



# COWLITZ CHAPLAINCY

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## Death Notifications

As Chaplains we have several different duties, but one of the most difficult is death notifications. There are many times people stop me to say, "Thank you," for my service, but they almost always add, "I hope I don't see you come to my house!" because they also know that delivering the very sad news of a death is one of our tasks. Many times people ask, "How do you do it?" and add, "I couldn't do it!" This has been an easy question for me to answer, and it was one of the things that led me to become a Chaplain.

Almost 10 years ago my son died suddenly. I was called to a hospital without any information; just that I needed to come. I was quickly put into a waiting room. Before someone could tell me my son had died, an Orderly came in with a bag of my son's clothes and possessions and said, "Here are your son's things." That person was not informed that I had not been told my son was dead. He came ahead of the person who was supposed to do the death notification.

From that time on I realized the first person who talks to you during the greatest grief of your life, you never forget. I became determined that no one should ever be told like I was. All of us as Chaplains have been trained on the proper way to do a death notification, and even though the notifications rarely go according to our training, we all strive to make sure it is done with dignity and great compassion, because we know it is very difficult news to hear a loved one has died. It is only a part of what we do as Chaplains, but for me, it is a blessing to be there at the time when people really needs someone who cares.

Sometimes a person may thank us for caring for them before we leave their home. Sometimes it may be weeks or months later when we happen to come across that person at a public event, and sometimes we never hear it, but we are still blessed to walk with others and support them as they walk through the valley of the shadow of death.



Chaplain Caliatra

## Chaplains Activity

This has been our busiest year responding to crisis events in Cowlitz County. In July and August we responded to assist first responder agencies 42 times, which is the most times that anyone can remember in a two months period. In the 31 days of the month of August we were called 28 times. Please remember Chaplains Doug, Mario, and Ray in your thoughts and prayers, because they handle the majority of those calls.

It is always a special event when new officers graduate from the law enforcement academy. In July we had three new officers graduate. Officer Amandrea Horton of Kelso PD, and Officers Alec Langlois and Levi Weatherl of Longview PD. Congratulations to these new officers, and we pray for a long and safe career in public service for each of them.



Officer Mandy Horton



Officer Alec Langlois  
Father, Sgt. Mark Langlois



Officer Levi Weatherl

In July we also attended the awards ceremony for the Sheriff's Office, and during that ceremony we had the privilege of participating in a memorial moment for K-9 Fritz who sadly died after many years of faithful service to his handler Deputy Brent Harris.

In August we celebrated the retirement of Deputy Danny O'Neal after 46 years of law enforcement service with Washington State Patrol and the Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office. We also celebrated with Sgt. Brad Gillespie of the Woodland Police Dept. who retired after 27 years of faithful service to the people of Woodland.

August also brought three new infants born to officers of the Longview Police Dept. Reserve Officer Oscar Vazquez and his wife welcomed a baby girl. Officer Jordan Sanders and his wife welcomed a baby boy, and Officer Jeran DeLapp and his wife also welcomed a new baby boy.

Chaplain Doug Fields has agreed to serve on the board of Columbia Wellness. This will provide a good liaison between our two organizations. Chaplain Mario Gambaro continues to serve on the board of Community House on Broadway.

## Chaplain Training

In July Chaplains Tom, Mario, and Francisco went to a training at the Criminal Justice Training Center in Buri-en on Post-Suicide Care for Families. The training focused on community resources for first responders to share with families who have experienced the suicide of a loved one. Even though the focus was on resources in King and Pierce Counties, there are also state-wide organizations we can tap into in our area. Sadly, we are called out to an increasing number of suicides, especially of teens and young adults. It was a good training to help

us provide resources to families for long term care. Many of the organizations require that their volunteers have experienced suicide in their family and are at least two years past the time of their own tragedy. This provides a very personal and experiential connection between the caregivers and those going through the crisis.

## Fundraising

We had our annual Golf Classic on September 9. It was a great event and we have wonderful support from both golfers and sponsors. We will provide all the details in our next newsletter.

We also want to remind you of our 16 minute promotional video. You can find it on our website, and on YouTube. Look for Cowlitz Chaplaincy Promotional Video. This video is a great tool for you to introduce others to the mission of the Chaplaincy and encourage them to match you in your financial support. Perhaps you have a Bible study group, or small group you belong to at your church, or you belong to a service organization or other civic group. This video is a great way to explain our mission to the county.

As you do your online shopping, please consider using AmazonSmile, and designate Cowlitz Chaplaincy as the non-profit organization to receive a percentage of your purchases.

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## Cowlitz Chaplaincy

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"Supporting those who support our communities' first responders"