

“Working Together is the Answer...Compassion Consciousness is the Goal.”

Family Assistance Foundation

# Sharing the Journey

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

The Official Newsletter of the Family Assistance Education & Research Foundation

Spring 2009

## Our Vision:

To provide a positive environment in which member organizations and other relevant groups can share resources, information, experience, and insight about family assistance and emergency management.

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## May 19-20, 2009 Family Assistance Foundation Cruise Line Conference “The Integrated Response”

The 2009 FAF Cruise Line Conference will consist of a two-day program featuring survivors and responders on Day One and an industry-wide exercise on Day Two. The opening panel will include a discussion of a tour excursion, which turned to tragedy.

The three-generation Smith/Mayer family was nearing the end of their Alaskan cruise on Holland America Line. They had one adventure awaiting them, a bear-watching excursion, when the seaplane taking them into the remote Alaskan wilderness crashed. Surviving passenger, Mrs. Mindy Mayer of Oregon City, Oregon, lost her husband David along with her son & business partner Eric Smith; her daughter-in-law Christi; and three-year-old twin grandchildren, Trevor & Allison. While Allison survived the original crash, she died several weeks later due to infection from burn injuries. Traveling long-distances still presents a challenge for Mindy, so via video, Mindy will describe her survival during the crash, as well as her dedication to helping others in honor of the lives she lost.



Mindy Mayer with son and business partner, Eric Smith

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## Support the Family Assistance Foundation and Win the Vacation of a Life Time!



### Carnival Cruise 'Auction'

Carnival Cruise Lines, for the second year in a row, has generously donated a 5 day cruise in an owner's suite cabin (not available for public sale). See FAF website at [www.fafonline.org/auction.php](http://www.fafonline.org/auction.php) for details about the auction. Don't miss this opportunity to win the cruise of a life time, while knowing you are contributing to the support and ongoing efforts of the Foundation.



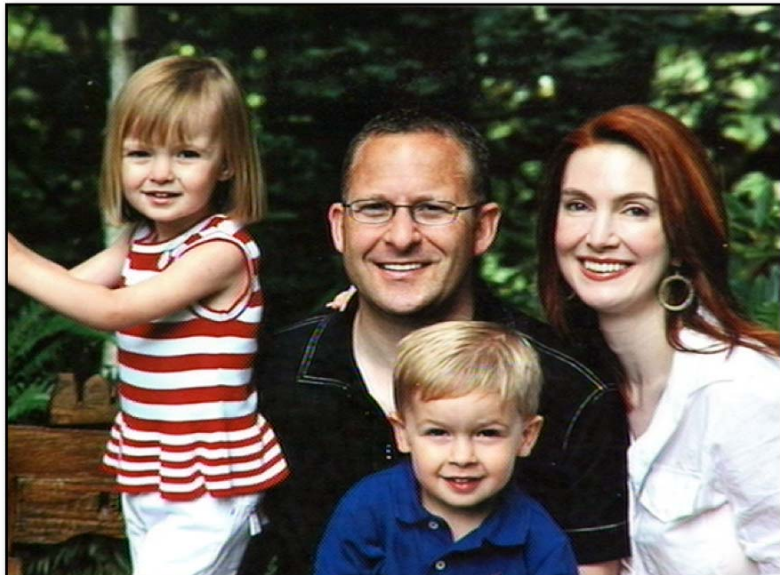
### NCL Cruise 'Raffle'

Norwegian Cruise Lines has generously donated a 7 day cruise in an ocean view cabin for your choice of destinations. Including Bermuda, Hawaii, Alaska, Florida/Bahamas, and more (based on availability). See FAF website at [www.fafonline.org/cruise\\_conference.php](http://www.fafonline.org/cruise_conference.php) for details about the raffle. This is your chance to win a vacation that will yield fabulous memories to last a lifetime.

**All Proceeds Go To Support The Ongoing Education And Research Efforts of The Foundation**

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Mrs. Randi Ray (daughter of Mindy Mayer), her husband, and their two children were also guests on the ship, along with Mindy & other family members. Randi will share with the audience about the support that she and her family received from the ship's crew and CareTeam leadership & response teams from the point of notification until she and her mother returned home.



*Eric & Christi Smith with their 3 year old twins, Allison & Trevor*

After Mindy and Randi have shared their experiences related to Holland America's Guest Care response, Rob Hon, Director of Reservations Planning & Administration for Holland America, will moderate the panel of responders. Among the other presenters will be Captain Eric van der Wal, Chief Officer on the ms Zuiderdam during the tragedy. He will be followed by Heather van der Wal, R.N., N.P., who serves as Manager of Family Assistance/Care Team and heads up Holland America's CareTeam program. CareTeam responders Greg Crick, Manager of Guest Relations, and Rene Spatz, Sales Development Manager, who assisted the family, will also provide the audience with a detailed account of their response.

Following this panel from Holland America Line, other passengers, family members and responders will present additional effective responses for other cruise lines, including Carnival Cruise Lines, Royal Caribbean Cruises, and Celebrity Cruises.

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## 2009 Cruise Conference Program Agenda

**Monday, May 18, 2009** Embassy Suites Ft. Lauderdale, 1100 S.E. 17th Street - Terra Ballroom

TIME	SESSION
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Survivor Reception (Pre-Registration Required)

**Tuesday, May 19, 2009** Cruise Terminal 29 at Port Everglades, 3500 SE 19th Ave. Fort Lauderdale

AM SESSION		PM SESSION	
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Registration	12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	LUNCH (provided)
8:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Opening and Introductions	1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Survivor Panel - Family and Passenger survivors from Various Cruise Line Incidents
8:30 AM - 8:45 AM	Recognition and Awards	2:30 PM - 2:45 PM	Refreshment Break
8:45 AM - 9:45 AM	Holland America Line Panel/Survivors' Stories	2:45 PM - 3:30 PM	Case Study I - Carnival Cruise Lines Responders "The Belize Tubing Incident"
9:45 AM - 10:00 AM	Refreshment Break	3:30 PM - 4:15 PM	Case Study II - Carnival UK Responders "The Naples Bus Crash"
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Holland America Line Responders Q&A	4:15 PM - 4:25 PM	Comfort Break
11:30 AM - 11:40 AM	Brief Comfort Break	4:25 PM - 5:10 PM	Case Study III - Royal Caribbean/Celebrity Cruise Line Responders "The Dominca Bus Crash"
11:40 AM - 12:00 PM	Royal Marine Insurance Group	5:15 PM - 5:30 PM	Conclusion and Information about Day Two

**Wednesday, May 20, 2009** Cruise Terminal 29 at Port Everglade, 3500 SE 19th Ave. Fort Lauderdale

EMERGENCY EXERCISE	
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	FAC Exercise & Debriefing Breaks and Lunch Provided for Participants

## It's About the How, Not Just the What!

by: Jeff Morgan



**Jeff Morgan**

*President,  
EAF Co-Founder*

As many of us, particularly from the airline industry, have watched the evolution of both emergency management and, more specifically, family assistance, we have been able to observe the growth in the knowledge of what we need to do to better assist survivors of many types of disasters. Yet, despite this additional knowledge, we continue to see organizations making many of the same mistakes observed twenty years ago.

So how is it that we can be so much more knowledgeable yet still not succeed in providing proper support for all survivors? I think, to a large extent, this is because many of us have learned WHAT to do, but not exactly HOW to do it. Providing for the basic needs of survivors can be readily understood with the proper training. And in smaller, more isolated situations any organization can effectively support the survivors of an accident.

However, as an isolated accident grows into a mass casualty accident, the abilities and resources of any organization can be quickly overwhelmed. When this happens, any lack of understanding on how to accomplish all of the critical tasks will become painfully apparent. The result is that perhaps some survivors will be provided with effective support but many others will not, resulting in many second assaults.

So what do we mean by “how”? Many employees, volunteers and other responders who have been to all types of training can recite the major actions that must be taken in a mass disaster: activate a call center, mobilize your ER teams, activate your command centers, dispatch your Go or Away teams, notify next-of-kin, set up a family assistance center, and on and on. However, for many, if you begin to ask detailed questions on exactly how various tasks may be completed, the gaps in ER plans become exposed. Again, the major activities are clearly understood, but how to carry out those activities to a successful completion is not always clear. How do we get better?

### **Walking the Plan**

While I can't claim credit for this term, I also cannot tell you exactly where it originated. However, “walking the plan” refers to the process of literally taking each and every task and activity and “walking” through the process. This means taking a task step-by-step to see if it can actually be accomplished. Often, when you do this, you find there are gaps or dead ends in your processes and procedures. You may also find that your current procedures don't produce the desired result. For example, the procedure may sound good from the organization's standpoint, but it will create second assaults on survivors. Walking a mile in their shoes while walking the plan can uncover these potential undesirable results.

### **Isn't This an Exercise?**

No, “walking the plan” is a process that should happen before an exercise. Exercises always combine any number of tasks and activities and always in a limited period of time. Walking the plan allows you to take specific tasks and activities and concentrate on one at a time without the normal time constraints of an exercise. Once a group of activities has been closely examined, they can then be validated through the exercise.

### **How Do You Know What You Don't Know?**

Fortunately, many organizations have not had to respond to and endure a mass casualty disaster. As such, it's difficult to write procedures for something you've never done before. To overcome this challenge, seek the wisdom of those who have been there before and have been successful in meeting the needs of survivors. This is the purpose of the Family Assistance Foundation, both in helping you to be better prepared and also in continuing to ask survivors how best to meet their needs so we can provide you with the data needed in order to know what works and what doesn't work.

*Next Time: What are Best Practices and how did they get that way?*

JOIN US ON MAY 20TH IN FORT LAUDERDALE TO SEE AN EMERGENCY EXERCISE IN ACTION

## Action Behind the Words: Is Your Credibility at Risk?

by: Jeff Braun



**Jeff Braun**  
Vice President  
Communications

“We’re doing all we can to help the people involved.”

How many times during a company’s response to a tragic event have you heard a spokesperson or top executive utter these words? Have you ever asked yourself, “Yes, but what are they really doing?”

Rest assured that the families and loved ones of those

affected are asking that question, as are the journalists and others covering or following the events.

In this era of corporate social responsibility, it’s prudent to ask if your organization is truly prepared to respond to a crisis or other tragedy on a moment’s notice with the appropriate personnel and structure in place to effectively manage all of the pressures that accompany such an event. From a credibility perspective, it’s vital that actions support your words.

Over the course of my career training and coaching corporate spokespersons and executives, I’ve often asked my clients about the preparedness of their organization. The response I usually get when talking to professional communicators is that it’s a Human Resources issue. In other words, they’ve assumed others have it covered; it’s outside their bailiwick. That is, right up until a crisis occurs and they are being held accountable for what they say. Unfortunately, a worst-case scenario frequently comes to life as those affected by a tragedy begin speaking out against the company because there are no plans, and no formal structure, to support the families and others affected by the event.

Some companies even outsource family assistance functions, leaving their most important relationships—the ones they have with their customers and surviving employees—in the hands of others. The message it sends is that the people aspect of the crisis isn’t important enough for your company to handle directly. Thinking about whom within your organization will be deployed to communicate with and support the affected families is something everyone would prefer not to think about but, as we all know, it’s a prudent question to ask.

Years of carefully built client relationships and patronage could be destroyed in an instant. It’s important to understand the media will always gravitate toward the human aspect of the story. By failing to plan and integrate a Human Services Response program into the emergency planning and communications process, many organizations are surrendering leadership on the issue that will have a long-term impact on their reputation, image and credibility.

With corporate authenticity and transparency being the new order of the day, it’s imperative that corporate spokespersons, and others that interact with the public, are prepared to provide details on not only what, but how your company will assist survivors. By taking a proactive role to determine your company’s readiness and the specifics of its Human Services Response plan, you will have the detailed information to communicate with confidence and compassion when actions are underway to support those in need and the media is at your doorstep. (Our Crisis Communications Media Training helps prepare professional communicators, executives and others to engage with journalists in high-stakes, high-risk and high-profile situations.)

The Family Assistance Foundation has partnered with many organizations to ensure there is a solid backbone to support organizations that truly are putting actions behind words. In fact, each year, the Foundation recognizes an organization that exemplifies this with its Heart Award. For more information about how you can nominate your organization, go to our website at [www.fafonline.org](http://www.fafonline.org) and download a nomination form.

***You are cordially invited to attend the Survivor Reception at the Family Assistance Foundation Cruise Line Conference***

***Monday, May Eighteenth  
Two Thousand and Nine  
from Five-Thirty to Seven-Thirty in the Evening***

***Embassy Suites Ft. Lauderdale***

***Business-Casual Attire***

## Have You Thought About Joining the Foundation as an Individual Member?

by: Lamar McEwen



**Lamar McEwen**

*Vice President,  
Operations*

As you probably already know, the Family Assistance Foundation, Inc. (FAF) is an independent non-profit corporation founded in 2000 for the purpose of empowering people following tragedy. Our mission is to support and improve business and industry responses to emergencies and disasters. But did you know that unpaid directors manage the Foundation? Co-founders Carolyn Coarsey and Jeff Morgan volunteer

their time to run the Foundation day-to-day and plan and conduct the FAF's educational events, workshops and conferences.

So, have you ever thought about joining the Foundation? As an Individual Member you'll be providing financial support, which helps support our administrative staff, and you'll have the

opportunity to provide other means of support to the very important work that the Foundation does in helping organizations successfully meet survivor's needs by coordinating and mobilizing resources during the acute phase of a crisis and beyond.

You'll be contributing financially to the Foundation through your annual membership fee, which is tax deductible, and you'll also have the opportunity to become a Foundation Care Team Volunteer and be trained in the Human Services Response™ approach, developed by Carolyn Coarsey, PhD, in caring for people. You can become an Individual Member of the Foundation without becoming a Care Team Volunteer, but to become a Volunteer you'll need to first be an Individual Member. As a Volunteer, you may be called upon to respond to disasters and other and other crises to which the Foundation is mobilized.

If you're interested in joining the Foundation, please go to [www.fafonline.org/volunteer.php](http://www.fafonline.org/volunteer.php) to complete an application. If you have questions, please send us an email at [info@fafonline.org](mailto:info@fafonline.org)

We hope to add you to the membership rolls soon!

For information on Corporate Membership and Associate Membership, please go to [www.fafonline.org/membership.php](http://www.fafonline.org/membership.php)

## Q&A from Bill Diring:

### Q. When Will I Meet My 'Family' for the First Time?

**A.** The answer to this question will really "depend" on a multitude of variables. First of those variables is the method by which your company makes its family assignments. In most cases, when a family calls in for assistance from your company, one of the questions asked is whether they would like to have face-to-face family assistance. If they do, you, as a member of your company's team, could be assigned to work with that particular family. You would be given the specifics about the family and would initiate contact for the first time, generally by phone. Depending on whether the family decides to travel to the accident site, your first physical meeting with them could be in their home or at an airport along their route of travel.

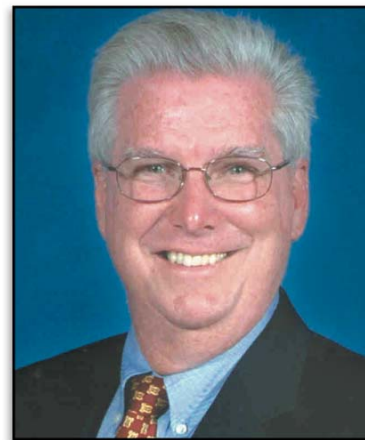
A second variable impacting when you meet for the first time is when the family travels to the accident site. In some cases, families will travel immediately to the site and look for assistance when they arrive there. To handle situations like this, companies will generally send "unassigned" family assistance representatives to the accident site and match them with the needs of the families there.

A third variable that could impact would involve the specifics of the event--when, where, etc. For example, if the event occurs

at an airport or seaport, family members could already be in the vicinity before any company representatives arrive. In cases like this, because of their proximity to the event, these families would not generally access the phone system for assistance. Any available family assistance members in the area would be "drafted" into family assignments immediately.

If this occurs, more than likely, you will have no family information and will start your process from scratch.

Bottom line----be ready to meet your family ANYWHERE at ANYTIME. Flexibility is the key to success in addressing the needs of the families.



**Bill Diring**

*Director, ER Planning & Logistics*

### Newest FAF Member, CSX Transportation



Dr. Carolyn Coarsey and Bill Durring train a group of CSX professionals at CSX Training Center in Atlanta, GA.



On March 6-8, 2009 Bill Durring, Director ER Planning & Logistics, facilitated in a 3 day “Boot Camp” exercise hosted by Malaysia Airlines (MAS) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The exercise was conducted at MAS’s Emergency Management Centre and attended by representatives from several airlines in the region. The purpose of the exercise was to review and discuss the internal processes for establishing a Care Team Control Centre, establishing a Family Assistance Centre, and developing policies for deployment and control of Care Team volunteers.



#### FAF MEMBER RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

Barbara Skudlarick, one of our active FAF Member-Volunteers, was recently awarded the National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Award by Attorney General Eric Holder. A retired R.N. and flight attendant, Barb now dedicates much of her time as an advocate for victims of crime in her local community. Congratulations to Barb for this well-deserved



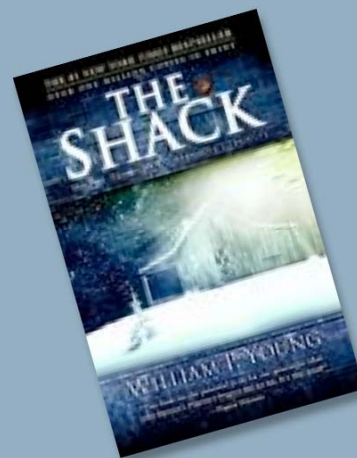
**Jolene West**  
Director, Internal  
Operations &  
Administration

## Book Review:

### The Shack

by **William P. Young**

*Reviewed by Jolene West*



When I first heard about this book and learned the basis of the plot I really didn't think it was a book I wanted to read. But then I kept hearing about it and became curious. The reason I felt I really didn't want to read it was because of the travesty of a missing child. It's just beyond my comprehension!

I remember an incident that took place near the area my husband and I were living when our own daughter was two years old. There was another adorable two year old that went missing and was later found in the closet of an old abandoned home. For me the tragedy of what happened to her was so great that I sought out a counselor to help me deal with it. I just couldn't imagine how that little girl's parents could possibly cope with their loss.

Moving beyond the travesty of the book is a message about healing, and that is really what this book is about. I've read other reviews from people who seemed to only focus on whether or not the book is Biblically correct. If you pick up this book and decide to focus on theory, then you will completely miss the gist of the message it contains.

This is a fictitious novel with numerous analogies from which we can learn. Read it with an open mind and you will find many hidden nuggets of inspiration. However, if you may be one who would get stuck in theory, then I might suggest choosing a different topic.

## Disaster Memorials Division Quickly Reaches Out

by: Paul Houle

The Disaster Memorials Division of the Family Assistance Foundation (FAF) is contacting and working with many groups around the country. These groups consist of private organizations, individuals and government entities interested in creating disaster memorials. The goal of the Foundation is to help facilitate the successful completion of these projects in any way possible.

In April, representatives of FAF met with members of the Flight 242 Memorial Committee in Dallas, GA. This committee is building a memorial to the victims of the 1977 Southern Airways Flight 242 accident. Fundraising is currently underway, and they have identified a beautiful location for the memorial. We are honored to be associated with such a wonderful project and to work with such a caring and dedicated group of people.

Discussions are ongoing with the City of Charlotte, NC in an effort to locate an appropriate site for the Flight 212 Memorial. This memorial will honor those who were lost in the 1974 Eastern Airlines Flight 212 disaster. Several locations have been identified and city officials are evaluating the availability of the sites. We are confident that the City of Charlotte will approve the project. Fundraising and Public Relations efforts can begin as soon as the project is approved.

Several family survivors and first responders of the 1994 American Eagle Flight 3379 disaster have also been contacted. These groups are working jointly to solicit support for a memorial to those who were lost in Flight 3379. A first responder to the accident became so enthusiastic about the effort that he has personally contacted local officials in the area for assistance with the project. He was overwhelmed with the unanimous support he received from Morrisville, NC officials. Several locations have already been reviewed and found to be appropriate locations for the Flight 3379 Memorial.

There has been tremendous interest in our willingness to help facilitate the work of groups interested in creating memorials in the four months since the Disaster Memorials Division was established. Anyone who is interested in contributing to any of these projects, in any way, can contact the Family Assistance Foundation at (404) 881-2895, or you may contact me directly via email at [paul.houle@fafonline.org](mailto:paul.houle@fafonline.org).



**Paul D. Houle**

*Director, Disaster Memorials*

**'09 Cruise Line Conference Planning Committee:**



Carolyn V. Coarsey, PhD  
*Program Chair*



Ray Gonzalez  
*Co-Chair*  
*Carnival Cruise Lines*



Jolene West  
*Event Coordinator*



Andrew Baldwin  
*Carnival UK*



Gloria Schlemovitz  
*Carnival Cruise Lines*



Bill Sera  
*Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd*



Heather van der Wal  
*Holland America Line*



Jane Kilgour & Alice Cain-Moore  
*Norwegian Cruise Lines*



Terry Dale  
*(Cruise Lines International Association)*  
*Photo not available:*  
*Donna Curry & Linda Sodaro*  
*CLIA*

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**"Sharing the Journey"**  
awards to be presented May 19,  
2009 at the Cruise Conference  
in  
Fort Lauderdale.  
Awards will be given to both a  
survivor and an employee in the  
cruise line industry.