

# MY VIEW



*Founder Wayne Fortin*



## THE COMPASSIONATE WARRIORS

Some of the most stressful times in my TIP career have been the few hours before the first night of Volunteer Training Academies. I always know how many residents have said “*I’ll be there*,” but never know how many “no shows” there will be. I’m sure other TIP leaders can relate to this “how many will show” anxiety. This anxiety is understandable. After all, it’s TIP volunteers who make a TIP Program work.

After years of “how many will show” anxiety, we now know what % of a TIP Affiliate’s total population will respond to a TIP Affiliate’s recruitment campaign and actually go on to become TIP volunteers.....**.00005%**. No matter how creative and comprehensive our recruitment efforts are, it seems like graduating .00005% of the population as TIP volunteers is the norm.

Yikes....TIP is such a good idea. Why do so few people in our communities become TIP volunteers? I’m sure there are lots of factors. I and others have had many theories over the years including the fact that TIP volunteering is a major time-consuming commitment. While that is certainly true, I think the reason many citizens don’t become TIP volunteers goes deeper and has to do with the personal qualities required of our volunteers.

TIP volunteers need two personal qualities, both in good measure...**COMPASSION + COURAGE**.... **COMPASSION** is needed to provide our clients with the caring, humble, quiet, gentle and non “fix it” approach they need.

.... **COURAGE** is needed to jump into emotionally fiery situations; to go to any location including the side of highways and homes in disarray; and to be willing to help strangers who are traumatized and who can be unpredictable and volatile.

Citizens cannot be effective volunteers without having both compassion and courage. **Without compassion**, TIP volunteers would not be able to give survivors what they need most...a caring presence. **Without courage**, TIP volunteers would not leave the comfort of their homes absent lights and sirens, weapons and uniforms to provide compassionate support to those who need it.

So back to the question of “*why do just .00005% of the population become TIP volunteers?*” I think at least part of the answer is that few of us have both COMPASSION and the COURAGE required to be TIP volunteers.

When many residents are considering “should I become a TIP volunteer?” most have one of two responses....

1. *“I really feel for those hurting but no way can I imagine responding to help strangers in the middle of the night.”* (compassion without courage.)
2. *“I like the idea of rushing to emergencies, but I can’t imagine just being their helplessly with a grief-stricken person.”* (courage without compassion.)

Only a very few (.00005%) have **both** the compassion and the courage needed to be TIP volunteers. For that reason, I call our volunteers **COMPASSIONATE WARRIOR**s. For them, compassion is not just an ideal or a virtue but something to put into action in the rough and tumble world where tragedy occurs. We are so fortunate to have them in our midst.