

First Responders Get Great New Resources

*to Assist Persons Living with Dementia in
Emergencies*

by Mara Botonis

For the last three years, [Project Lifesaver International](#) has been working with a core group of volunteers comprised of leading dementia experts and leaders from the law enforcement and first responder community to create a one-of-its-kind training course. The group, led by Project Lifesaver International volunteer Mara Botonis, has worked tirelessly to incorporate feedback from first responders based upon the real-world situations that are being encountered most often as well what communication tools and techniques have been most effective. The ever-evolving course has been accredited by Indian River State College and endorsed by the National Preparedness Institute and Law Enforcement Today.

Project Lifesaver Chief Director General Gene Saunders knows first-hand how important Alzheimer's/dementia training can be after collaborating with over 1400 law enforcement agencies in 48 states to achieve an incredible 3,129 rescues. The Project Lifesaver program is more than simply search technology. In today's world, technology changes every day. The Project Lifesaver program also provides first responders with an understanding of the symptoms and behaviors of the individuals that they are recovering; giving Project Lifesaver trained and certified first responders the tools to assess and effectively manage the safe and comfortable return of the "At Risk" individual. Project Lifesaver was the first organization to address the issue of protecting and recovering individuals with cognitive conditions who are prone to wandering and for the past 15 years has remained the gold standard.

Chief Saunders notes, "First responders are getting more calls every day involving a person with cognitive impairment. The record growth in the aging population and the growing prevalence of Alzheimer's/dementia symptoms in that group of citizens, is putting public safety professionals in growing contact with persons who have special needs that are in crisis. Our first responders deserve the most effective tools we can give them to support their ability to quickly locate, assess, protect and return persons with Alzheimer's/dementia and help them do so in ways that take into account the unique needs of each person. This program has a profound ability to help improve call outcomes, officer safety and community satisfaction."

Botonis adds, "Project Lifesaver's Alzheimer's and Dementia courses help first responders identify and capitalize on the unique strengths that each person living with dementia still has and supports the creation of a trusting relationship quickly during an emergency. It means a lot to persons living with Alzheimer's/dementia and the families of those impacted by these diseases that their public safety officials are eager to learn more about how best to support us in an emergency. I'm really thankful that Project Lifesaver is making these resources available."

Chief Saunders notes that later this year, big plans for a nationwide roll out continue as the Alzheimer's courses will be a highlighted feature of PLI's annual meeting and partnerships with PLI are currently forming to assist in making these courses even more available and affordable for public safety departments nationwide.

To book PLI Alzheimer's/dementia course for your public safety organization, Police, Fire/Rescue and EMS agencies can contact Project Lifesaver at 877-580-LIFE.

About Project Lifesaver International:

Project Lifesaver International is a 501 (C) (3) community based, public safety, non-profit organization that provides law enforcement, fire/rescue, other first responders, and caregivers with equipment and training to quickly locate and rescue individuals with cognitive disorders who are prone to the life threatening behavior of wandering, including those with Alzheimer's disease, Autism, and Down syndrome. To date Project Lifesaver agencies have conducted over 3,129 successful rescues with a success rate of 100%.

Project Lifesaver is the most widely used and effective program in the nation that is specifically designed to protect the "At Risk" populations in our communities. Project Lifesaver has trained thousands of public safety agencies, not only in search, rescue and the use of our electronic locating equipment, but also in the methods necessary to communicate with a person who has Alzheimer's disease, Autism or a related cognitive disorder. For more information about PLI, call toll-free 877-580-LIFE, visit our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), or connect with us on [Facebook](#).