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America's First Collegiate Emergency Medical Service Turns 50

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- In 1968, the Cedarville University Emergency Medical Service (CUEMS) became the first collegiate emergency medical service in the nation. This year, CUEMS celebrates 50 years of service to the university and the surrounding community.

"I worked with CUEMS as Greene County EMS coordinator long before I started teaching at Cedarville," said Dr. Angelia Mickle, dean of the school of nursing. "CUEMS has always provided exemplary 911 emergency services. Historically, many nursing students served and continue to serve on CUEMS. I appreciate their selfless service in providing emergency 911 care to our campus 24 hours a day while maintaining rigorous studies. It is a privilege to have this unique service at Cedarville University."

In 1965, Ralph Wenrick of the Wenrick Construction Company in Medway, Ohio, donated a 1939 fire truck to Cedarville College. After this generous donation, 23 members of Alpha Chi, a men's service organization on campus, were trained by the Cedarville Township Volunteer Fire Department and formed the Cedarville College Fire Department.

After several years, the upkeep of the department became too expensive, and the fire truck was sold. The proceeds allowed an old station wagon to be transformed into an ambulance. This changed the fire and rescue squad into a first aid and transport service.

In November 1968, Cedarville University's emergency fire and rescue service morphed into the Cedarville College Rescue Squad, the first collegiate emergency medical service in the nation. In the fall of 2000, the team changed its name to Cedarville University Emergency Medical Services: CUEMS.

"I am so appreciative of all those who served on the crew before me, and it is exciting to think that future students will be taking up to torch after me and continuing the legacy," said Hayden Vroegop, senior nursing major from Indianapolis, Indiana, and chief of CUEMS.

"I believe that CUEMS is an important part of the campus because it provides a unique environment for young students to refine their leadership skills and take responsibility for their career right off the bat. as a ministry-focused healthcare team, we have a very unique opportunity to develop the skills and wisdom of how to care for patients spiritually."

CUEMS responds to all medical and traumatic emergencies on the university campus and is available to the surrounding community. All 15 members of CUEMS are nationally-certified emergency medical technicians trained at the basic, intermediate or paramedic level.

“Being able to provide medical care for my campus community and share the love of Christ with them at the same time is an immense privilege,” said Megan Hanley, senior molecular and cellular biology major from Pekin, Illinois. “I’ve learned how to integrate my faith into my medical practice and how to function as a calm, competent medical provider in a high-acuity situation. I’m thankful to have served the Lord alongside three crews who are passionate about EMS and serving Jesus and our campus with humility.”

Under the guidance of Dr. Murray Murdoch, distinguished professor of history and government, originally and now Debra McDonald, director of university medical services, CUEMS has maintained its reputation as one of the finest emergency services in the nation.

"I am not sure I can put into words the impact that the ministry and members of CUEMS have had on my life," said McDonald. "I remember the first time I saw the EMS team respond to an emergency in the old Patterson Clinic in 1996. As a seasoned critical care nurse, I was so amazed and somewhat emotional seeing these young professionals provide such quality prehospital care. CUEMS Alumni have served as nurses, flight nurses, paramedics, fire chiefs, physicians, missionaries, businessmen and businesswomen, athletic trainers, and engineers, to name just a few. I am so thankful for those who serve now, and for those Alumni who have served on CUEMS."

“Being on the team has been the most formative experience out of my entire time at Cedarville,” said Tyler Reid, senior molecular and cellular biology major from Cedarville, Ohio and captain of CUEMS. “It’s given me a passion for medicine, an opportunity to serve my peers, and a true family on campus. It’s my hope that through wise leadership and guidance from the university, CUEMS will be able to continue its service for many years to come, so that future students can experience the same blessings and opportunities that I have.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.