CERT class starts February 12
Join the ranks!

CERT training is a FREE Citizen Preparedness course that includes academic and hands-on instruction. It is designed to prepare you to help yourself, your family, and your neighbors in the event of a catastrophic disaster. Because emergency personnel may not be able to help everyone immediately, you can make a difference by using CERT Training to save lives and protect property.

The course will begin on Wednesday, February 12th and run seven (7) additional consecutive Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. The course will culminate in a disaster simulation on April 2nd. Each class will be held at the Buffalo Fire Department Training Center located at 20 Elmwood Avenue (corner of Virginia Avenue) in the City of Buffalo.

Topics covered include:
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Disasters and Disaster Workers, Community Preparedness
- **Fire Safety:** Fire Chemistry, Hazards, Safety and Suppression
- **Emergency Medical Operations I & II:** Triage and Treating Life Threatening Injuries, Public Health
- **Light Search and Rescue:** Search and Rescue Size-up and Operations
- **CERT Team Organization & ICS 100:** Incident Command System
- **Disaster Psychology:** Impact of Disaster on Rescuers and Victims and its Mitigation
- **Terrorism and CERT:** Terrorism and its Goals – CERT Protocols for Terrorism Incidents
- **Course Review and Simulated Disaster Exercise**

Participants must be at least 16 years of age, attend all 8 sessions. Best of all, CERT training is fun and FREE!

For more information or to enroll please contact:
Dana Estrada, Director, Border Community SERVICE of Niagara University
at (716) 205-0075 or e-mail: dle@niagara.edu

You can also register online at: [http://www.niagara.edu/bcs-enrollment/](http://www.niagara.edu/bcs-enrollment/)
It seems that even all our preparedness knowledge couldn’t get us to New Orleans during a winter storm. Needless to say, Valerie and I weren’t able to attend the International Disaster Conference this year but we’ve had plenty of presentations and educational opportunities to keep us busy in January.

A highlight of January was attending the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service at Buffalo City Hall on January 15th. Marked by speeches, performances and informational tables, Border Community SERVICE was able to reach out to approximately 150 visitors and employees of City Hall. The event was wonderful! Many people appreciated the information on getting prepared and the small first aid kit they were given to commemorate the legacy of MLK.

As you all know, Judy Levan of the National Weather Services’ Buffalo office was gracious enough to give a tour of their office located at 587 Aero Drive in Cheektowaga in January. Judy gave us an in-depth look at the role of the office, the information they provide to the public and an introduction on how forecasts are created. The group then moved into the actual forecasting room and was able to observe NWS employees working – no doubt this year - on another snow forecast. Interest in the tour was overwhelming and Judy again offered to let another small group in – the wait list from our first date - for a tour at the end of February. We are very grateful.

As you’ve all read, we are beginning another CERT class on February 12th in the City of Buffalo. We still have room available so if you know of someone that would like to take the class, please encourage them to sign up. We’d love to have a packed class of preparedness minded folks!

Do you wish you had more information at your fingertips during the recent extreme weather conditions? Then sign up today for NY-Alert. New York State is committed to provide New Yorkers with information so that they will understand the risks and threats that they may face and know how to respond accordingly. Each of us has the responsibility to be as prepared as possible for any emergency that may arise. One of the keys to preparedness is having up-to-date information. The information posted here will include severe weather warnings, significant highway closures, hazardous materials spills, and many other emergency conditions. Additionally you will find information regarding response actions being taken by local and state agencies and protective actions that you should take to protect you, your family and your property. By signing up for NY-Alert, you can receive warnings and emergency information via the web, your cell phone, email and other technologies. Signing up for NY Alert is free. Your information is protected and never shared. You can modify what type of information you receive or unsubscribe at any time. It is a tool to provide you with critical information when you may need it most.

You can find more information or sign up for NY-Alert now by going to https://users.nyalert.gov

Please help us to better serve you -
If you register to attend a Skills Enhancement offered by BCS, or a program offered by another organization whose information was distributed by our office, and you cannot attend, please notify the contact person that you cannot attend. Sometimes very popular programs are offered with a limited number of participants that can attend, and your vacant space could easily be filled by another interested member. Of course, the sooner you can notify us that you cannot attend, the quicker we can find another person to take your place.

Thank you for your help and thoughtfulness ☺
Western New York survived the Blizzard of 2014! Freezing temperatures, blowing snow and high winds had the perfect conditions for the weather system on January 7th to be considered a blizzard. This winter sure has been tough with the extreme cold and snow. I hope everyone has their emergency kit ready at home and in their cars. See below on how to send a preparedness e-card to friends and relatives that includes helpful tips on being safe during the winter season.

In January, I presented to the Early Childhood class at BOCES in Sanborn. The class of 14 students learned the importance of preparing for weather emergencies for themselves and how as a future teacher they need to encourage their families to also be prepared. This presentation took place after the blizzard, so the students were more aware on what type of things they should have on hand.

Unfortunately, due to the weather, we had to cancel the fourth annual Emergency Preparedness Workshop for WNY Scouts that was taking place at Niagara University on January 25th. We have rescheduled the workshop to place on Saturday, March 1st and have sent out notifications to those who have previously registered.

Please let me know if you have a group or organization that would be interested in having a presentation on emergency preparedness. I’d be happy to come out and present “Preparing Makes Sense” to them. I can be contacted at 205-0076 or vhaseley@niagara.edu.

Send a Preparedness e-Card

Looking for a fun way to get the preparedness message to family, friends or coworkers this winter? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have created winter themed e-Cards (http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/ecards.asp). To send one of the four CDC e-Cards, simply choose the card you wish to share, enter your friend’s email address, preview the card and send it. Additionally, you can personalize your message in 150 characters or less. Best of all, the e-Cards address some winter preparedness questions:

- What to have on your winter weather checklist?
- How to weatherize your home?
- How to prepare your vehicle for winter?

CDC has also made it easy to send greetings-on-the-go (https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/cdc-eCards/id439259250?mt=8) with its e-Card mobile application (http://www.cdc.gov/mobile/iPhoneApps/promos/mobile_applications.html). Use this exciting technology to share the preparedness message today!
Be Prepared - Winter keeps us all guessing!

We all have heard it; we all know it - be prepared at all times. The new year’s arrival brought terrible driving conditions that forced the closing of the thruway and major roadways; airlines that had days of cancelled flights; schools that closed their doors due to frigid temperatures. What can we do to be as prepared as possible?

Traveling by plane:

Sign up for flight alerts! The earlier you know there’s a problem, the more time you have to find other alternatives. If you are already at the airport, get in line at the gate desk but while waiting your turn, dial the airline customer service number at the same time. Whomever you talk to first - deal with them.

Be flexible! Perhaps you can be re-routed to a neighboring city and can arrange for land transportation from there to your destination. Or fly to/thru a different airport (example: instead of going through Chicago, take the flight to Arizona and then onward to your destination from there). Pay attention to the weather and if you can fly a day or two earlier or later, it might be worth changing your ticket to avoid the storm and delays.

Make sure you do have a carry-on that contains the personal items you’ll need to be comfortable throughout the delay. Do not count on having access to your checked bag during a delay or after a cancellation, but most airlines, will give you an amenity kit if you’ll be at the airport overnight. Just go to the airline’s baggage service office (typically on the perimeter of the baggage claim area), tell them you are delayed overnight, and ask politely if they have a kit. The amenity kit is a little nylon bag of goodies normally given to business or first class passengers on intercontinental routes and may contain some or all of the following: a tiny toothpaste tube, toothbrush, lip balm, sleep mask, mints, foam earplugs, maybe a little tube of skin lotion.

For your rebooked flight, if you can print out your new boarding pass or carry it on your phone, do that to avoid massive lines at the airport of people trying to print them out then.

Keep your sense of humor and perspective. You will need both. With very few exceptions, a delayed trip is not ultimately a really big deal, even if it seems to be of huge importance in the moment. It's not your fault, and no one will hold it against you. For your sanity's sake, try to take the inconvenience in stride.

And last but by no means least, be nice to all the reservationists, gate agents, and flight attendants. They have the ability to help you, and they are only human. If you are nice to them, they will go out of their way to help you. In any event, the problem is not their fault, and it's terribly inappropriate to take out your frustration on them.

Traveling by Car:

For most people, snowstorms and blizzards are best experienced indoors. But when you find yourself trapped in a highway-transformed-parking lot in two feet of snow, it can become a nightmare. Don't get stranded in the first place! If you don't have an important reason for driving in the snow - stay home and wait for the roads to be cleared. Avoid traveling during a snowstorm or blizzard for anything but medical emergencies, or you run the risk of getting stranded. Know if you are considered “essential” personnel to your boss and/or company.
Ensure that your vehicle is readily equipped with the following essentials before heading out when snow is in the forecast:

- Blankets and pillow
- Warm clothing, to be used if you need to change, or to layer
- Non-perishable food (e.g. nuts, canned tuna, crackers, dry cereal, fruit cups) and water if possible
- A flashlight and extra batteries
- Matches
- Prescription medications
- A fully-charged phone
- Snow shovel & ice scraper
- Jumper cables
- Full tank of gas

Add anything else vital that you may find useful if trapped in your car.

**Prepare to settle in.** Utilize your supplies and make sure to inform your family of where you are. If there are several people in the car, ration the food and water. Only ration the water down to a bare minimum of 1 liter of water per day per person. Get all the crumbs from between the seats, as well as any whole food you have - those crumbs may help you survive. The rule goes: you can last 3 weeks with little to no food, but you can only last 3 days without water, and only 3 hours without adequate warmth.

If you are going to need to drink snow, try to heat, boil or strain it first to remove any harmful organisms or other things. Do NOT eat snow unless you absolutely have to -- try to melt it if you can. Leave the snow to warm up in the car before drinking it.

- For 10 minutes every hour, turn on your car and run the heater.
- If possible, make sure that the exhaust is clear of snow to protect from carbon monoxide.
  Also, leave the windows cracked slightly to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Move your arms, legs, hands, and feet to maintain good circulation. Always check for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Make yourself visible to rescuers by tying a bright cloth to your antenna or door handle.

**Abandon your car as a last resort.** This is your only means of shelter unless a hotel or public building is nearby, or if you aren't properly clothed to walk somewhere for shelter. If you happen to have a pet with you in your vehicle, it is even more crucial that you stay inside it. Cover the pet with a blanket and keep an eye on their well-being. If you travel with pets frequently, be sure to always have any pet supplies your dog, cat, etc. may need to keep warm and healthy.

**Staying in-place/home:**

The best way to stay safe during a blizzard is to stay put in your cozy home. There’s a good chance of power outages during blizzards due to the strong winds and heavy snow. So you’ll want to be prepared for that situation while at home.

- Make sure you have working flashlights, and that you can access them easily.
- Your fireplace is a great source of heat, should the power outage last a long time.
- Try to consolidate everyone to a room or few rooms to help stay warm.
- Put a towel under the door to prevent heat from escaping the room.
- Have non-perishable foods on hand.
- If possible, have a generator, gas to fuel it, and know how to use it.
Other helpful tips:

- Listen to your NOAA Weather Radio or check The Weather Channel and weather.com frequently for weather updates and emergency information.
- Use extreme caution with electric space heaters. Keep them at least a few feet away from anything flammable, such as drapes, bed sheets or blankets. Never place them on top of furniture or near water, and never let children play unattended around them.
- Keep a fire extinguisher close by the area in which you plan to use a space or kerosene heater.
- Use your fireplace, wood stove or other similar heater only if it is properly ventilated and does not leak gas into your home's indoor air space.
- Conserve heat and fuel, if necessary, by temporarily closing off heat to unused rooms.
- Eat regularly and drink plenty of water, but avoid caffeinated and alcoholic beverages. Instead, drink warm, sweet beverages, or try soups or broths.
- If you use an electric generator, make sure you keep it outdoors - never bring a generator indoors - and connect appliances to it using only heavy-duty, outdoor-ready cords.
- If you experience a power failure, use battery-powered flashlights and lanterns instead of candles whenever possible. If you do use candles, never leave them unattended when lit.
- Wear warm clothing in multiple layers as needed.
- Monitor body temperature, both your own and your family members'. Because infants younger than a year old lose body heat more easily than adults, make sure they wear warm clothing and try to keep your home warm inside if you have an infant at home. If you cannot maintain a warm temperature inside your home, try to make alternative arrangements.
- For adults age 65 and over, maintaining body heat during severe cold can be a concern, thanks to their lower metabolism. Check the temperature in your home often during a winter storm, and check in frequently with older friends and neighbors to ensure they stay warm.
- Drip all faucets in your home continuously during severe cold, including kitchen and bathroom sinks as well as shower and tub faucets, to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting.
- Open cabinet doors around pipes (especially in bathrooms) to allow warmer air to circulate around water pipes.
- If your pipes have already frozen, don't try to thaw them out with a torch or other flame. Instead, use a hair dryer to slowly thaw them out.
- Use bottled water if instructed by your local emergency management authorities.

**Safety Tips for Outdoors:**

When a winter storm or extreme cold threatens, you should avoid going outdoors unless absolutely necessary. In the event that you must, however, always dress warmly and return indoor as soon as possible.

- Wear multiple layers of clothing to stay warm, as well as a hat, scarf, mittens, a water-resistant jacket and boots.
- Make sure you stay as dry as possible, as water against the skin from wet clothing can chill the body quickly.
- Don't ignore shivering. If you shiver persistently while you're outdoors, it's a sign that you need to return inside.
- Avoid over-exerting yourself while shoveling snow or performing any other hard work or heavy lifting. Extreme cold puts extra strain on your heart and cardiovascular system, so heed your doctor's advice if you have experienced any signs of heart disease or high blood pressure in the past. If don't have to do outdoor chores in the cold, wait until the storm passes and the outside temperature warms up.