executive Director, ICPC

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start your planning now to be with us in Indy!

On behalf of the entire Executive Committee I wish to extend our humble gratitude to you. We take the responsibility of serving you very seriously and pledge to continue to do so with God's help. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us at any time should you wish to discuss any ICPC issue.

With you in ministry, Craig Hungler 800-647-1512 ext. 4809

CHIT-CHAT

A Members Forum

ICPC CRUISE 2006

You are invited to join us for the 2nd ICPC Cruise, this time to Alaska!

August 26 – September 2, 2006

We will be traveling the high seas with Norwegian Cruise Lines from Seattle, WA., on the Norwegian Sun. Our booking agent, Chandra Blair at Parker Cruise & Tour, will answer all your questions and you may contact her at (800) 242-8262. When calling Chandra, be sure to identify yourself with the ICPC in booking your reservation.

The cruise is open to all ICPC members, families and friends. Serving as Host and Hostess, will be Immediate Past-President, Walter Schott and his wife Lola. They may be contacted at (701) 663-3421 or e-mail at wschott@bis.midco.net.

I received my new ICPC Membership directory yesterday in the mail. It looks GREAT! The spiral binding makes it a lot easier to use because it lays flat. I've already used it to check out the chaplains in our area for our upcoming RTS.

THANK YOU for a job well done!

-Chaplain Bob Heath

Hey folks - very seriously...

That was one very, very, very fine directory - and thanks to each of you who must have done a ton of work. This guy is most grateful - and too, thanks again for everything you guys do for us all.

We're very thankful.

—Ken Gaydos

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The ICPC awards two (2) International Scholarships each year to attend the Annual Training Seminar (ATS).

Scholarship include registration fees, room (shared with another chaplain) and a food allowance while at the ATS. The ICPC does not pay for early or late stays outside the time frame of the ATS. Applicants are responsible to obtain their own transportation to the ATS and for their visas.

Applications must be received in the Destin office no later than April 1st.

To request an application, either call the Destin office at (850) 654-9736 or email us at: icpc@icpc.gccoxmail.com

Thank You!

Greetings from our Executive Director...... Dr. Chuck Lorrain

Greetings from the main office in Destin!

We are very excited with what is happening at the ICPC....first, you have a new slate of elected officers who are doing a stellar job on your behalf. You should feel very confident in their abilities to lead this organization.

Second, by now many, if not most of you should have received the new 2006 ICPC Directory. We have implemented many changes to make it more user friendly and trust you will use it often. Additionally, we are putting the directory on our website in a special "member only" section so you will have another avenue by which to access this information. As a reminder…the ICPC directory may not be utilized for any commercial purposes without prior written approval.

Third, many of you that have renewed your membership recently have received the new ICPC membership cards. These CR80 cards not only look more professional, but they will wear better in your wallets, purses, or as ID's. Look for yours at your next renewal!

We appreciate all the warm calls and affirming emails the members send in. The staff works very hard on your behalf and it's nice to know the effort is appreciated. Should you ever have questions or comments on anything, don't hesitate to pickup the phone or drop us an email....we always love to hear from you. Also, if you are planning to be in the Destin area for any reason, we definitely want you to stop by—we'd love to see you!

—Chuck

A SCHOOL RESPONSE TO YOUTH SUICIDE ATTEMPTS: WHAT WORKS

Mary Schoenfeldt, Educational Wellness Consultant [Part 2 in a 2-part Series]

(Part I may be found in the December 2005 Journal)

Let's take the members of this group one at a time starting with the school staff. This includes ALL staff: teachers, instructional aids, office staff, lunchroom supervisors, bus drivers, crossing guards, etc. As mentioned above, the Crisis Response Team will triage these adults as well as students. If anyone is identified as needing additional support, that should be given immediately in an appropriate manner. Many school systems have Employee Assistance Programs in place and a general consultation call to the EAP counselor might be in order.

Once the needs of specific adults are met, the rest of the staff needs information about the incident, but even more importantly, information about the phenomenon of suicide itself. This will help to relieve the intense emotions that come up that cause us to think we should have been able to prevent this. All staff should be asked to stay attuned to the students and others so additional support can be given if needed. Every staff member has a different relationship to students and may see things that others aren't aware of. Depending on the situation, a series of staff meetings might be in order. At the very least, before school on the day of the student's return and, if possible, a quick check-in meeting when school is done for the day. These meetings are a place to give staff accurate information without too much detail and to provide support as needed. The staff is the pillar of support for students. We must assist them to be as solid as possible.

One of the biggest challenges following this type of crisis (or any type, for that matter) is rumor control.

The staff plays a pivotal role in keeping the rumors to a minimum. By being able to provide appropriate, accurate information to students, the staff acts to diminish exaggeration, dramatic interpretation and speculation. Once something is repeated twice, it's no longer speculation; it becomes fact in the minds of those who hear it. Students should be told to go to a specific designated adult if they hear something new and not repeat it until a member of Administration or the Crisis Response Team has verified it. It is the adult's responsibility to check into the information and get

back to the student.

As in any crisis, this system of checks and balances will help to keep the situation under control. As humans, we need

information in order to try to make sense out of the senseless. If we don't give students information, someone will undoubtedly make something up and that will be perceived as the truth. (More information on rumor control can be found in the book Picking Up The Pieces, Responding To School Crisis, 2000, by Mary Schoenfeldt)

The media may become interested in this incident and can play a very important role. There are many examples of the media being effective in covering an incident of this nature. Responsible media coverage will put an emphasis on Suicide Prevention and will include warning signs for parents as well as hotline numbers or other resources in its coverage. The School Crisis Response Team needs to work with them to make them part of your Aftermath plan rather than setting up an adversarial position that takes time, energy and can be harmful. Unless it's a very visible attempt, the media may not even be involved. In a series of attempts though, ask the media to assist you in stopping the contagion factor from continuing to spread. In this situation, their involvement is a prevention effort.

The school's Administration may have a particularly difficult role responding to this crisis. First, they are adults who will have a personal reaction to the fact they were not able to stop one of their students from attempting to harm themselves. In a school where there's been any kind of a crisis the Principal is often neglected when it comes to receiving support and should be given appropriate support as a person, not just the principal. In addition to a possible personal reaction, in many crises the school principal is often seen as the scapegoat and is blamed for the incident. Anger is one of the emotions people use to motivate themselves through an intense experience and that anger often times is mistakenly directed at the leader or leaders of the school. District Administration may also come under attack.



Within the district, some attention needs to be given to the potential for lawsuits concerning this incident.

There are many legal precedents where a school has been found negligent in a student suicide attempt or completion. The school legal advisor should be notified of the situation immediately. From there, steps may be taken to protect all parties. If at all possible though, avoid cloaking the incident in secrecy. The "no comment" attitude is counter productive to the continued support and education for all.

Effective Suicide Prevention and Intervention depends on our ability to talk about what is real.

The parent community of a school experiencing student suicide attempts may have an extreme reaction. Parents, like all the other adults, will have had their belief systems shaken and may be frightened for their own family. One method to distance from those emotions is to find someone to blame: the parents of the student who attempted, the school principal, current music or video game content. This is a natural reaction. As a parent, if you can believe that someone could have stopped it, then it follows that if you do things another way, you can also believe your child is immune and therefore, safe. As the School Crisis Response Team plans Aftermath activities they need to stay mindful of these reactions.

In everything you do to respond to this incident, you must remain sensitive to the family of the student who attempted and not expose them to undue stigma. In some instances, the school will notify the parent community of the incident through a letter sent home to all parents. That letter needs to be written with tact and sensitivity. The letter can be written without names or specific details, just information for parents to talk to their own children, about upcoming Parent Information Nights or other resources that might be available.



Many times it is appropriate to hold a Parent Information Night, and this may be scheduled in approximately a week. The purpose of this meeting is to give information about the phenomenon of suicide, highlight warning signs, identify resources, and tell the parent community about the Prevention and Intervention Programs (suicide included) that exist in the school. It also is a place to allow parents to vent some of the intense feelings of anger and fear that they may feel. The structure needs to be supportive of parents but NOT sacrifice anyone as a target. It is highly recommended that if the school hosts this meeting, they invite representatives from local mental health agencies and other resources to attend and present information. As in all types of crisis, facilitating a parent meeting can be a challenge. A good structure for these meetings can be found in the book,

<u>Crisis Response Teams</u>, <u>Lessening The Aftermath</u>, 4th edition, by Mary Schoenfeldt. Contact the author for more information.

Any effective Suicide Prevention and Intervention program begins and continues with appropriate training for school staff. All staff members need the basic information on suicide prevention, warning signs, and what to do if they suspect someone is contemplating suicide. A core

group of staff in each building needs to be trained in the specific skills of intervention and bridging a person to the appropriate help. That does not mean that the general school staff is responsible to do therapy, or any other mental health intervention, with this person. It simply means that they've been trained to assist the person to receive the help they may need. There are many models of Suicide Intervention Skills available but one of the most widely recognized is the ASIST model from Living Works, based in Canada.

Suicide in a school community is frightening, baffling and complex. No matter who is involved (student or staff member), or whether it's an attempt or completion, the school must react in a manner that first and foremost supports those most intimately involved. In addition this is one type of crisis that must be used as an effective step in a prevention program of further events. It is circular...Aftermath becomes Prevention.



For more information on any of the specifics addressed here, or for information on any type of crisis response or aftermath plans, please contact the author at 360-659-2271

or at www.safer-schools.com or yoursafeplace@msn.com



Mary Schoenfeldt of Schoenfeldt & Associates is a national lecturer and offers training, products and services in all areas of crisis response, school response and recovery.

ICPC Education Committee Advisory Panel Announced

By: David J. Fair, D.Min. Chairman Education Committee

When our new ICPC President Craig Hungler contacted me about serving as the Chairman of the Education Committee for ICPC, I was indeed honored. In accepting the position I pledged to Craig, as well as the board and membership, to not only continue the previous outstanding work of the committee, but through the committee to take ICPC education and training to the next level.

I have been distressed by the fact 64% of our membership is not credentialed at even the Basic Level. We must do something to increase interest in credentialing through education and training. The Education Committee, will be working closely with Chaplain Leo Connolly and his Credentialing Committee, to make this a priority. Never in the history of law enforcement chaplaincy has it been more important to have *quality* education, training, and experience.

A submission/approval form has been designed. All new presenters and all new subject matter for classes, must be submitted to the education committee for approval. To maintain their good standing with the ICPC, presenters and class material must receive a minimum of an 80% approval rating by attendees through their evaluations.

I am extremely excited about our new project, the ICPC Education Committee Advisory Panel. We have obtained commitments from professionals world wide to help us maintain proper quality control for our educational and training processes.

A group of professionals, experts in their field, have agreed to on request, review learning objectives, course outlines, give suggestions, check for technical correctness, and make recommendations for education and training for the ICPC Education Committee.

This is an outstanding group, who although are very busy, have agreed to help the ICPC. There will be no meetings of this group. They are however acting individually to assist us in our goals of offering top quality presenters and presentations to our worldwide membership. Some of them have offered to serve as presenters later on.

A secondary gain is the furtherance of the ICPC message into these people's sphere of influence.

Here is a list of the Advisory Panel members, and their areas of expertise:

Eli Sommer, PhD, Sr. Clinical Psychologist, President Elect, International Society for the Study of Dissociation, Israeli Institute for the Study and Treatment of Stress, Haifa, Israel.

Jim Cavanah- FBI Special Agent-ret. - Abnormal Behavior, Crisis Intervention and Terrorism

William Bell- Former Municipal Attorney, Former Municipal Judge, City of Brownwood, Texas

Dr. Fran Douglas, Director, Texas Department of Public Safety Psychological Services Bureau, Supervisor DPS Chaplain Program

Nancy Bohls, PhD.- Law enforcement psychologist, developer of the Bohl Law Enforcement Debriefing Model

Jerry B. Byrd, Technology Partner, Tatum Partners, Dallas Office (computer consultant, and missionary)

Kathy Figley, Green Cross Foundation, Institute of Traumatology- Compassion Fatigue.

Rev. Richard B. Gilbert, BCC, PhD. Director of Chaplaincy Services, Sherman Health Care Systems. Well known author and lecturer, on grief issues.

Cecile Asekoff, Executive Director, National Association of Jewish Chaplains

Cendra Lynn, GriefNET

Angie McGowan, Director of Texas Dept. of Public Safety, Victim Services

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, retired US Army, noted author, lecturer, and presenter on the psychology of killing.

Dr. David Smith, MD, FAAFP, CMD, Formerly Professor of Family Medicine and Psychiatry, University of South Dakota School

of Medicine, and Chief of Medicine, South Dakota Human Services Center

John Dunn, M.D. J.D., noted medical doctor, attorney, speaker, consultant, and expert witness, emergency medicine.

Jeff Mitchell, PhD- Co-founder International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICPC)

Chuck McCormick, FBI Special Agent (Ret)- former head of FBI Chaplain Program, currently Deputy Director of Texas Governor's Office of Homeland Security

Ed Stauffer, Executive Director of Federation of Fire Chaplains

Don Howell, Executive Director, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF)

Patricia M. Brammer, EEO Specialist, Ernie County, NY, Sheriff's Office, Professional Standards Division, Coordinator Chaplain Program

Mark D. Lerner, PhD- President of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress

Daniel W. Clark, PhD- Clinical Psychologist, Washington State Patrol Department Psychologist

Frank Shane, CTR, CTSS- Executive Director, K-9 Disaster Relief Foundation,

Capt. Vaughn Donaldson, B.C.E.T.S.- Fire Captain/Paramedic Midland, TX. Fire/Rescue. Involved in rescue and CISM, OKC Bombing, 911, A & M Bonfire Collapse,

If you know anything about what is happening in the world today, you will understand that some of the finest minds in Chaplaincy, psychology, medicine, law, and other important disciplines have made a commitment to Law Enforcement Chaplaincy, to help us be the very best we can be.

Please note we have officers from virtually every major trauma related group worldwide, including International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Green Cross Foundation, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, and the International Society for the Study of Dissociation. These experts come from three countries, the United States, Canada, and Israel.

From time to time, we will add other experts to our Advisory Panel. We are extremely thankful so many professionals have volunteered to help the ICPC.

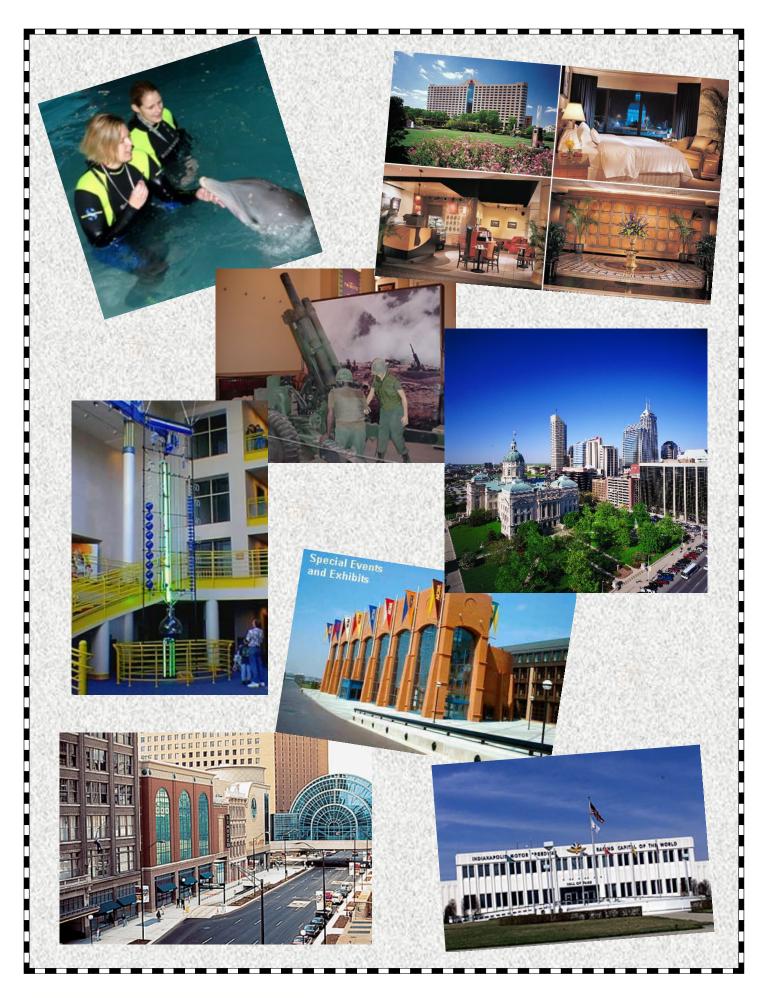
Be watching for training in your regional area of ICPC, and mark your calendars for the ATS next year.

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- Fellowship, networking, and more!!



(You must give the AWD number to get the special rate)

Come and join us in Indianapolis for an ATS

TRANSITION TEAM: COURAGEOUS CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE

By: Gary Malkus, Transition Team Chairman

n his book, Making Strategy Work, Lawrence G. Hrebiniak addresses the importance and difficulties with change. He notes that people resist change as a rule. To overcome this he recommends high levels of cooperation and interdependence. Your transition team agrees with this idea.

Making the move from 24 regions world wide to 11 regions represents a significant change in structure for ICPC. Why is this change necessary? Allow me to give you a brief history.

In 2001, the Long Range Planning Committee, chaired by Richard Sale, looked at the prime mission of ICPC. After surveys and discussions with hundreds of chaplains, it was determined the primary focus of ICPC should be on training and education. This led to a mission statement that was presented in Spokane and approved by the membership in St. Louis in 2004 which is: MISSION STATEMENT: Developing professional law enforcement chaplains through dynamic education and support.

Even before the adoption of this statement the committee was considering the long-term ramifications of what it really means. To become what we should be, we must increase the quality, diversity, and practical value of the training.

The optimal goal would be to have enhanced training and educational programs in each of the 24 regions; however finances and lack of an adequate number of appropriately trained personnel prohibit that option. Therefore, the obvious solution is to consolidate the regions, thus freeing up quality personnel and resources for the benefit of all. This consistent quality training and in-depth educational opportunities throughout all ICPC regions would lead to more professional, better prepared chaplains supporting law enforcement in all ICPC jurisdictions.

Administratively, the board of directors will be streamlined providing the efficiency and accountability a fast-growing organization requires. Over a two-year period, the membership of ICPC has examined the proposed changes and last year, at the San Antonio ATS, approved a basic division of 11 regions. A map showing those changes may be found in this journal.

Change is afoot. No doubt this change will involve a complexity of tasks that include:

Assessing the size and content of a strategic change. Determining the time available for execution.

Overcoming resistance to change.

Determining the steps or tactics to be employed in managing change.

Clarifying responsibility and accountability in the change process.

The size and content has been assessed. The new regional divisions will encompass greater distances and will cross over cultural boundary lines. The opportunities to enhance training along with expanded Regional Training Seminars will overcome this limitation.

These structural changes will be in effect by the ATS 2007.

We want you, our members, to know what is going on. In this article, we have included a timetable showing the steps to be employed. We want you to understand the thought processes and the steps that will be taken to implement this membership approved structural change.

The responsibility and accountability for these changes is placed directly on the regional and state directors, for they are critical in the implementation of this program. Their integrity and willingness to cooperate for the betterment of the organization will lead the way to a greater ICPC.

Following are the steps to be taken in the next few months:

All Regional Directors and Area Representatives are being asked to meet either in person, via email, conference call or Microsoft NetMeeting to form their new Regional Boards. That meeting should be completed prior to or at the ATS in Indianapolis in July, 2006.

At that meeting the process of consolidating all bank accounts into a Super Regional Account will begin. A bank with branches in all states represented by that region will be chosen to maintain continuity within the region.

All Regional Directors and Area Representatives would select officers for the newly formed region: a Temporary Regional Director, Assistant Regional Director or Deputy Director, Secretary, Treasurer, and Registered Agent of the Corporation and full contact information on all new officers will be forwarded to Destin by September 30, 2006.

A suggested set of bylaws for the new regional corporation will be provided to each Regional Director to use at their discretion. It is expected that the fiscal year for the newly formed regions would coincide with the fiscal year of the ICPC which is July 1 - June 30.

The newly formed Temporary Regional Board will select the date and site of the first super Regional Training Seminar (RTS). A full election will be held at this first RTS. It is reasonable to expect this to be accomplished between September 30, 2006 and May 31, 2007. The costs of the incorporation would be paid from regional funds in order to not place that burden on an already stretched ICPC budget.

All new regions will present full contact information on their new officers and copies of all papers to the Destin office of ICPC before June 1, 2007

By the time we meet in Annual Training Seminar, July 2007 the transition should be complete.

The transition committee and ICPC International office in Destin are also researching information on other issues related to this transition process. These issues and areas include but are not limited to:

- Seeking legal council on how best to facilitate the organization of the new super-regions while preserving a viable, mutually beneficial relationship between the new super regions and the International ICPC.
- Clarification of the election process for regional offices.
- The maintaining of open lines of communication between the entire membership, the Transition Team and ICPC Destin.
- Re-organization of the Board of Directors

Please feel free to offer your suggestions for a smooth transition or address any concerns to any of the members of the transition team. Their names and e-mail addresses are included in this article.

Over the next 18 months we will, together with you, work through the complex challenges that will make us stronger. Each day will bring us closer to the quality training organization we all desire. The transition team is excited and committed to seeing the process through to a successful conclusion. With your cooperation and understanding these will be the best days ever for ICPC.

On behalf of the entire Transition Team, I want to thank you for your willingness to participate in this process.

Chaplain Gary Malkus, Chair

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Dr. Chuck Lorrain <u>exdir@icpc.gccoxmail.com</u> Ex Officio



Membership in the ICPC

very now and then we hear one of our members say; "Why should I belong to the ICPC?" or "What's in it for me?" As a professional membership organization, I believe that is a legitimate question. Many of our membership belong to multiple professional organizations—so why the ICPC? Well, let's look at what you get with your membership in the ICPC......



Membership in the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) affords the law enforcement chaplain a professional standing in the largest and most respected law enforcement chaplaincy organization in the world. Established in 1973, the ICPC offers the chaplain the ability to network with approximately 2800 chaplains in 19 countries worldwide. Departments all over the world have recognized the ICPC as the standard in law enforcement chaplaincy today.

When you join the ICPC, you become part of a large family of chaplains who desire to learn, share, and support each other through this vital ministry. Nobody knows or appreciates what you do more than someone else who does it. We want to provide the best training, support and care we can to our front-line law enforcement chaplains, while assisting them in making their existing

programs better and stronger.

Training/Education:

The International Conference of Police Chaplains offers chaplains worldwide the ability to attend regional and international training seminars. Currently there are multiple regional and one (1) international training seminars where chaplains may attend and work towards three (3) levels of training (basic, senior or master). Additionally we offer three (3) levels of training for those who serve our agencies as liaison officers. The ICPC helps chaplains and liaison officers to learn to "serve and not be served".



Support:

As part of your membership in the ICPC, you are provided support on many different levels. Some of these benefits include:

- Standing in a professional organization
- A professional Journal sent to our members four times a year.
- A lending library of resource materials for our members on all aspects of chaplaincy.
- A membership directory for networking with other chaplains as well as a new on-line directory.
- Support for individual chaplains, chaplaincy programs, or departments wishing to start a chaplaincy program.
- On-line sales of chaplaincy-related goods
- Bibliography of chaplaincy resources

If you honestly check with other professional organizations and see what their membership costs, benefits the members get, the cost of training and/or seminars, you will see that the ICPC is the best game in town! Perhaps the question each of us should be asking is not "what's in it for me" rather, how can I help other chaplains and chaplaincy programs who need assistance. Then we will see what it is to be fulfilled as chaplains.

Thanks to each of you for what you do!!



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IN MEMORIAM



Chaplain John Frick

Beloved husband of: Karen Frick

Died: November 2005

Condolences: 228 SW 39th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73109

Chaplain Thomas Cook

Condolences: 3346 Lansing Ave. Knoxville, TN 37914

Chaplain Thomas Culotta Died: January 2006

The ICPC Auxiliary does a wonderful job supporting the members of the ICPC. We need to let them know how much we appreciate them and all they do for us; the chaplains, and the ICPC as an organization.

> Tell your auxiliary member you appreciate them today!!!



>>REMINDER<<

Did You know that the ICPC Auxiliary has a newsletter? Well they do, and it may be accessed anytime at the ICPC website:

www.icpc4cops.org

"Take Hold of Every Moment"

A friend of mine opened his wife's underwear drawer and picked up a silk paper wrapped package: "This, he said, isn't any ordinary package." He unwrapped the box and stared at both the silk paper and the box.

"She got this the first time we went to New York, 8 or 9 years ago. She has never put it on; was saving it for a special occasion. Well, I guess this is it. He got near the bed and placed the gift box next to the other clothing he was taking to the funeral house, his wife had just died. He turned to me and said: "Never save something for a special occasion. Every day in your life is a special occasion."

I still think those words changed my life. Now I read more and clean less. I sit on the porch without worrying about anything. I spend more time with my family, and less at work. I understood that life should be a source of experience to be lived up to, not survived through. I no longer keep anything. I use crystal glasses every day. I'll wear new clothes to go to the supermarket, if I feel like it. I don't save my special perfume for special occasions; I use it whenever I want to. The words "Someday..." and "One Day..." are fading away from my dictionary. If it's worth seeing, listening or doing, I want to see, listen or do it now.

I don't know what my friend's wife would have done if she knew she wouldn't be there the next morning, this nobody can tell. I think she might have called her relatives and closest friends. She might call old friends to make peace over past quarrels. I'd like to think she would go out for Chinese, her favorite food. It's these small things that I would regret not doing, if I knew my time had come. I would regret it, because I would no longer see the friends I would meet, letters... letters that I wanted to write "One of these days". I would regret and feel sad, because I didn't say to my brothers and sons, daughters and sisters, not times enough at least, how much I love them.

Now, I try not to delay, postpone or keep anything that could bring laughter and joy into our lives.... And, on each morning, I say to myself that this could be a special day... Each day, each hour, each minute, is special!



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