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Free CERT Training Class in January

By Cathy Dausman

Duncan Seibert believes in the motto "be prepared."

"With the constant threats of earthquake, wildfire and now El Nino, people need to know how to fend for themselves," he said.

Seibert, a longtime Lafayette resident, is program manager for Lamorinda's Community Emergency Response Team, a Federal Emergency Management Agency-backed all-risk, all hazards training course. He is anxious to promote the next CERT session starting Jan. 12 in Lafayette. The three-hour evening classes are free and open to anyone over 17 living or working in Lamorinda.

"There are 60,000 residents in Lamorinda. There are normally six police patrol cars, seven fire engines and two ambulances on duty," he said, which translates to one first responder vehicle serving every 4,000 residents. "When a large-scale disaster strikes, you and your family could be on your own for quite a while."

Seibert says CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster preparedness. Over the course of seven weeks of lectures and hands-on training, participants learn about local disaster risks, managing hazardous materials and small fires and receive training in basic first aid and triage. Instructors are local volunteers, firefighters or paramedics trained to FEMA standards. CERT is a program of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and is organized under the California Volunteers program and the Department of Homeland Security. Lamorinda CERT is directed by a steering committee of volunteer members selected by the Citizen Corps Councils of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. Students age 16 are welcome if accompanied by an adult. For details, call (925) 255-5143 or visit <http://www.lamorindacert.org>.

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