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## **Interview with University of Dayton EMS**

Winner of the 2019 NCEMSF Collegiate EMS Week Celebration of the Year

**Grace Scharf & Nicholas M.G. Friedman**

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# Interview with University of Dayton EMS:

## Winner of the 2019 NCEMSF Collegiate EMS Week Celebration of the Year

*Grace Scharf, the Public Relations Officer of the University of Dayton EMS, shares her agency's tips for organizing a terrific celebration during Collegiate EMS Week.*

### **Congratulations on organizing the 2019 Collegiate EMS Week Celebration of the Year! Tell us about the events your squad organized.**

Last year we hosted a variety of events, focusing on outreach and awareness about emergency medicine. Every year we make it a point to host free CPR and First Aid classes for our community. We've noticed that one of the main factors preventing people from becoming certified are the fees behind the process. As a result, we waived those fees for students during National Collegiate EMS week in hopes of reaching a wider audience.

We also hosted table hours, an open house, and a Pie-an-EMT event. With these events we invited the students to meet our members and ask any questions they had regarding our purpose on campus. Our goal is to always make it known that we are EMTs and students should never be afraid to seek help from us. We hoped to make ourselves seem more approachable to the public and more real, rather than just something they hear about in passing or see occasionally on campus. The Pie-an-EMT event also served to raise funds for the Epilepsy Foundation, which has always been very important to UD EMS.

While we kept many of the same events we hosted last year, this Fall we also hosted a blood drive and a takeover at our local Chipotle. Each year we try to host something new as we grow as an organization, and both of these events fit our mission through serving our local community. By sponsoring a blood drive at our university, our members were able to both serve as donors and work the "canteen" where donors went to rest and regain energy after giving blood. Our restaurant takeover raised funds for the Epilepsy Foundation and allowed our alumni to get involved with the celebrations, as many came with their families to support the fundraiser and talk to our current members. This allowed us to expand the scope of our celebration this year to include all members of UD EMS, both past and present.

### **What makes your events so successful?**

We work to be constantly engaged with our campus and host events that we see a need for in our community. When your community knows who you are as an organization and is able to recognize you on campus, it becomes much easier to create interest in what you are doing and increase attendance at your events. We aim to make our-



**University of Dayton EMS hosts a Pie-an-EMT event each year during Collegiate EMS Week (Dayton, OH).**

selves known not only through our professional media, but through our members as well. For example, many of our members will post the flyers for our events on their personal social media and talk to other students about what they do as part of our organization.

### **Why is it important for collegiate EMS organizations to promote Collegiate EMS Week?**

It's important for us to celebrate National Collegiate EMS week to not only raise awareness about collegiate EMS organizations and what they do, but to also celebrate the members of those organizations and everything that has been accomplished throughout the past year. This week is a time to congratulate our peers and reflect on all of their positive impacts on their communities through service as EMTs. Collegiate EMS week promotes bonding between members of our squads and a sense of accomplishment for everyone involved. This celebration is also a perfect way to thank all of the advisors,

universities, and public safety officials who make collegiate EMS organizations possible.

## What advice do you have for collegiate EMS organizations who are planning celebrations for Collegiate EMS Week?

My best piece of advice is to not be afraid to get creative with your events and to try something new. By starting early and engaging with your campus throughout the entire year, gaining interest in your events becomes much easier. You can reach out to the students directly by asking professors if members of your organization can talk to interested students before classes, or reach out to your university to see if they would be able to help you in your celebration by spreading the word about it through emails or social media. Even if your events do not turn out exactly like you planned, they are a great way to learn about what your community seeks from you and how you can expand your scope as a collegiate EMS organization.

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