



BACKING the BADGE

"Serving those that serve us."

(800) 788-8630



BACKING the BADGE Newsletter Volume 15 May 2018

Welcome to Volume 15 of the BACKING the BADGE Newsletter. Spring is here, and hardly a snowflake in sight, since I'm sure everyone is sick of shoveling. Enjoy the weather and let's get started.

[Visit our Website](#)

Another Local Tragedy by Gary

Bush, Executive Director and Co-Founder

As many of you know, I actually live and work remotely in Ocala, FL. My BACKING the BADGE duties bring me to Michigan quite often. On April 19th in the afternoon, Sgt. Noel Ramsey, 30, and Deputy Taylor Lindsey, 25, of the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office in Florida were ambushed and murdered while on duty. Gilchrist County is a neighboring county about 40 miles away. It's a very small county, with 17,000 residents. Trenton, the county seat, has 2000 residents. There are 27 sworn officers, including the Sheriff. These officers were eating lunch at a restaurant in downtown Trenton, when the gunman shot and killed both officers from the outside by shooting through a window. There was no warning and these officers were simply eating lunch, and had no clue they were in imminent danger. He then went back to his vehicle in the parking lot, and the coward took his own life. Being a very small, tight-knit community where everyone knew everyone, this has rocked the community.



What happened in this community is not to diminish the ultimate sacrifice many of our Brothers and Sisters have made in other parts of the country, but this is just another stark reminder that any of our officers, in any

community and in any state, large or small, can potentially have a target on their backs. These young officers were just eating lunch. They were not on a HOT call, a domestic or engaging in a pursuit. **THEY WERE EATING FREAKING LUNCH!** I sincerely hope that this slaughter of our law enforcement officers stops. I did not personally know these officers, but that doesn't really matter. All of us, every LEO, in every state, are bound by the Badge, the Blood, and the Blue. Take the time to hug your loved ones, armor up, stay vigilant and watch your six, no matter what you are doing. Thanks to all of you for your sacrifices. When a community loses an officer, we ALL lose. **STAY SAFE!**

-Gary



Burning Embers by Battalion Chief Bart Perry (Retired)

As many of you have either heard me say or read in this column, the Fire Service has been in the midst of a behavioral health epidemic over the past 15 years with the culmination of this epidemic playing out in the form of Firefighter Suicides. Although cardiac events have been touted for years as the number one LODD of firefighters with the NFPA reporting 26 cardiac-related deaths in 2016, the real truth of firefighter deaths lies in the data collected by Captain Jeff Dill, (retired) founder of the Firefighters Behavioral Health Alliance. The FFBHA is the foremost authority in the USA on Firefighter Suicide Data. Averaging nearly 100 documented firefighter suicides over the last three years and acknowledging that this number may be under-reported by 40%.....leads us to the obvious conclusion.....in the fire profession, we are taking our own at a documented rate of over 4 times that of cardiac events. This number does not even begin to consider the probable under-reporting.



With this said, there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. 2018 is shaping up to be a record low number of documented firefighter suicides since Captain Dill and the FFBHA started its tracking in 2010. As of this writing, 18 firefighter suicides have been documented and we are approaching the halfway point of the year! Our culture is changing, awareness is happening, but we cannot let our guard down. We still have some heavy lifting to do before we can declare this "fire" under control.

Savor your summer with family and friends, as we all know it flies by in the blink of an eye and then we are shoveling snow again!

Stay Low My Friends

-Bart

BACKING the BADGE Team Member and ICISF Certified Instructor Dennis Potter Conducts a Group Crisis Intervention Course (CISM)



BACKING the BADGE Team Member and ICISF Certified instructor

Dennis Potter recently conducted a two day Group Crisis Intervention Course, hosted by the Kent County Sheriff's Office in Grand Rapids. There were approximately 37 attendees for the course, and were made up of Law Enforcement Officers, Corrections Officers, Firefighters, and Medical Personnel. Future courses are planned as the need arises.



BACKING the BADGE Participates in the MPFFU Biennial Convention in Bay City

BACKING the BADGE Team Member Bart Perry recently attended the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union Biennial Convention held in Bay City. The convention was attended by hundreds of firefighters from all across Michigan. He was assisted at the BACKING the BADGE booth by Team Members Cathy Fitzgerald and Steve Darling. While at the convention, Bart Perry had the opportunity to address the attendees with a short presentation.

Backing the Badge Introduces New Team Member Bryan Pogodzinski, LLPC



BACKING the BADGE is pleased to introduce the latest addition to our team. Please welcome Bryan Pogodzinski. Bryan brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team. He is a 20 year U.S. Air Force veteran, retiring as a Master Sergeant from the 92nd Security Force Squadron, Fairchild AFB. Bryan went on to receive a Bachelor's degree from Aquinas College and a Master's degree from Western Michigan University and he has a Post Master's certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis. Bryan has a variety of work experiences that includes: Environmental Health and Safety Manager/HR Generalist (automotive industry), Children's Protective Service (investigator and foster care case manager), Behavior Analyst and Children's Crisis Clinician. He has completed Forensic Interviewing, Mindfulness, DBT, and Motional Interviewing. Additional, Bryan has experience working within the Autism Spectrum, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome as well as working with persons who are Developmental Delayed.

Says Bryan of our First Responders; "They (you) need to be reminded every day: you are 1%ers! Less than one percent of the population wear badges. The vast majority of Americans mentally and physically do not qualify for this job, and the ones who do, choose not to serve! You're special and we are here to support your continued efforts."

BACKING the BADGE Conducts Training Sessions With Battle Creek Fire Department

BACKING the BADGE recently conducted six training sessions for the City of Battle Creek Fire Department over a period of three weeks. The topics covered were Resiliency, Reality and Resources. The presenters were BTB Team Members Sara Eklove, Bart Perry, Dennis Potter, with Guest Presenter Deputy Chief Gregg Ginebaugh of the Kentwood Fire Department. Over the course of the training sessions, there were approximately 84 attendees. The training was well-received, and our thanks go out to Battalion Chief Martin Erskine and the dedicated members of the Battle Creek Fire Department.



Guest Authors Wanted!

BACKING the BADGE is always looking for guest authors for the



quarterly newsletter. If you have a short article (a couple of paragraphs) that would be of interest and relevant to our 1400 LEO's, Firefighter and Paramedic readers around Michigan, please send your submission to gmbush@encompass.us.com. You do not have to be a scholar to do this, and we do not count off for spelling or punctuation. Just an interesting thought or idea to share with your fellow First Responders is all that's required. The next newsletter will probably go out in August.

Helpful Hints by Sara Eklove, ENCOMPASS CEO

When we are looking for change in our own lives – it's helpful to make sure we are looking at own lives. The average person spends more time looking around themselves and getting wrapped into what other people are doing. This creates an experience of comparison versus introspection. Commit to staying focused on the things you can actually control – your own actions and your own reactions and the change will come!



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