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and emotions — he had never personally dealt with.

"I was called in more or less as a crisis counselor," Chapman said in his Boys and Girls Republic office. "I was there basically to assist the grieving families in any way we could and help them get settled."

Besides providing a much needed shoulder for the grieving family members to lean on, Chapman also helped with some day-to-day tasks like shopping, transportation and making sure they had food to eat, he said.

"It was rewarding being able to be a comfort to the people no matter how small or how large the task was," he said. "It was a very traumatic experience to work with that many families at one time. There was such an outpouring of emotion."

He went out to the site Nov. 7 to provide counseling for two grieving families and stayed there for five days.

Chapman's name was in a computer database listing people who have had training in trauma and grief and aviation disasters. He was one of 70 counselors at the crash site aiding victims' families and friends.

But even his 1997 aviation disaster training in Cincinnati could not prepare him fully for the demanding — and emotionally draining — task in Rhode Island.

"You can't say you know what (victims' families) are experiencing because you've never experienced it," Chapman said. "You just try to reassure them that everything will be OK."

Complicating the problem was

the language barrier. Chapman and other U.S. counselors depended upon interpreters to translate their calming words into languages — mainly Arabic and French — the victims' families would understand, Chapman said.

The investigation into the crash recently focused on the copilot's last words on the Boeing 767's voice recorder — "I made my decision now; I put my faith in God's hands." No evidence of malfunction or an explosion has yet been found, according to news reports.

Chapman's experience working with troubled youths at Boys & Girls Republic helped provide important training for the EgyptAir task.

"It sort of built my skill base to be able to deal with a lot of emotion," Chapman said.

He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Fisk University in Nashville and a master's in social work from Eastern Michigan University. He decided to turn to a career in social work while working as a part-timer at Boys & Girls Republic in 1979. He was working full time in a bank at the time.

"I realized that I really enjoyed working with young people," he said. In 1981, he began working at the facility full time.

One of the most exciting parts of Chapman's stay in Rhode Island was being able to find out what was going on before the news media did. The National Transportation Safety Board gave briefings on the investiga-

tion three times a day.

"That was sort of unique — getting news briefings before the newspapers did," Chapman said.

When asked if counseling at an air disaster site was something he would do again, Chapman's answer was emphatic.

"If asked, yes," he said. "Basically because that's my nature — I like helping people. It was rewarding to help people looking for answers and being a shoulder for them to lean on."

Boys & Girls Republic is an

80-bed residential treatment center housing children ages 12 to 18 of various backgrounds. Residents include abuse and neglect victims and "status offenders" or children with incorrigibility and truancy problems.

Under an agreement with the city of Farmington Hills, the facility cannot take youths connected with serious crimes. The center has been in Farmington Hills since 1966 and was established in 1890.

ing.

"It's a clear illustration of why the 911 surcharge is a winner for everyone," Dwyer said. "This was, I think, a major victory for the residents of Oakland County."

Police and fire agencies using different frequencies also caused problems at the 1996 Wixom Ford plant shootings.

"We had nine different agencies respond (at the Wixom shooting)," Dwyer said. "No one

could communicate with each other."

Robert Daddow, assistant deputy county executive, said he hopes the 911 improvements help avoid some tragedies. He said the 1998 fire in Farmington was one such example.

"That is absolutely silly," Daddow said. "You've got flames flying and you can't talk to someone 100 yards away."

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