

The RESOURCE CONNECTION

Volume 6, Number 1

HOMELAND SECURITY

Fall 2002



Coordinating Emergency Management

by *Jill Saito*

The key to assisting in emergencies, according to national service programs that respond to disasters, is to build relationships with emergency management agencies well before a disaster or emergency occurs.

Building Relationships

“One of the most important things when disaster occurs is that they know who you are and you know who they are,” said Greg Chun, senior program officer for the California Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV). “Relationships are critically important in disaster work. When a disaster or other emergency occurs, the last thing you want to do is scramble around trying to find the right person to talk to.”

GO SERV, California’s state commission, talks to agencies such as the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on a regular basis and attends meetings of VOAD, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters.

Cee Cee Molineaux, the emergency management coordinator for the Corporation for National and Community Service, is building relationships on the national level with organizations such as

FEMA, the Salvation Army, United Way, the American Red Cross, and Citizen Corps to integrate national service programs into coordinated national relief efforts. She would like national service programs to begin building these relationships now at the local level to strengthen a community’s ability to prepare for emergencies and to respond if a disaster occurs.

“These partnerships are so beneficial,” Molineaux said. “If the community is hit with a disaster, then those partnerships are already there.”

She encourages programs to assist with what’s already in place in the community through the American Red Cross, state emergency management agencies, police and fire departments, and others involved in emergency management.

“We can support so many of their roles,” Molineaux said. “See what they’re already doing and see how we can support that. The American Red Cross already has the programs in place; what they need is the help.”

See Coordination, page 12

Read about California’s experience on page 3.

Theme: Homeland Security—Editor’s Box

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the Corporation has joined the rest of the country in recommitting itself to the national priorities of public safety and emergency preparedness. This issue of *The Resource Connection* highlights national service programs that have contributed to those priorities and provides examples for others to answer the President’s call to service.

Our lead article outlines a few critical things programs can do to heighten their preparedness and strengthen their response when the next emergency takes place. “Programs Plan for Disaster Response” highlights the experience and expertise of programs immersed in the field; it gives a handle for others looking to get involved. Building on community resources to

increase community safety is the focus of our case study on New York’s Red Hook Public Safety Corps. In our interview with Ann Markey, we see how an RSVP Volunteer Coordinator gets down to the business of effectively placing senior volunteers in law enforcement agencies. Our last article describes how students and teachers across the country have developed a pro-active approach to public safety and preparedness through service-learning projects.

Inside you will also find notes, essential web addresses, and reference information targeting documents and effective practices—a primer in using service as a strategy for homeland security. ■

In this issue:

Coordinating Emergency Management..... 1

Seniors Aid Law Enforcement Agencies.....2

Programs Plan for Disaster Response....4

Brooklyn Community Finds a Solution.....6

Service-Learning Takes Up the Challenge.....8

Library Spotlight...10

Best Practices.....11

The newsletter of the National Service Resource Center



Funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service under Cooperative Agreement No. 01CA-CA0006

Seniors Aid Law Enforcement Agencies:

Interview with a Volunteer Coordinator

by Judy Karasik

Additional Resources:

The Volunteer Center of Orange County :
www.volunteercenter.org

National Service Training Resources

The Corporation for National and Community Service funds a network of training resources to strengthen the capacity of national service programs and projects, and to assist them with their work in local communities.

The Corporation's website has useful links to training and technical assistance providers, publications, training resources, a master calendar, listservs, effective practices, and other helpful information.

Visit their resource page at:
www.nationalservice.org/resources/training

Orange County's three million citizens live in and around 34 cities, including Anaheim, Santa Ana, Fullerton, Huntington Beach, San Clemente, Orange, and Irvine, in an area encompassing close to 800 square miles of Southern California.

Ann Markey has all of it covered. She has been the RSVP volunteer coordinator at the Volunteer Center of Orange County for 15 years, managing 1200 RSVP volunteers.

What makes her situation a little different—and suddenly very relevant to the new USA Freedom Corps initiative—is that her senior volunteers work with law enforcement agencies, 18 of them at last count. Seniors receive specialized training in safety rules, crime prevention, record-keeping, avoiding dangerous situations, and city and county regulations.

Service assignments include neighborhood and business watches, fleet maintenance, mentoring, victim assistance, child seat-belt instruction, code enforcement, administrative and clerical tasks, and handling public inquiries.

Talking to Ann Markey, you hear the voice of a problem solver. She comes across as experienced, relentlessly practical, optimistic yet realistic. You really get the sense that she knows what each volunteer does—and more important, what each one of them wants to do:

Q. Was it difficult to place RSVP volunteers in law enforcement agencies?

A. The police were the hardest people in the world to convince about volunteers. The police chiefs thought volunteers would be in the way, staff thought they'd be taking away their jobs, and everybody thought they would be just a bunch of 'old seniors.' Each of our cities has a different program. I sat down with them, they got out their manual, and we went through it and thought about what volunteers could do. Sometimes they took my ideas, sometimes they didn't. We went to the paid staff. It's essential to get their buy-in. We asked each department what they'd like to have help with. Those were our job descriptions. Then you recruit.

Q. How did your program grow?

A. Police chiefs with RSVP volunteers talked to other chiefs; the program spread by word of mouth. Some cities only allow the volunteers to work internally, handling the information desk, working with computers. In other

situations, the seniors are highly visible. They wear uniforms—not to look like policemen, but a white blouse, blue pants, a special patch on the shirt. Even the cars they drive say RSVP Volunteer. They drive around to do neighborhood watches, what we call vacation watches—where a family's gone away and the house needs to be checked. The citizens love them.

"Police chiefs with RSVP volunteers talked to other chiefs; the program spread by word of mouth... The citizens love them."

Q. What other functions do your RSVP volunteers have?

A. If you go to Disneyland or the big convention center in Anaheim, you'll see RSVP volunteers. We call them the Ambassador Team—they help if you've lost your passport, if you need directions. Anaheim's the safest resort town in the

country! In other cities seniors license bicycles, fingerprint children, do crowd control—as many tasks as there are jobs to be done.

Q. What about training for the volunteers?

A. The cities, because they each have a distinct program, each do their own training. Most of them have what they call the Citizen's Academy. There's training at the beginning—maybe 40 to even 100 hours, depending on what they need to know—and there's ongoing training. Volunteers bring up issues they run into. Other times, they brush up on their skills. The police departments staff and design the training.

Q. How do you recruit volunteers?

A. Recruiting? It depends. Each city is different, each location is different. Is there transportation? What time of the year is it? What's it about? For example, I just had someone call who is running a statewide olympics. He said, 'I need 1,200 volunteers for crowd control.' I told him it was no problem.

We thought together and threw out ideas. Who would be interested? People who go to gyms? So we can go to all the health clubs in the area and recruit through them. The event runs seven days—that means weekends, so we can recruit through businesses and corporations, where people want to volunteer but can't during the week. The event happens when lots of college students are out for break—so we can recruit them.

You just sit and think. And then there are all our regular volunteers. I told him, “You have to do a T-shirt. Give my RSVP volunteers a T-shirt and maybe a free meal and they’d be delighted to come and help. And when you’ve got them, appreciate them. That T-shirt is important. Tell them they’re doing something wonderful.” It’s absolutely true, after all, so we like to say it.

Q. What is the cost, in staff time, to the police department?

A. Each police department has to have a paid staffer in charge of the volunteers. We don’t place volunteers without that. Sure, it’s work at the beginning, but I show them how to do group sign-in sheets, how to delegate a lot of the paperwork, and I talk a lot about how to spot the volunteers that have leadership capacity. They stand out, really very quickly. We call them advisory staff. I tell them if it is time-consuming to run this program, what it means is you’re not running it right.

Q. How have volunteers changed over the years?

A. Well, I’ve noticed that senior volunteers are getting younger—a lot of them are 55 to 65 years old, and not all of them are retired. So, we need to have more weekend opportunities. Before, meetings were always in the afternoons. Not now. We hold meetings in the evening, on Saturday and Sunday. Many volunteers come with fantastic skills. People who use volunteers have started to really appreciate the experience they bring.

Q. How did you come to be a volunteer coordinator?

A. This was my daughter’s job! I was a stay-at-home mom and she was in college, and she had this part-time job but needed to find work that made her more money, so she was moving on. And she said, “Mom—this is the perfect job for you!” ■

Judy Karasik is a consultant and former Training and Technical Assistance Officer for the Corporation for National and Community Service.

For more information on the Orange County Volunteer Center, call (714)953-5757, or fax (714) 834-0585.

The California Experience: Coordinating Emergency Management at the State Level

Emergency preparedness and disaster response has been a priority for the California Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV) for years. The state commission is committed to ensuring that national service programs are prepared in case of an emergency and know where to turn if their assistance is needed.

GO SERV asks each AmeriCorps program it funds to submit a continuity/contingency plan in case of an emergency. “It’s an assessment of the program’s ability to withstand a disaster themselves and their ability to respond to disasters,” said Greg Chun, GO SERV senior program officer.

The plan should detail how the program will continue to serve if affected by a disaster and how members will be contacted in case of an emergency. For example, if an earthquake hits, how do members report to the program and where will they continue their term of service if their service sites are damaged or destroyed?

GO SERV also asks its funded AmeriCorps programs to plan how they will assist in the event of a disaster. If a disaster occurs, GO SERV has an online form for programs to complete that lets the commission know how the programs have deployed members to assist in disaster relief.

The expectation to be prepared for disasters and possibly assist in a disaster or other emergency is supported with continued training and technical assistance. California’s last annual national-service conference provided disaster training for program directors.

The California Disaster Program, which recently ended, was a three-year VISTA program with the American Red Cross and California Corporation for National and Community Service State Office. It provided training and technical assistance to national service programs through AmeriCorps*VISTA members serving across the state.

The VISTA members of the California Disaster Program were hosted by local Red Cross chapters. They were given the task of identifying the national service programs in their chapter area and providing assistance in emergency service planning. They also helped connect the national service programs with various emergency-response resources in the community. “As a commission, we keep in touch with the larger disaster organizations and agencies so when a disaster happens, we are ready to respond in the most effective manner possible,” Chun said. ■

California’s Citizen Corps Council

Governor Davis identified the Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism (GOSERV) to serve as the state Point of Contact to administer the 2002 FEMA Supplemental Funds for the Citizen Corps program and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program enhancements. GOSERV will work closely with the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services to administer these programs in California. Recently, a state Citizen Corps Council was formed. It is a subcommittee of the State Strategic Committee on Terrorism.

For additional information, contact:

Governor’s Office on
Service and Volunteerism
1110 K Street, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tel: (916) 324-7947
Fax: (916) 323-3227

Programs Plan for Disaster Response:

Helping Communities Weather the Storm

by Jill Saito

Helpful Links:

National Readiness and Response Corps (NRRC)
www.acrossla.org/NRRC/ameri-corps.html

National Crime Prevention Council
www.ncpc.org

California Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GOSERV)
www.goserv.ca.gov/index.asp

National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD)
www.nvoad.org

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
www.fema.gov

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org

When an ice storm hit Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma earlier this year, the AmeriCorps members of St. Louis Partners' Emergency Response Team were quickly dispatched to the hardest hit areas.

Within hours, another 76 members from four AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) campuses packed their gear and headed to the Midwest to join them. At the disaster-struck areas, even more national service members, from AmeriCorps*VISTA to Senior Corps volunteers, arrived to lend a hand.

Together, more than 100 national service members worked side-by-side helping with such tasks as clearing debris and removing fallen trees.

The Corporation Responds

Long before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, AmeriCorps programs with a focus on emergency preparedness, such as the Emergency Response Team (ERT), the NCCC, and the American Red Cross National Readiness and Response Corps, have coordinated efforts to respond to disaster-struck areas. And inevitably, local national service members have provided support as well when they saw their neighbors in need.

Cee Cee Molineaux, the emergency management coordinator for the Corporation of National and Community Service, is working to increase national service's role in emergency management nationwide. And since President Bush announced his intent to involve AmeriCorps and Senior Corps more in homeland security, her efforts have become even more important.

As a former AmeriCorps*NCCC member and American Red Cross National Readiness and Response Corps (NRRC) member, Molineaux believes strongly in what she's doing.

"We have so much to offer this field," Molineaux said. "There's no reason why every program can't be involved. It's a field where we can really meet a need."

How involved programs become in emergency management can vary from a team dedicated to emergency response like St. Louis Partners' ERT to members who incorporate emergency management into what they already do, such as teaching safety awareness during an after-school program.

If national service programs increase commu-

nity emergency preparedness at the local level, the entire nation's emergency preparedness is raised, Molineaux said.

"We have the opportunity to make that happen by our programs getting involved at the local level in all four areas: preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery," she said. "We are an excellent resource for every community."

Responding to an emergency is often the first priority when planning for emergency management, but Molineaux encourages programs to become involved in preparedness, mitigation, and recovery as well. Preparedness activities might include educating children on safety or helping to form a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Mitigation activities could include helping to retrofit buildings so they're resistant to flood damage. Recovery might involve helping families who need assistance to clear fallen trees.

Emergency Response Teams

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) were mentioned by President Bush during his State of the Union address as one way to become involved in homeland security.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website, CERT members give critical support to first responders in emergencies, provide immediate

assistance to victims, organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site, and collect disaster intelligence to support first-responder efforts.

Training is offered to CERT members through FEMA in areas such as disaster preparedness, disaster fire suppression, basic disaster medical operations, and light search and rescue operations.

Bruce Bailey, director of St. Louis Partners' Safety Service Corps, encourages national service programs to support local CERTs.

"In cases of large catastrophes, we know it takes a period of days for an adequate response from outlying areas," he said. "We know that community groups and other individuals would have to rally around their own resources at this type of disaster to help people who need shelter or need to be fed."

Immediate response to injuries is also critical. CERTs help to build the community's capacity to respond quickly and effectively to an emergency.

"We have so much to offer this field. There's no reason why every program can't be involved."

The Red Cross Prepares

The AmeriCorps members of the American Red Cross National Readiness and Response Corps responded to 116 national disasters between September 1995 and June 2001. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, all 113 NRRC members were deployed to serve as family service technicians and to provide mass care. They are well-versed in lending a hand when disaster strikes.

Before NRRC members can assist after a disaster, they receive extensive training through the American Red Cross. Taking advantage of the free training provided by the Red Cross in disaster services is the first step NRRC national program coordinator Carmel Comendador recommends for national service programs interested in building disaster response into their programming.

Comendador also suggests contacting a nearby NRRC team. Their full-time members may be able to train your participants in disaster services or collaborate with you to provide community disaster and health education. The NRRC operates 20 sites in cities across the country, including Los Angeles, Baltimore, Atlanta, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. (Visit the NRRC website for a complete list of NRRC sites.)

Involving your national service program in disaster response and emergency management strengthens your community's ability to respond to disasters and provides members with skills in communication, leadership, and community organizing, Comendador said. And the training they receive in first aid, CPR, and emergency preparedness will help prepare them for the unexpected. ■

Jill Saito is a consultant and former AmeriCorps program director and member.



Volunteers assist with an environmental clean-up.

St. Louis Team Responds to Emergencies

The 16 AmeriCorps members of St. Louis Partners' Emergency Response Team (ERT) are ready to respond to a disaster at a moment's notice. A multifunctional rapid deployment group, the team is trained to assist in emergencies that range from wilderness search and rescue to wildland fire suppression.

The ERT, which is part of St. Louis Partners' Safety Service Corps, was developed in part because of a call from the Corporation for National and Community Service to develop pilot emergency-response programs in states prone to natural disasters—states like Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, California, and Florida.

One of its first assignments was assisting with donation coordination after the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City. "Members worked alongside the Oklahoma City fire department, federal law enforcement, FBI, ATF, and others," said Bruce Bailey, Safety Service Corps director.

The members work closely with the state's emergency management agency to respond to unmet needs in disaster-struck areas. They help clear debris or cut down trees that have fallen on homes. They fight fires that are threatening lives or property. They do whatever is necessary to help a community protect itself and recover from disaster.

"The whole country was built on the notion of people helping one another, neighbor helping neighbor," Bailey said. "Given the national threats we have to face, some of the issues around borders and turf have dissolved." The ERT most recently returned from assisting with recovery from the ice storms in the Midwest. It has also helped after hurricanes hit North Carolina, wildfires raged in Kentucky, tornadoes swept through Arkansas, and floods wreaked havoc in Grand Folks, North Dakota.

The team has also found a niche in helping communities organize and coordinate a recovery system. They do this by convening planning meetings of community groups, volunteer groups, and state agencies. The group has become recognized as such a valuable contributor to disaster relief that they're built into Missouri's statewide emergency-response plan to manage and coordinate donations. "We're building community to help solve immediate problems, but we also want to create a system that lives on after we have left," Bailey said. ■

Tips for Emergency Coordinators

Bruce Bailey, director of St. Louis Partners' Safety Service Corps, offers the following advice:

- Define the role that makes sense within your larger program mission.
- Define your niche. What can you do to improve your community's response to disaster?
- Identify partners and logical connecting points.
- Train members through simulations and exercises.
- Connect with your state and local emergency management agencies.
- Make contact with the local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD).
- Seek out the local Salvation Army, American Red Cross, and fire and police departments.
- Find out if your city has a Citizen Corps Council. If not, look into starting one.
- St. Louis Partners' ERT: www.americorps-stl.org/r_ert.html
- Read about St. Louis Partners on page 11 in the Best Practices section.

Brooklyn Community Finds a Solution

by Jill Saito

Helpful Links:

Learn more about the Red Hook Public Safety Corps at: www.courtinnovation.org/demo_08rhpsc.html

Read about Red Hook on page 11 in the Best Practices section.

The bright red uniforms worn by Red Hook Public Safety Corps members in Brooklyn, New York, have become part of the Red Hook community landscape; they're a sign of safety for residents who previously were accustomed to signs of danger.

"This community was denied a lot of things for a long time," said Warren Berry, Red Hook Public Safety Corps deputy coordinator. "The city was so heavily infested with drugs, it was definitely known for that and nothing else."

But for the past seven years, a team of 50 AmeriCorps members with the Red Hook Public Safety Corps have been in the community working to reduce the amount of crime and increase the safety of Red Hook residents.

Walk around Red Hook, and you'll likely run into a Red Hook Public Safety Corps member.

They're there to greet you when you walk into the Community Justice Center, if you drop off your children at the child care center, if you need assistance at the police precinct, or if a public housing building needs maintenance. While they're stationed across the community in sites ranging from the public libraries to the health center, they maintain one focus—increasing public safety.

"We're trained by nature to keep an eye on the kids we're working with and to work with parents to remind them of safety issues," Berry said. "Everything we do has a public safety angle." According to Berry, life has improved in the Red Hook community since the Public Safety Corps began. "You can see it in the fact that small businesses are trying to come in, and businesses that are given an offer to leave are staying," he said. "Statistically, crime rates are down over the last five years."

Partnership with the Community

The Red Hook Public Safety Corps is an innovative partnership between the Center for Court Innovation and the Kings County District Attorney's Office in Brooklyn. AmeriCorps members, 65 percent of whom are recruited from the Red Hook community, serve on one of three teams—the justice center team, the unity team, or the community team.

Members of the justice center team work out of the Community Justice Center. They help individuals sentenced to alternative sanctions to receive services. They provide child care so parents may attend court without worrying about their children. They also assist in the mediation department and become certified mediators.



*AmeriCorps*VISTA members work to develop community action plans.*

Members of the unity team provide after-school tutoring and mentoring; mediate conflicts outside of the justice center; help safeguard the South Brooklyn Health Center grounds; and provide safety, mentoring, and tutoring to children at the public library.

Members of the community team provide direct service in the public housing buildings. They repair elevators, fix doors and lights, and monitor the buildings with the Public Housing Authority police. They're present both at night and during the day to help restore a sense of safety to the residents. The community team members also serve at three police precincts, helping to complete domestic violence reports and process arrests. They also escort community residents to courts and local treatment centers.

The Red Hook Public Safety Corps gets out into the community in other ways as well. An AmeriCorps member thought the 14 baseball fields in Red Hook could be used for a structured, safe summer activity for kids. Now more than 200 kids each year participate in the summer baseball league, which is organized and run by the AmeriCorps members.

Each August, the members organize a National Night Out. They encourage residents to come out of their homes for the evening and take over the streets. The members organize informational booths and patrol the blocks to ensure safety.

New Partnerships

A key to the success of the Red Hook Public Safety Corps is the relationships they've built with the various agencies already serving the community, such as the Public Housing Authority, police precincts, libraries, and schools.

Building the partnerships is easier now that the Red Hook Public Safety Corps has a reputation for "getting things done" in the community, Berry said. He recommends that programs that want to build these relationships sell the value of AmeriCorps members and have a concrete plan for how the members will assist the agency.

For example, the program has a positive relationship with the local police department because the members have helped ease tensions between police officers and Red Hook residents. "Ninety-nine percent of the time, people jump at the chance to have an additional person provide guidance," Berry said.

Going Door-to-Door

The Red Hook Public Safety Corps listens to the residents when deciding which partnerships to pursue and where members need to serve. At the beginning of the members' term of service, they fan out into the community for Operation Data.

The members go door-to-door conducting a survey containing more than 150 questions about the community and public safety issues. They ask residents at community centers, the justice center, and businesses to complete the survey as well. An average of 1,500 surveys are completed and compiled each year. "It assists us in identifying where the trouble spots may be," Berry said.

Once the information is compiled, it is shared with local residents, businesses, and agencies. Operation Data also serves as an effective first community-service project for the new team after members undergo a month of pre-service training. The members meet residents and become more familiar with the community firsthand, which makes their service more meaningful.

Turning Lives Around

The Red Hook Public Safety Corps' commitment to recruiting from the community helps to increase safety and reduce crime in Red Hook by providing a positive opportunity for many residents. The program now attracts 300 to 400 applicants each year for 50 positions.

"You know you're effective when you have one of the popular bad boys or bad girls of the community become friends with one of the AmeriCorps members and start to turn their lives around," Berry said. "A lot of people who have been bad were bad because they saw no hope." ■

Brainstorming for Public Safety

National service programs wanting to strengthen their public safety efforts have an ally for technical assistance. The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), in collaboration with CHP International, is available to assist national service programs with public safety projects. NCPC provides technical assistance, cost-effective training, and resource materials. Some of the public safety issues NCPC can assist with include:

- ✓ Building better community partnerships.
- ✓ Assessing public safety needs and appropriate responses.
- ✓ Preventing youth and gang violence.
- ✓ Helping immigrant and refugee populations understand and work with law enforcement agencies, and with the criminal justice systems.
- ✓ Assessing staff and site safety practices.
- ✓ Developing effective program evaluation strategies and meaningful measures of success.

Technical assistance can be provided in the form of one-on-one consultations or workshops on topics such as community mobilization, conflict management, and youth violence prevention. NCPC staff is available for telephone or e-mail consultations to help national service programs assess specific needs.

NCPC also works to connect national service programs with their peers to exchange effective practices and ideas. Public safety programs are connected through monthly peer-exchange conference calls that are facilitated by skilled trainers for active peer problem-solving. ■

For more information, contact the National Crime Prevention Council at 1-800-355-1200 or visit www.ncpc.org/natservice. You can also e-mail Sarita Coletrane at coletrane@ncpc.org

Additional Resources:

USA Freedom Corps

President Bush created the USA Freedom Corps this year to encourage volunteer service and foster a culture of citizenship and responsibility.

Its website includes access to the new USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network, an online clearinghouse to help volunteers find service opportunities in their hometowns, across the country, or around the world.

www.usafreedomcorps.gov

Citizen Corps

A component of USA Freedom Corps, Citizen Corps encompasses education, training and volunteer opportunities in community safety and emergency management. It is coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the state and local levels.

www.citizencorps.gov

Service-Learning Takes Up the Challenge

by Judy Karasik

Helpful Links:

If you are thinking about ways to commemorate September 11th, the National Association of School Psychologists has some thoughtful and practical suggestions for helping students and adults reflect together.

www.nasponline.org/NEAT/911memorial.html

The Constitutional Rights Foundation has a list of service-learning project ideas that address the issues of public safety and homeland security. www.crf-usa.org/lessons.html

When a classroom is open to the world, what happens outside happens inside, too. After September 11, issues of public safety and emergency management became higher priorities in all of our daily lives. In classrooms around the country, new questions began to arise—how do we process and learn from emergencies whenever they occur?

Guided by the questions and concerns of teachers and students, service-learning projects have responded to these new challenges in constructive ways.

New Challenges

Students in Missouri's Hickman-Mills School District decided before September 11th that the academic year's service-learning project would center around veterans. After the terrorist attacks, their project changed—not just in its subject matter but in its impact on students and the community.

In upstate New York, 11th and 12th grade students in Ulster County serve in local fire departments and emergency squads; their work, too, took on greater purpose after the attacks.

The same was true for sixth graders in Hyannis Middle School on Cape Cod: An oral history project grew into a book documenting and celebrating local heroes.

In Alabama's Butler County, students created a "Let Freedom Ring" banner. In Montgomery County, Maryland, blankets were made and sent to children in Afghanistan.

In Oregon, students raised money, conducted blood drives, and conducted Challenge Days to discuss racial tolerance and cultural diversity.

In southern Texas, students identified pervasive tagging and vandalism—in which some of them had even participated—as a kind of terrorism. They responded by creating Operation PRIDE, a project to restore and beautify their community.

In Kansas City, high school students in the CODE Program continued working for the Peace Jam, a national program that has been in existence for the past three years. In this program, young people get to meet a Nobel Peace Laureate; but first, as "peace apprentices" to the Nobel

winner, students must implement a peace service project in their own schools and communities.

By participating in and reflecting on these projects, young people rediscovered and strengthened the connections among people that are at the heart of a strong and secure nation. Service-learning projects continue to be a prime vehicle for processing current events and translating concerns into action. Let's look at some of these projects in more detail:

Constructive Solutions

As a history project, the Missouri students in Hickman-Mills School District had been visiting their local veterans hospital and inviting veterans to speak in their classrooms. Students also researched and interviewed family members who had served in combat in the Second World War, the Korean War, and the war in Vietnam.

After the September 11 attacks, students listened with new empathy and understanding: each veteran's story endowed America's past decisions to fight with sobering immediacy. What had originally started as an intergenerational history project became a way to talk about war, and the value and price of peace in the world today. Many families talked for the first time, about the war experiences of those among them who had served. Veterans saw their past become

part of the way in which these young people would think about the future.

Homeland security took on a practical face in upstate New York's Kingston City School District. Last fall, a much-needed Junior Firefighter/EMT program was just getting under way, volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians being in short supply in this rural county. Forty students and a handful of parents had signed up and begun the 60 to 120 hours of training when the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center made everyone see the job in an entirely new light. Professionals and learners both responded with tremendous energy and renewed interest in the program. Now, college credit and tuition are being sought for these volunteers.

Everyday Heroes

In Hyannis Middle School on Cape Cod, near Otis Air Force Base, 100 sixth graders watched live televised coverage as the second of two planes hit the World Trade Center. "We all be-

Service-learning projects continue to be a prime vehicle for processing current events and translating concerns into action... "And do you know what? These are projects that anyone can do."

came students,” their teacher, Kathy Duncan, recalled. How could this tragic event be explained?

Within minutes, it seemed, parents arrived at the school, several to bring children home so that they could say goodbye to fathers who had to leave immediately, mobilized to help at the place that became known as Ground Zero.

One sixth grade girl wrote later, “It made me feel better that there were people who started to act right away when it happened. I just felt so helpless.”

The service-learning project that the sixth grade students expected to do was to interview people the group had identified as heroes. The goal was to sharpen language arts skills by learning how to talk with adults, and how to create the questions for formal interviews.

The children talked about who they thought was a hero. Duncan had them reflect over a period of time. The final group they selected, called “The Heroes Among Us,” included fire fighters, police officers, pilots, and healthcare professionals. In early February, the children’s local heroes assembled at a church to be interviewed, each in the uniform of his or her profession, many with the tools of their trade. Firetrucks arrived, as did police cars and EMT vans.

That morning, each student was given a name, a local hero to interview. As part of the introduction, each student had to finish a sentence beginning with the words: “You are my hero because...” Then each student asked each adult to describe two events that had made them what they were today. People who had not been recognized before were accorded respect, honor, and admiration.

One adult said afterwards, “Every day I go to work. Sometimes, it is just a job. But when a kid tells me that I’m a hero, I realize that sometimes I *do* get to do something really special.” Some of the heroes said that they had chosen their profession many years before, when they were just kids—and often because an adult in their chosen profession had taken an interest in them and explained what the work was all about. Toward the end of the event, one boy, dressed in the hat and coat of one of the firefighters, said, “I want to be a pilot or a policeman. I just can’t decide which.”

Planning for the Future

“The Heroes Among Us” is now a book—local publishing companies and businesses printed it at no cost. “And do you know what?” said Kathy Duncan. “These are projects that anyone can do.”

Across America, through service-learning projects, young people have found ways to understand and take action in response to the events of September 11. These projects continue to provide a constructive forum for developing ways to deal with emergencies and make plans for a safer future. ■

Educating Youth and Children About Safety

The AmeriCorps members of the American Red Cross National Readiness and Response Corps (NRRC) spend only 20 percent of the year responding to disasters. The majority of their time is spent delivering community disaster and health education to traditionally underserved communities and school-age children and youth.

Carmel Comendador, American Red Cross NRRC national program coordinator, encourages national service programs to tap into the American Red Cross education resources. Local Red Cross chapters can help provide education materials or may even be able to provide training to local schools and community organizations.

A curriculum developed by the American Red Cross teaches students about safety. The *Masters of Disaster* curriculum helps teachers integrate disaster safety instructions into regular core subjects like language arts, math, science, and social studies. “Each unit of the curriculum can be presented individually and suggests several ways to keep children engaged and informed,” said Comendador.

The *Masters of Disaster* curriculum kit contains lesson plans, activities, and demonstrations. The curriculum is designed to strengthen students’ academic skills while educating them about hazards that cause injury, death, and damage. Topics include hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, lightning, earthquakes, and general disaster preparedness.

Resources are also available to national service programs to help children feel safe. The National Crime Prevention Council, a technical assistance provider to national service programs, offers a booklet called *Helping Children Feel and Be Safe*. The booklet provides information for adults and activities for children. Topics include:

- Talking to children when they are afraid
- Teaching children ways to help out in the community
- Teaching children good safety habits

To order a copy of *Helping Children Feel and Be Safe*, contact the National Crime Prevention Council at 1-800-627-2911. For information about ordering the *Masters of Disaster* curriculum kit, contact the American Red Cross (You can find your local chapter online by going to www.redcross.org). ■

Homeland Security Grants Announced:

The first federal grants invoking citizen volunteers in homeland security efforts were jointly announced by the White House and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

For more information and a list of grant recipients go to:

www.nationalservice.org/news/pr/071802.html

Examples of some of the awards:

- **Alaska**
The Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services will assist homebound seniors and an estimated 4,500 physically or developmentally disabled residents of Anchorage prepare to respond to a disaster.
- **Connecticut**
The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) plans to expand its program to 5,200 certified emergency volunteers.
- **Texas**
The Office of Emergency Management will coordinate 300 volunteers to form the volunteer teams of Disaster Ready Austin, and the Austin Police Department’s Civil Defense volunteer program will be expanded by 200 volunteers. The emergency management office will develop a long-term corps of volunteers who will provide direct emergency management services to the community.

Library Spotlight: Disaster Response

National service programs may check out these and other items from our Library Catalog by contacting Bernadette Perez, Resource Specialist.

Phone:
(800) 860-2684, ext. 260

TDD:
(831) 461-0205

Fax:
(831) 430-9471

Address:
NSRC/ETR Associates
4 Carbonero Way
Scotts Valley CA 95066

To search for library items online, please visit www.etr.org/nsrc/library.html

National Service and Public Safety: Partnerships for Safer Communities

68 pages, M0083

Guide to ways that service programs can help meet local public safety needs and build safer neighborhoods and communities through partnerships with criminal justice agencies, AmeriCorps programs, and community residents.

Safe Homes, Safe Neighborhoods: Stopping Crime Where You Live

Stephanie Mann and M.C. Blakeman
226 pages, R0061

Provides information on improving home security and building neighborhood watch programs, preventing child abductions, eliminating graffiti, combating drug dealing, and learning about domestic violence.

Neighborhood Watch and Community Mobilization

60 pages, M0575

Manual on community crime prevention. Includes the philosophy and strategy of neighborhood watch groups, how to organize a neighborhood watch, and written procedures for the group.

Neighborhood-Oriented Policing in Rural Communities: A Program Planning Guide

117 pages, R1289

Focuses on redirecting the use of policing resources to achieve greater effectiveness in handling public safety problems such as crime, fear of crime, drug abuse, violence, and disorder. Discusses how to develop, implement, and assess a rural neighborhood-oriented community policing program.

Ideas That Work: Crime & Public Safety

National Governors' Association
157 pages, R2042

Collection of best practices in crime prevention and public safety compiled by governors of the nation's states and territories. The profiles are organized according to subject: delinquency and youth violence, prison crowding and corrections reform, sexual abuse and crimes against children, punishment and sentencing reform, drug trafficking and drug abuse prevention, and police assistance and firearms control. Each profile includes a brief description of the program, why it works, and contact information.

Disaster Response: GIS for Public Safety

Gary Arndahl
108 pages, R2043

Describes a dozen case studies in which geographic information systems (GIS) have been used to enhance emergency management and disaster response. Case studies include how GIS was used to map the risk of wildfires in Marin County, California; to create a model of a mudslide in San Bernardino Valley, California; and to develop an emergency preparedness plan in Ouachita, Louisiana.

Human Elements Training for Emergency Services, Public Safety and Disaster Personnel

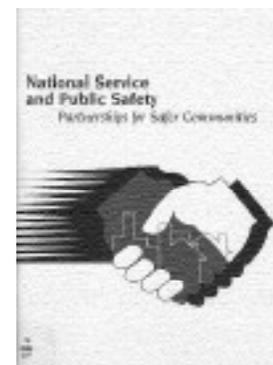
Jeffrey Mitchell and George S. Everly, Jr.
235 pages, R2044

Serves as an instructional guide to teaching debriefing, crisis intervention and stress management programs. Describes key concepts of critical-incident stress management (CISD) and instructional methods for teaching human-elements concepts. Provides course outlines for teaching crisis intervention, general stress management, CISD and command officers' stress management. Also includes a complete, two-day basic CISD course.

United for a Stronger America: Citizens' Preparedness Guide

National Crime Prevention Council
24 pages, R2067

In response to the September 11 attacks, this booklet provides suggestions for preparedness in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, places of worship, and public areas. Contains a list of additional resources.



Best Practices in Emergency Management

Public Safety

Partnering RSVP volunteers with law enforcement agencies

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) volunteers in Orange County, California, are assisting law enforcement agencies by performing many non-risk tasks that would otherwise pull officers away from their focus on citizen safety (See article on page 2).

Providing home security and community safety services to residents of low-income communities

Safe Neighborhoods AmeriCorps Partnership (SNAP) in Bridgeport, Connecticut, presents public safety training and related practices undertaken by AmeriCorps members, resulting in increased community safety and reduced overall costs for the community.

Making a bus stop safe and friendly

Due to the efforts of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Anchorage, Alaska, what had been a dirty, dangerous place that people moved through as quickly as possible is now a clean, safe, and friendly site.

Providing telephone reassurance for senior community members

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program volunteers in Portage County, Wisconsin, call seniors each weekday to check on their well-being. Any concerns are referred to appropriate family members, RSVP staff, or other agencies.

Crime Prevention

Fostering police and community relationships

AmeriCorps members build partnerships between police and the community to control and prevent crimes, offer assistance to victims, and enhance the quality of life within the community. Community Assisting Police (CAP) is a collaborative effort between AmeriCorps and the Montgomery County (Maryland) Department of Police.

Sponsoring a youth baseball league to prevent crime

The Red Hook Public Safety Corps in Brooklyn, New York, runs a youth baseball league at no cost to residents. By providing a safe, positive activity, the program provides an alternative outlet for young people and is part of a larger crime prevention effort for the neighborhood (See article on page 4).



Reducing youth recidivism

In Philadelphia, trained community volunteers form Youth Aid Panels to hear the cases of many first-time juvenile offenders, instead of judges.

Providing summer youth activities

The New Horizon Community Development Corporation in Dallas County, Arkansas, responded to the lack of youth activities in their community by providing an out-of-school program during summer break.

Disaster Response

Creating a Community Inter-agency Disaster Organization (CIDO)

A CIDO is a local organization composed of public, private, and not-for-profit agency representatives that is created to enhance a community's ability to mitigate, prepare, respond to, and recover from disasters. The AmeriCorps-St. Louis Partners Emergency Response Team is a member of the CIDO developed by the Missouri Disaster Recovery Partnership (See article on page 7).

Using the Tribal Civilian Community Corps to assist in disaster response

In June 2001, Houston, Texas experienced severe flooding as a result of Tropical Storm Allison. To aid in cleanup projects there, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offered emergency assistance to those in need with help from two AmeriCorps programs: National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and the Tribal Civilian Community Corps (TCCC).

Preparing seniors with disaster mitigation

The Green River Area Development District in western Kentucky created the Disaster Relief Corps to address the disaster response needs of local seniors.

Find More Best Practices

www.nationalservice.org/resources/epicenter

To search the EpiCenter best practices database, click on "find a practice," and then either enter words in the search box and click "find now", or choose from a list of popular pre-searched topics.

Contact EpiCenter at (800) 860-2684 x100 or epicenter@etr.org.

National Service Resource Center



ETR Associates
4 Carbonero Way
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

Phone: (800) 860-2684
TDD: (831) 461-0205
Fax: (831) 430-9471
E-mail: nsrc@etr.org
Website: www.etr.org/nsrc

NSRC Staff:

Susan Hillyard, ext. 105
Program Manager

Laura Norvig, ext. 116
Library and reference questions.

Denise Lee, ext. 100
Questions about the EpiCenter database

Forest Monsen, ext. 197
Listserv support

Bernadette Perez, ext. 260
Information on borrowing library materials

Tara Fuller, ext. 142
Materials distribution and information on ordering free publications

Corporation for National and Community Service
1201 New York Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20525
Phone: (202) 606-5000
TDD: (202) 565-2799
www.nationalservice.org

Corporation for National and Community Service Adviser:
David Miller, Training Officer

Upon request, this material will be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities.

Coordinating Management

(Continued from page 1)

Directors of community programs recommend becoming involved with the local VOAD group. VOADs are a collaboration of community-based, faith-based, and nonprofit organizations that are ready and willing to respond to emergencies. There are also city, county, and state emergency-management agencies that may have a voluntary liaison who works with organizations in emergency response.

"There are ways for programs to dialogue with and plan with voluntary organizations that have as their primary focus responding to emergencies," said Bruce Bailey, director of the AmeriCorps St. Louis Partners' Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Developing Partnerships

When forming new partnerships with emergency management organizations, be aware that different organizations operate differently. "They have been doing disaster response and preparedness for a long time. Our programs can learn from them," Molineaux said.

And don't forget the other national service programs in your area. Statewide coordination is already happening in places like California, Florida, and Missouri, which tend to be more prone to natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes.

In California, GO SERV asks each of its AmeriCorps programs to submit a plan for how it will assist in the event of a disaster. Part of the plan can include contacting the local emergency-management agencies such as the fire and police departments to let them know the AmeriCorps program can make its resources available, said Eddie Aguero, GO SERV ADA and special projects director.

National service programs interested in helping out in a disaster or other emergency should contact their state commission, Chun said. The state commissions should be able to provide guidance and technical assistance as well as contact information for the various emergency management agencies. The state commissions will also want to know what its programs are doing to help in the affected areas during times of disaster.

In Missouri, the AmeriCorps programs funded through the state commission are required to include CPR training as a member development objective. The program directors also receive an introduction to the AmeriCorps St. Louis Partners' ERT, which deploys its members to assist in disaster-struck areas.

Missouri AmeriCorps programs are encouraged to allow members to participate on the ERT when possible. AmeriCorps members interested in responding to disasters with the ERT are provided specialized training in areas such as mass care,

shelter operations, and emergency logistics, Bailey said. Those members can then be called upon in emergencies to supplement the Emergency Response Team in Missouri and nearby states.

States not normally hit by natural disasters still need to be prepared. The terrorist attacks on September 11 were a harsh reminder that disaster can happen anywhere, anytime, and the threat is no longer just Mother Nature. "Disasters can impact us all, and they're not going away," Molineaux said. "It behooves us all to be prepared for the worst."

Local and National Networks

For AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), effective coordination is crucial when responding to disasters. AmeriCorps*NCCC members have responded to more than 50 disasters since the program started in 1994. Members, who are stationed at five residential campuses across the nation, are typically sent on response calls for three weeks.

Although AmeriCorps*NCCC often finds itself working with local agencies for the first time, it has built relationships nationally with the American Red Cross and FEMA, so being called upon by national organizations is now common.

"In the first year, we made ourselves known as a resource," said Wayne Verry, AmeriCorps*NCCC assistant national projects coordinator. "The American Red Cross was very responsive, and so we responded to a number of disasters early on."

A benefit AmeriCorps*NCCC can offer disaster-struck areas is an already formed team trained in how to respond. A team leader provides supervision and is trained to coordinate with the American Red Cross or other emergency management organizations. "It helps with their ability to serve right when we hit the ground," Verry said.

A Role for National Service

The team structure and readiness of AmeriCorps members is not unique to AmeriCorps*NCCC. It's a benefit national service programs nationwide can offer their local communities in responding to emergencies.

As programs build their capacity to respond to emergencies, organizations such as AmeriCorps*NCCC, St. Louis Partners and GO SERV have created a history of successful emergency management and national service relationships to build upon. ■