



The De-Stress Press

Volume 3, Issue 2, Fall/Winter, 2007

The Western New York Stress Reduction Program Newsletter

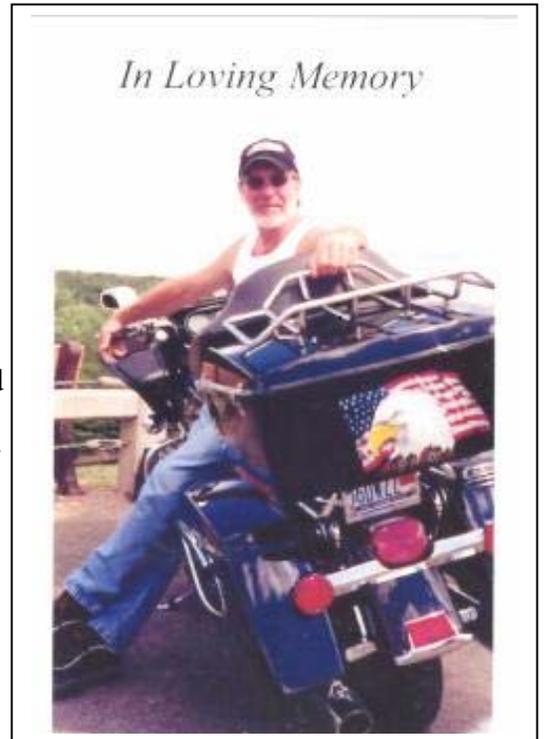
3359 Broadway, Cheektowaga, NY 14227

Michael was human, real, down to earth. He taught and mentored many, not only in EMS but in CISD. He used his life experiences to be a healer. His own suffering did not defeat him, but it made his faith grow ever stronger. He was ready to meet the God of Creation.

~ Fr. Joe Bayne, OFM. CONV.~

In Loving Memory of our Friend Michael Walters 1944-2007

Friend, mentor, leader – Mike was all of these and much more to countless individuals and groups. Mike's passion for his work and his concern for the well-being of others led to the development of the Western New York Stress Reduction Program. As the founder and Executive Director since the team's inception in 1988, Mike demonstrated compassion for emergency responders and provided guidance to the volunteer team members. Regardless of the situation, Mike could connect with you in a way that left a lasting impact. He knew how to make you smile, he knew how to steer you toward the greater good, and he knew how help you accept challenges toward making a difference in the community.



"He was one of my best friends and I am lucky to be able to say that." ~ Sharon Hoy, WNYSRP ~

Mike dedicated himself to his wife, Karen, his family, his friends, his community, and his country. He lived a life of service to others ~ helping others to heal, to grow, and to become stronger and healthier. Mike led by example and showed others how to "pay it forward".

"Mike, you are gone, but life for you was not a journey to the grave. You rode life hard, and slid in to the end all battered and bruised saying what a hell of a ride. Rest well my friend, you earned it." ~ Tom Luka, WNYSRP ~

Mike's legacy will live on in our hearts and in our service to the community. He has always been loved by us and we will miss him tremendously.

Fast Facts

- ❖ Mike served in the United States Navy, as Emergency Services Commissioner for Erie County and as a volunteer with Evans Center Volunteer Fire Company.
- ❖ Mike was a passionate motorcyclist and hunter.
- ❖ Mike served as Mayor of the Village of Angola, NY from 1993-2000.

“My friendship with Mike Walters over 30 years of working together is one I will always cherish.

Mike was a very compassionate and caring individual who always wanted to help others - whether volunteering his time in the fire service, donating blood at the Red Cross, or helping to develop successful programs like the WNY Stress Reduction Program.

It's not every day you come across a Mike Walters in your life, and when you do, you wish there were more like him in this world..

His insights, guidance and the life experiences he shared with us were gifts to be treasured. He will surely be missed by all of us the emergency services community.” ~ Gregory Skibitsky, Commissioner of Emergency Services, Erie County ~

How to Contact the Team

Information & Education: 716-681-6070

Immediate Assistance:

Erie County: 716-898-3696

Genesee County: 585-343-3313

Niagara County: 716-898-3696

Wyoming County: 585-786-8867

Website: www.erie.gov/depts/wnystress

Email: wnystress@yahoo.com

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This month's issue of the De-Stress Press is a departure from our normal format. In November, we said farewell to Mike Walters, the Executive Director and founder of the Western New York Stress Reduction Program, who died an untimely death. He fostered the growth of the organization which has helped thousands of our fellow emergency services personnel in their time of need. He also served as mentor to many of the team members. He will be sorely missed, but we are all richer for having known him. In this Issue, the members of the WNYSRP pay tribute to Mike with their own heartfelt words. The organization will continue to serve those in need, as Mike would have wanted it to. We are proud to continue serving Wyoming, Erie, Niagara, and Genesee Counties. Stay safe and if you need us, call us-we'll be there.

~ Thomas Luka ~

Police Helpline

In April of 2005, Mike convened a small group of team members to discuss the development of a specialized **Police Helpline**. Mike considered such a service a natural extension of what the team was already providing to the WNY first responder community. His tireless commitment to emergency responders led to the development of the **Police Helpline** Steering Committee. The Committee has been meeting monthly with the goal of implementing the 24/7 **Police Helpline** on 2/1/07.

The members of the Steering Committee (listed below) are grateful to Mike for his insight and determination to create another source of support and assistance for working and retired police officers, dispatchers, and their families.

Thanks, Mike. Your vision lives on.

Dr. Rob Delprino, BSU
Chief Tom Domino, Depew PD
Investigator Bernie Feldman, NYSP
Bonita Frazer, WNY Emergency MH
Investigator Donald Gleason, NYSP
Retired Lt. Tom Hanover, West Seneca PD
Debbie Hard, NYS EAP
Officer Mark Pitirri, Amherst PD
Lt. Dave Zack, Cheektowaga PD

