



For Immediate Release
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Greater Westfield Medical Reserve Corps leader, Ed Mello, Jr., selected for national “Innovator Award”

(Westfield) The prestigious national Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), “Innovator Award” will be presented on June 5, 2013 in Washington DC to Westfield resident, Ed Mello, Jr., RN. Ed is the founder and president of the Greater Westfield & Western Hampden County MRC-CERT (GWWHC MRC-CERT). Two years after Ed and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers served tornado stricken communities across Hampden County, he will be recognized for his steadfast and creative commitment to the health and safety of our region.

In the immediate aftermath and recovery from tornadoes in 2011, Ed saw a deficit in providing care to the workers and volunteers responding to and assisting with the recovery from the natural disaster. There were insufficient personnel, equipment and supplies to feed those impacted including the army of emergency responders, utility workers and MRC and other volunteers. He proposed a **Mobile Disaster Kitchen** to a funding source in the region. He knew there was a need and he became more determined to achieve his vision of obtaining and operating a mobile disaster feeding unit before the region’s next catastrophic event.

The Greater Westfield & Western Hampden County MRC is a combined unit with the community’s emergency response team (CERT). Together the GWWHC MRC-CERT have partnered with Westfield State University (WSU) over the past several years and the MRC unit co-hosted the Annual Spring Concert 2012, from which a portion of proceeds went to the purchase of a mobile feeding unit. The GWWHC MRC-CERT **Mobile Disaster Kitchen** was literally outfitted by members and local donations. Partnering with community based organizations along with MRC volunteers and his Emergency Medical Services (EMS) students at WSU; Ed has engaged the faith-based community to enlist their talents, support and expertise in assisting people impacted by emergencies and disasters. You can find Ed Mello, Jr., and the Greater Westfield MRC **Mobile Disaster Kitchen** at community events including the summer concert series 2013.

Ed and the GWWHC MRC-CERT have deployed to assist neighboring MRC units and public health departments with exercises, drills, training, pandemic and seasonal flu clinics, community events and response to tornadoes, fires and power outages. To learn more about emergency preparedness and the Medical Reserve Corps in Western Massachusetts visit wmmrc.org.

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