CERT Programs Reach More Communities in Niagara and Erie Counties

CERT Training consists of 7 three hour classes with topics including: Disaster Preparedness, Fire Safety, Emergency Medical Operations I & II, Light Search and Rescue, Disaster Psychology, Terrorism, and CERT Organization. CERT Training concludes with an eighth session which is a simulated disaster training exercise.

During Year Two of our grant community response and involvement in CERT has grown significantly. Our goal is to provide CERT training to at least 150 community members. Following NYSEMO’s 3 day CERT Train-the-Trainer course in Niagara Falls last month, communities across the two counties have approached the Border Community SERVICE program for advice and financial assistance with CERT trainings.

To date trainings have been scheduled at:

**Upper Mountain Fire Co., Lewiston**
This training is for all community members, especially those living in Niagara County. Classes are scheduled from 9 AM to noon on Saturday mornings starting February 25, 2006 through April 1, and run every Saturday through April 29, with the exception of April 15 and April 22 in observance of the Easter holiday.

**Niagara University Community**
This session, open to students, staff, and faculty of Niagara University, will meet on Wednesdays in March (3/1, 8, 22 & 29) and April (4/5, 19 & 26) from 7:15 - 10:00 PM in Dunleavy 227. The final disaster training exercise is scheduled on Saturday, April 29 at Upper Mountain Fire Co. Trainings are not scheduled on March 15 or April 12 due to University breaks and holidays.

Planning for additional trainings in Niagara and Erie County communities has begun. As training schedules are finalized we will send it to you. That information will be sent out as it becomes finalized and is available.

As a reminder, this additional training can be counted toward volunteer hours. If you or anyone you know is interested in CERT Training, please call our office at 205-0070.

**Grand Island Fire Hall, Grand Island**
This session will run on 7 Thursday nights (7 PM - 9:30 PM) from February 16 through March 30, 2006 at the Grand Island Fire Hall on Baseline Road. The last session, a disaster simulation training exercise, is scheduled on Saturday, April 1, 2006 from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Erie County Fire Academy.
Volunteer Opportunities

BCS is an organization of trained volunteers who agreed to provide an average of 4 hours per month of community service when they received “Community First Aid & Safety” and “Together We Prepare” training. Many opportunities exist to volunteer time in your community to fulfill your commitment. They include:

Community Emergency Preparedness Training with First Aid Kit Distributions
BCS receives numerous requests for community presentations at local schools, senior centers, churches, and agencies. Help with distributing disaster preparedness information and first aid kits is needed. Volunteers are also needed on an ongoing basis to conduct follow-up surveys by phone with the families/households who have received this training.

Healthy Neighborhoods
Healthy Neighborhoods is looking for volunteers to help them during the week from 10 AM to 4 PM on an ongoing basis. Volunteers will accompany staff members who visit homes to promote healthy choices. Our volunteers will share emergency preparedness information, distribute first aid kits and assist with survey completion. For more information, please contact Gail Root of Healthy Neighborhoods at (716) 278-8292.

Local Red Cross Chapter
BCS provides training in partnership with 3 chapters of the American Red Cross: Niagara Falls, Greater Buffalo, and Eastern Niagara County Chapter in Lockport. Your local Red Cross Chapter needs volunteers to assist with blood drives, provide office support, train to be members of the local Disaster Assistance Program and support their work in many other ways. Please contact your local chapter if interested. If you are unsure of which Chapter is yours, please contact us.

Clean Sweep Niagara
Please save Saturday, April 22, 2006 for the annual Clean Sweep Niagara event. Volunteers are needed to help clean up various areas and neighborhoods in Niagara Falls. More information will follow as plans are finalized.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these opportunities, please contact Nola at (716) 205-0070 unless otherwise noted. Also, if you know of any volunteer activities that would be appropriate for BCS volunteers, please contact the office with that information.

Please maintain a personal log of all volunteer hours completed, be it additional training sessions or activities in the community. Our office will send a reminder to report any hours accrued. Border Community SERVICE is required to report volunteer hours to our funding agency. Your cooperation with the collection of those hours is greatly appreciated.

Upcoming Disaster Action Team Training offered by the American Red Cross of Niagara Falls (ARC-NF)

Every year the President of the United States proclaims March to be "Red Cross Month" which gives the American Red Cross a special opportunity to promote its services and celebrate its successes throughout the USA.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt began the March tradition in 1943 as a way for the public to learn more about the organization and support it through donations of money and time through volunteerism.

In honor of “Red Cross Month,” the Niagara Falls Chapter has scheduled several trainings. Please see Page 3 for Basic Level “Community First Aid & Safety” and “Together We Prepare” train-the-trainer classes scheduled at ARC-NF offices on Sawyer Road adjacent to Summit Mall.

ARC-NF has also scheduled training to prepare volunteers for its Disaster Action Team (DAT). DAT training is scheduled from 9 AM to 5 PM on Saturday, March 4, 2006 and Saturday March 11, 2006 and both sessions should be attended. DAT training topics include Mass Care, Shelter Operations, and Family Services. These classes provide the full training need to for DAT participation.

Volunteers interested in this training should contact the BCS office and the Niagara Falls ARC at (716) 731-4030. Training sessions may be included as volunteer service hours.
Upcoming Volunteer Training Dates – Please Share the Dates!

The American Red Cross—Niagara Falls Chapter has scheduled additional basic level volunteer training. Volunteers who are still missing training components are invited to attend the missing components and complete your training. As pre-registration is required, please call 205-0070. Seats will be reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis; walk-ins cannot be accommodated.

All of these classes are open to new volunteers. If you have a friend who is interested in joining our volunteer program, please have him or her call the office or enroll online at our website: www.niagara.edu/bordercommunityservice.

**Skills Enhancement Trainings**

Border Community SERVICE has several Skills Enhancement Trainings scheduled in February and March.

**CERT members** are invited to a training by the Niagara County Sheriff’s Department on **Tuesday, February 21**. CERT trained volunteers will meet at the Niagara County Jail in Lockport at 7 PM. After visiting the NCSD dispatch center, they will receive training in Search Techniques and the use of dogs during search efforts. The group is limited to 30 participants and pre-registration is required.

An **Incident Command System (ICS-100) training** will be offered to all volunteers, including CERT, on **Saturday, February 25** (9 AM to noon) in the computer lab of St. Vincent’s Hall, Room 105. Due to space limitations, pre-registration is required. We expect to have a presenter from NYSEMO who will explain this vital command system.

**ATTENTION FLU POD PARTICIPANTS!**

An olive-green ski cap was left behind at the Niagara County Department of Health Influenza POD Drill that took place at Niagara University in December. It has no markings. If it belongs to anyone, please contact our office and arrangements will be made to return it to you.

**A Defensive Tactics Training** has been scheduled on **Thursday, March 16**. Originally planned for December, but postponed due to weather conditions, the class will be held in the front gym of the Kiernan Center. Enrollment is limited to 40 participants with priority given to those who were enrolled previously. Enrollments will be accepted beginning March 1.

Please watch your email for additional information.

**ATTENTION CERT MEMBERS!**

Please check the following link [http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is317.asp](http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is317.asp).

"Introduction to Community Emergency Response Teams" (IS - 317) is an independent study course that serves as an introduction to CERT for those wanting to complete training or as a refresher for current team members. It has six modules with topics that include: an Introduction to CERT, Fire Safety, Hazardous Material and Terrorist Incidents, Disaster Medical Operations, and Search and Rescue. Those successfully finishing it will receive a certification of completion from the Independent Study Office.
Volunteer Profile

Norma Higgs is this month’s featured volunteer, one of Niagara Falls most dedicated volunteer. Norma is extremely active in her local community where she serves as Treasurer of the Niagara Falls Block Club Council and as a vital member of the Citizen Corps Council, the Niagara Beautification Committee, and the Blockbusters Block Club.

Norma is pictured here (back row, far right) at a Citizen Corps Council Meeting with (seated left to right) Niagara Falls Block Club Council President Roger Spurback and RSVP Executive Director Priscilla Dolling along with (standing left to right,) United Way’s Phil Buffone, Dr. Melvin Dyster, Commander of the Niagara Medical Reserve Corps, and David Taylor PhD, BCS Project Director.

What would you like to share with us about your family?
My son, Doug and his wife, Jill, live in Bowie, Maryland with my grandsons Evan (12) and Gabriel (9).

Why did you join BCS?
I am interested in community service and this was a way to learn new ways to help citizens in neighborhoods. The programs they offered connected with disaster preparedness and homeland security sounded like a new service to offer my block club and others.

Ways I’ve been involved in the program:
I completed the basic First Aid and CPR course, participated in the Bi-National Disaster Preparedness Conference that was held last August at NU and was a “victim” during the disaster simulation held in conjunction with that conference. I have also attended several of their volunteer training evening lectures.

They have reciprocated by working with me on the Niagara Beautification Commission Clean Sweep effort, by attending various events I have scheduled at block clubs to offer their presentation on preparing for an emergency by assembling a disaster kit including first aid kits, and by joining the Citizen Corps Council which I helped to organize.

What has been your favorite part of the program so far?
Working with the staff on all of their projects. As far as an individual project – I guess it would have to be the disaster simulation. I learned so much about first responders and disaster training.

How have you prepared your family for an emergency?
I have started an emergency disaster kit for my home and have discussed the family notification plan with my out of town family.

What would you save from your house in an emergency such as a fire or a flood?
I recently encountered a burst water pipe in my home which has caused me to leave temporarily. Fortunately I was not there when this event occurred but I guess the first thought is to escape yourself and protect your family and pets and not think about possessions. I am now living with only a few of my things (everything has been packed and stored) and find I can manage although it is not the same. Family mementoes are difficult to replace when they are destroyed and personal papers need to be protected as well.

Words of Wisdom/Favorite Quote:
Creating a safe and clean neighborhood and encouraging others to do the same is on the top of my list. John F. Kennedy’s quote, “Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country” is probably my favorite quote. Age and time limit me to just my neighborhood and city. Unfortunately, I cannot save the world.