

## Attention Greater Niagara Falls CERT Members: Mandatory Meetings Scheduled!

Some very exciting things are on the horizon. CERT has been recognized by the entire Buffalo-Erie-Niagara region as an important component in not only emergency preparedness planning; but also in its role in creating a more disaster resistant community.

The Buffalo-Erie-Niagara region is one of a select few areas in the state that receive grant monies under the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). Niagara County has committed UASI funds to address some of the concerns of not only our CERT program, but all of the CERT programs in the County. In order to maximize both our efficiency as a team and to take advantage of the talents that exist in all of our communities, the decision has been made to look at CERT as a regional organization while still allowing community teams to maintain their individual identities.

Concerns such as training, record keeping, and program management may best be delivered and managed in a regional structure. This will allow a standardized business practice, training curriculum, and policies/procedures to be developed and administered in a central format while cities, towns and villages retain access to those in communities who are CERT participants.

To more clearly communicate these enhancements to the CERT program, mandatory meetings will be held. Two sessions will be held for the Greater Niagara Falls CERT membership. **Your attendance at one of the two meetings is required to**

**continue your membership in Greater Niagara Falls CERT.**

We understand that your situation in life may have changed since you completed your initial training and that you may no longer have the time to commit to CERT. If that is the case, we appreciate your participation in the program and hope that the knowledge, skills, and abilities that you acquired during your training has better prepared you as an individual and neighbor. However, if you would like to serve with Greater Niagara Falls CERT as a potential "deployable asset" during emergencies or disasters, it is very important that you plan to attend a mandatory training meeting.

Two sessions will be held for the Greater Niagara Falls CERT membership in the auditorium of the Niagara Falls Public Library located at 1425 Main Street in Niagara Falls, NY. Please plan to attend either:

**Saturday, November 15  
10:30 AM - Noon  
or  
Monday, November 17  
7:00-8:30 PM**

Please direct your questions and comments to Michael Torrie, Niagara County Project Coordinator, at 716 286-8023 or via email at [mtorrie@niagara.edu](mailto:mtorrie@niagara.edu). Thank you and we hope to see everyone there!

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## Niagara County

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On September 29th, 40 community members began the CERT course offered by Border Community SERVICE in collaboration with several partners, including the Kenfield/Langfield tenant commission of BMHA and the Buffalo Fire Department. Community Members from all areas of Buffalo come each Monday evening to take instruction from experts in fields that include Fire Safety, Disaster Medical Operations and Terrorism. It's been a wonderfully enthusiastic class with tremendous discussion by the participants. The group is looking forward to putting their skills to use at the class training exercise scheduled for November 22nd at the Martha Mitchell Community Center. We're still looking for assistance for the simulation so if you'd like to put your acting skills to the test and be moulaged up for the exercise, please give me a call. Special thanks to Patti Aine Guzinski for serving as our Instructor Coordinator for the course and generously donated her time and talent to make this class a success.

Our CERT skills enhancement training for November will be the **American Red Cross Local Disaster Response** class for those that took "Fulfilling Our Mission", "Mass Care" and "Shelter Operations" in September. The class will be held on **November 19th from 2pm until 5pm**. If you are unable to make this course, the Red Cross will be hosting an evening Local Disaster Response course in December. Please call me for more details!

Presentations continue as I crisscross all over the Buffalo! Thank you to Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Northwest Community Center, Adamski Village Block Club, Bradley/Dart Block Club, the Salvation Army on Main Street, East Lovejoy Coalition of Neighbors, the Boys & Girls Club, Brinkman/Bailey Block Club, Trinity Towers, East Ferry and Grider Homes, Erskine Block Club, the Alsace Block Club and the children of the Martha Mitchell Community Center After-School Program for hosting these important presentations for your communities. As you know, a neighborhood that is well prepared and working together makes for a stronger community. Interested block clubs, community agencies/centers, religious organizations, schools, and businesses in the City of Buffalo, can contact me at 716 851-4299 or via email at [destrada@bpdny.org](mailto:destrada@bpdny.org) to schedule this free emergency preparedness training.

It was just a few months ago I was wishing everyone a happy 4th of July. Now we are well into the Fall season and winter is fast approaching. The leaves have turned colors and begun to fall to the ground. Please remember to use extra care around large leaf piles because we were all kids once and know how kids love to play in the leaf pile!

The clocks changed November 2nd so remember to change batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Do not forget to place at least one alarm on every level of your home. If you have not checked and rotated supplies in your emergency kit, now is the time.

By November 22nd we will have 45 more people who have completed CERT training in Niagara County. Border Community SERVICE congratulates all of our new volunteers for their successful completion of the training. We are working very hard to bring several more trainings to Niagara County in the upcoming months. If you are interested in this valuable training or know someone who would like to enroll, don't hesitate to call the office for more information.

Thank you to those who attended the Skills Enhancement Training at the U.S. Coast Guard Station Niagara. Chief O'Connell and his crew gave a professional and very informative session for those in attendance. Please remember that the **American Red Cross Disaster Action Team** training is taking place **November 8, 2008** at Niagara University. The training is from **9:00am to 4:00pm** with check in starting at 8:30am. Call me at 286-8023 or email [mtorrie@niagara.edu](mailto:mtorrie@niagara.edu) to reserve your spot for the training. The training will consist of an introduction to the Red Cross, Shelter Management, and Mass Care. For volunteers who want to assist during a disaster situation this training is extremely important.

Community preparedness presentations continue. If you know an organization that has not already had BCS come to speak and is interested, please call me with contact information or have the agency contact me.

I wish everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving Holiday. Please do not forget to change batteries in those alarms.

## Community Announcements

# Ken-Ton Community Preparedness EXPO

On Tuesday, November 11, there will be workshops, information tables, prizes, hands-on activities, and refreshments at Hoover Middle School as local agencies come together for the Ken-Ton Community Preparedness Expo. Participating organizations include the Town of Tonawanda Police and Paramedics, Christian Medical and Dental Association, Mercy Flight, RAWNY - Amateur Radio Operators, Erie County Dept. of Health, Ken-Ton Churches Outreach Programs, Independent Living, the Salvation Army, the SPCA, Sheridan Surgical, SEMO, Angel Flight, People Inc., Meals on Wheels, Central Referral 211, and many more!

**Everyone is invited!** This **free** event is a must attend for information that will keep families, individuals with special needs and neighbors both safe and prepared in case of a disaster or medical emergency. For more information, call 834-4153.

## Skills Enhancement Trainings!

**All BCS volunteers are welcome at all trainings. Please RSVP as indicated.**

### City of Buffalo

**November 19, 2008** - The American Red Cross Local Disaster Response class is scheduled *for those that took "Fulfilling Our Mission", "Mass Care" and "Shelter Operations"* in September. The class will be held from **2pm until 5pm**.

Contact **Dana Estrada** at **851-4299**  
or [destrada@bpdny.org](mailto:destrada@bpdny.org) to register.

### Niagara County

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Please contact **Michael Torrie** at **286-8023**  
or [mtorrie@niagara.edu](mailto:mtorrie@niagara.edu) to register.

A Red Cross Disaster Action Team (DAT) is a group of trained Red Cross volunteer responders sent to the scene of a disaster to provide immediate relief in the way of emotional and/or financial assistance to those directly impacted by the disaster. Members provide clients with basic human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and emergency mental health counseling or health services such as first aid. In some cases the team may open a temporary shelter or do follow-up with clients not immediately available at the scene.

DAT teams are an integral part of any Red Cross chapter's disaster preparedness and response capability. Very often they are among the first people on the scene of a local emergency. The DAT is on-call 24-hours a day, seven days a week, although individual members take turns being available to answer the call for help. Normally 2 to 4 members respond to a call. Each volunteer performs a key function on the scene, such as Damage Assessment, Family Service, or Mass Care.

## Winter Driving Tips

Contributed by Dana Estrada



### STOP!

It's that time of year again. Winter is rapidly approaching. We all know that winter driving can be extremely hazardous due to poor road conditions or from reduced visibility. Being properly prepared is critical.

Gear up for winter by having your vehicle serviced. Have your mechanic check your antifreeze levels, battery and ignition systems, brakes, fuel and air filters, heater and defroster, lights and flashing hazard lights, oil, thermostat and windshield wiper equipment. Also ensure that your exhaust system has no leaks – carbon monoxide is deadly! Make certain you have tires with adequate tread for winter road conditions.

Before you begin to drive ensure that your hood, roof, windows, all lights and license plates are free of snow. Let's be honest - we've all tried to get away with driving with three inches of clear space on our windshield hoping the defroster would clear the rest by the time we made it to the end of our street. Resist the urge! Make sure your car is snow free before you take it out of park! Not only will you be able to see better but the snow from your vehicle will not interfere with other drivers' visibility.

Leave a few minutes early and take your time driving to your destination. This will combat the urge to engage in risky driving behavior in poor weather to arrive on time. Also use extra care when stopping and turning. Be sure to use your blinkers and give plenty of warning to other vehicles. Break early and slowly to avoid skidding or locking your breaks.

Having an emergency supply kit in your car will make it much easier for you and your passengers if you do get stuck in the snow. Include an ice scraper, small broom, small shovel, kitty litter or a bag of sand to use for traction, blankets, a flashlight (with extra batteries!), flares, matches, first aid kit, extra winter clothing, necessary medications, jumper cables, tow rope, something brightly colored to use as a distress flag, bottled water and protein or granola bars and a charged cell phone. Let family members and friends know where you are headed and the typical routes that you drive too. As we relish in the fact that gas prices are dropping, remember to maintain at least half a tank of gas during the winter season. If you are stranded in snow, stay in your vehicle unless help is visible. Blowing snow can make you disoriented. Run the car for 10 minutes every hour and run the heater during that time. Make sure you clear your tailpipe of snow every so often to prevent carbon monoxide buildup.

Common sense and proper preparation will help keep you safe during this winter! Take care and have a safe season of driving!

# Happy Thanksgiving!

