

Weston EMS profile: Jon Weingarten: Volunteer proud to help the community

Written by Susan Spindler Jordan, Weston EMS
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Jon Weingarten, president of Weston EMS, has lived in Weston for 32 years. In his professional life, he is the owner of three companies in the entertainment production and book manufacturing industries.

Mr. Weingarten's companies are in New Jersey, California and Florida. "I travel a lot!" he said with a laugh.

His wife, Susan Weingarten, is a psychotherapist in Westport.

Mr. Weingarten has been a member of Weston EMS for 31 years, almost as long as he has lived in town. "I always wanted to be a doctor, but could never pass the chemistry course. My business partner's wife was an EMT and as she told me about it, I thought it sounded like something I wanted to do. It seemed like a great way to be involved in the community," Mr. Weingarten said.

"Thirty-one years ago," he continued, "Weston EMS was a much smaller organization. There were 20 or so members and we went on around 300 calls a year. But Weston was a much smaller community, too. Today, there are more than 40 volunteer members and we cover more than 600 calls a year. And we still enjoy the same wonderful reputation in the Weston community."

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Fund raising was a lot easier back then, too, Mr. Weingarten said.

"We used to send our fund drive letters, and because it was a smaller town and people knew us, we would get good response. Today, we have trouble meeting our fund drive goal of \$100,000. So I think it's our job to have people know us better and we do a lot of things to help that, he said.

"We work more on community service. We run CPR courses, we bring the ambulances to games and town fairs and events, we run a baby-sitting course — we are trying to be out in Weston in more ways than during medical emergencies."

Mr. Weingarten said there's a lot about Weston EMS that the people in town don't know. "For example, I don't think people understand that we have to raise our own funds. We get no funds from the town of Weston. That's why our fund drive is so important. I'm not sure people in town even know we're all volunteers," he said.

"Weston is unique in a couple of important ways," he explained. Many towns now have paid EMTs on staff because they don't have enough volunteers. Those paid EMTs cost taxpayers money. "We are fortunate to have enough volunteers," Mr. Weingarten said.

Weston is also unique in that EMS does not charge for service. "Most of our surrounding towns do charge, sometimes up to \$750 for a call," Mr. Weingarten said.

It's obvious Mr. Weingarten has great loyalty and commitment to Weston EMS and he is very proud of what the organization does for the community.

"We are helping people at their most vulnerable, when they're in a time of need. I feel good knowing we can be friendly, hopefully familiar faces showing up to help," he said.