

RESCUERS ON A ROLL



Martin Grillo (l.) and Janet Perry of Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC hit the road together in Queens park last week.

Volunteer paramedic group to debut its upgraded Segway emergency vehicles this spring

BY JOE KEMP

PHOTOS BY ANTHONY DELMUNDO

A QUEENS volunteer paramedic group plans to roll in with the warm weather on its newly upgraded Segways.

Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC — the first team of volunteer responders in the city to use the two-wheeled machines — has equipped the scooters with lights and sirens.

The Segways, which are otherwise illegal in the five boroughs, have been used by the group since the summer of 2008.

"When we're using them, they're emergency vehicles," said Martin Grillo, who founded the organization 15 years ago. "They're amazing."

The retired Port Authority cop first thought of the machines when his health began to fail from a 9/11-related illness, he said.

"Lately, it's been a little difficult," Grillo, 49, said, referring to his breathing problems. "With this, I can save my energy for what I have to do [to tend to a patient]."

The group used the Segways at about 17 events last year, including walk-a-thons

and races throughout the city, Grillo said.

The team has about four machines ready to use at all times; another four are kept for spare parts. The Segways' speed, which maxes out at 12 mph, and their ability to stop with precision make for easy maneuvering through large crowds, he said.

"You can stop it on a dime," Grillo said. "Faster than a bicycle."

Also slated for the spring is a stretcher attachment.

The project should be completed in the next few weeks as Grillo finalizes his plans to build a hitch attachment that can drag a

stretcher behind the machine.

A small room in the old Parkway Hospital in Forest Hills serves as the group's maintenance area.

Grillo does all of the mechanical work himself, and he relies heavily on the donations, which lately have been drying up. The group spends hours fund-raising.

"We struggle," he said.

Much of the fund-raising is spearheaded by Assistant Chief Janet Perry, 51, who said the payoff is worth the hard work.

"I love them," she said of the Segways.

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Emergency Medical Rescue of NYC founder Martin Grillo tests stretcher hitch attached to a Segway, which he hopes to perfect by spring. In photo at left, rescue group uses the scooters to patrol at local events and recreation areas, such as Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.



Grillo works on Segway stretcher hitch in the group's maintenance room in the old Parkway Hospital in Forest Hills. In photo at left, Janet Perry, assistant chief of the group (l.), and Grillo (r.) test rescue stretcher as John Wilson, 18, plays the role of patient being trundled past the sphere in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park last week.