
The EMS Experience

Saluting those with 20 years or more in EMS

Lucille Maes, LP



Lucille Maes, LP, has been with Angleton Area Emergency Medical Corps for 23 years, the last 16 as director.

First of all, I want to get one thing straight. I might be a Dino-Medic but I am a baby Dino! I have only been in EMS since the late 1980s. My gray hair has nothing to do with my age; it is a badge of my profession!

What was your first day on the job in EMS?

I don't really remember my first day as a volunteer, but I remember my first clinical on the ambulance. I was all by myself at a fire station waiting on a call, and I was scared to death. I made a call to my course coordinator and told him I thought I should leave—that I wasn't ready for this. He told me to sit tight, and he would be there in a while to talk to me. The next thing I know, the tone went off

and the dispatcher came across the PA announcing an EMS call for a stabbing victim. In a few moments people started pouring into the station, yelling for me to hurry and get in the ambulance. Long story short, it was a very bad call, but it had a good outcome and I had my first adrenaline rush. When we got back to the station my coordinator was standing there just smiling. Little did I know, but I was covered in blood and telling him, as quickly as I could talk, about the call. I went and showered, changed my clothes and hurried back for the next call.

Which services have you worked for over the years?

I have been with Angleton Area

Emergency Medical Corps (AAEMC) for my entire career. The first seven years as a volunteer and the last 16 as the paid director. I also worked for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice EMS for four years in the early 1990s.

Why did you get into EMS?

That's kind of a funny story. I had a friend that had moved back to Texas from South Carolina where she had worked in EMS. She wanted to take the EMT class here and begged me to take it with her. Needless to say, I finished the class, started volunteering and ultimately quit my job and came to work in EMS. My friend never completed the course, but I thank her all the time for dragging me to that class.

How has the field changed since you've been in it?

Treatments are much more invasive and complicated than they used to be. There were so few things we could do 20+ years ago. Everything took place in the emergency room. Now the back of the truck has been turned into an emergency room. Add to that the upgrade from equipment we had back then, like two-man stretchers, Thomas half rings, Lifepak 5s, foam c-collars, sand bags, wooden backboards, demand valves and limited drugs, if any. Today some of these items are even considered hazardous to the patient or to the medic. We are better educated and much more professional now, but back in the day we did the best we could with what we had. Today we actually work together and network with each other, where in the past we would not dare talk to each other. Just let me also say that I am *so glad* to be out of blue jeans and orange DynaMed jackets. Oh and no more 10-12 till we are 10-8, 10-76 to the 10-50, then 10-76 to the ER and 10-6 ER before we could be 10-24 10-8!

Is there a particular moment or call that stands out?

There have been so many, making it difficult to choose one. Every day is different—some up some down. There was a call about 20 years ago that I will never forget, and it haunted me for years. The whole story is much too long to go into here, but I will say that only a critically injured teenager survived a motor vehicle collision while the parents and two other adult members of the family passed away. I worried about that teen for years. Until one day, while on vacation in Alabama, I ran across members of his family while eating at a restaurant. This was purely an accident; I had no idea I would run



Lucille Maes started her life in EMS as a volunteer in the late 1980s.

into anyone, especially folks that were tied to that nightmare. After a very long conversation, I learned that the teen had been adopted by his aunt and uncle, had completed college and was doing well. It is an unbelievable story, and I still can't believe it, but I had two witnesses that day. Later, I was able to speak to the teen and helped the family find a woman that they had been looking for since that awful day. This woman had come upon the scene and stayed with the teen all the way to the hospital. She did not leave for hours until family could get to him in the hospital. Speaking with him and seeing that he had a good life helped me get over my nightmare call.

What has been your favorite part of your career in EMS?

Several aspects really stand out. First, just knowing people have had a chance to live or have a better life because of something you were able to do in the field is the best feeling in the world. Then I would have to say it would be the daily pride I have being the director of AAEMC, where the volunteers and paid staff work tirelessly for the community and for each other every day. Also, working with my peers in Texas to improve the EMS system. I am very lucky to have stumbled into the best job in the world!