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Isolated Moraga Needs to Get Organized for Effective Emergency Response

Submitted by Julie Lindemann, MNEP Steering Committee



Bruce Berman and Herb Lederman (green shirts) demonstrate the proper response to a gas line leak while Gary Borrelli, Frans Hoffman and Linda Borrelli observe. Photo provided.

The recent catastrophes in Haiti and Chile are grim reminders of the dangers we face from earthquakes while living in the Bay Area. Our rational minds know we must prepare for the inevitable, but do we? Is your family ready for a disaster such as an earthquake or wildfire?

Moraga is especially vulnerable. The town is geographically isolated and there are few law enforcement and fire personnel on duty at any one time. Because Moraga residents could be isolated from outside aid agencies from 3 days to 2 weeks following a disaster, we must know how to take care of ourselves until help arrives. We must know how to rescue and give effective first aid to the injured, provide food and shelter to the homeless, and communicate our needs by radio, assuming there will be neither power nor cell phone coverage.

In the event of a disaster, a coordinated group response is more effective than disorganized individual efforts. Thus, good communications and cohesiveness within neighborhoods are vital tools for survival. The Moraga Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness (MNEP) committee is a group of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) graduates, who have organized to meet the challenge of educating and organizing as many residents as possible. MNEP has received the endorsement of the Moraga Police Department, the Moraga/Orinda Fire District and Lamorinda CERT.

During the second half of 2009, 10 neighborhood groups in Moraga began their organizing activities with the help of MNEP. To date 29 CERT graduates have volunteered to serve as trainers and facilitators. During 2010, MNEP's goal is to assist at least another 15 neighborhood groups to organize and receive basic training. Should you offer to host a meeting in your neighborhood, a MNEP facilitator will bring the necessary equipment and documentation to present a 45-minute program. The only responsibility of the host is to provide a meeting place and to invite approximately 20 consecutive homeowners. Twenty is the ideal number of households to make a cohesive neighborhood. At the end of the presentation, volunteers will be called upon to take the responsibility of Neighborhood Captain. MNEP is an on-going free resource for the neighborhood groups.

MNEP is also reaching out to community service organizations, homeowners associations and church groups to increase awareness of their goals and programs. Interested organizations can contact MNEP and request a free presentation for their next gathering.

The members of the MNEP Steering Committee are: Co-chairs Gary & Linda Borrelli, Bruce Berman, Frans Hoffman, Herb Lederman, Julie Lindemann, Cindy Petrini, Barbara Renz and Lonnie Treat.

You can get involved today by emailing the Steering Committee at MoragaNEP@gmail.com.

Neighborhood Hosts are needed, as well as Neighborhood Captains. Donations are welcome.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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