

Esprit de CORE

Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies

Spring - Summer 2009

Editor: Kaity Booth

A publication of the Oakland Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services

CORE Program Highlights

By Kaity Booth

I can say with confidence that the last four months have been the busiest since I joined the CORE program in 2006. In addition to the dozens of CORE I and II classes we conducted at the neighborhood level this season, we also provided three rounds of public CORE I, II and III training at Holy Names University, Mills College & Patten University.

During our Spring CORE Graduation on March 26, close to 100 volunteers received their CORE certification. This is approximately the same number that graduated during the last few ceremonies, but this time it represents volunteers from only *three* sets of CORE III courses, compared to the usual *four*. Our class sizes are *increasing* and demand remains *higher* than I've ever seen it before, even though our staff and instructor resources are the *lowest* they've been during my time here. It is a great sign that Oakland residents are taking their safety seriously and putting more energy into being prepared for emergencies. *Bravo!*



Burlington CORE Group

Our most recent accomplishment is the success of the CORE Citywide Exercise on Saturday, April 25. After years of little to no media coverage for our program and the Citywide Exercise in particular, I was thrilled when this year the Office of Emergency Services was contacted by numerous media outlets to cover this event. We were mentioned on KTVU, in the Oakland Tribune and in the Oakland Hills Examiner. KRON 4 News filmed numerous locations where our exercise took place, and then ran a piece about us several times over the weekend.

See page 2 for more CORE Citywide Exercise photos.

CORE Proactively Reducing Costs

By Kaity Booth

The state of the economy and City of Oakland budget woes have been a regular topic of discussion for several months. Before cuts began in November 2008, the Office of Emergency Services had already been reducing costs wherever feasible.

Following are just a few examples of how the CORE program has reduced expenses over the last few years to save the City money. These measures save the City about \$10,000 a year:

- The CORE newsletter, *Esprit de CORE*, is no longer printed in mass and mailed to the thousands of volunteers in our database. We now only print one hundred copies for distribution in CORE classes, on lower grade paper, and have completely eliminated the postage cost by *emailing* the electronic newsletter to our volunteers.
- We have previously provided bottled water during our CORE III classes and advanced workshops for all participants. In October of 2008 Safeway donated a pallet of bottled water, which lasted us through March of 2009. Now that the donation has run out, we will no longer provide bottled water in CORE classes, except for full-day Saturday events.
- We have posted all of our CORE training manuals and numerous other resources on our website, increasing accessibility to our materials and reducing our printing and mailing costs when our resources are requested.
- We repackaged our CORE III manuals, eliminating the binder and section dividers previously used, and now just use staples. This resulted in a savings of approximately \$12 per manual!
- Wherever allowable, we use grant funds to cover our print materials, supplies and projects.

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CORE CITYWIDE EXERCISE: APRIL 25, 2009



7 Streets CORE Group

Twenty-nine CORE groups from across the City of Oakland came together on Saturday, April 25, 2009 to participate in the 4th annual CORE Citywide Exercise. The purpose of the exercise was to give organized CORE groups and individual CORE volunteers an opportunity to practice responding to a 6.7 magnitude earthquake on the Hayward Fault, centered at Mills College in East Oakland.

CORE training is based on the assumption that immediately following a disaster, local resources such as police and firefighters will be overwhelmed. CORE Volunteers are trained to take care of themselves and their neighbors, providing much needed assistance to each other in those critical first hours and days before professional assistance may arrive.

The goal of this year's exercise was for participating CORE groups to successfully operate a Disaster First Aid Station within the Neighborhood Incident Command structure. Over 600 volunteers participated in the exercise in 26 different neighborhoods, including approximately 30 Volunteer Victims.

In June the exercise After Action Report will be sent directly to the participating group leaders and monitors, and will also be posted on the CORE website for public reference.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this successful event!



Montgomery St. Emergency Response Network CORE Group



Chinatown NCPC CORE Group



Swan's Cohousing CORE Group



Cochrane Avenue CORE Group

Arson Awareness Week

By Investigator Maria Sabatini, Oakland Fire Department

Each year, in May, fire departments focus their fire prevention efforts on arson, in a national education campaign promoted by the Federal Emergency Management Administration. This year's Arson Awareness Week is May 3-9, 2009. Arson is a crime, with devastating consequences for everyone. The good news is: arson is preventable. Neighbors, merchants, churches, schools, fire prevention officials, and community groups such as CORE, working together, can make a powerful difference in the fight against arson in Oakland.

Some of arson's ugly consequences:

- *Death and injury to civilians and firefighters;*
- *Lost tax revenues;*
- *Urban decay and deterioration;*
- *Lost jobs and earnings;*
- *Higher insurance premiums for everyone.*

Ultimately, arson affects everyone in the community. What can you do to fight arson? Report suspicious activities, and review the arson prevention tips (right). The Oakland Fire Department's Investigators are tasked with investigating the circumstances of all fires and apprehending the persons deemed responsible for those fires that are determined to be arson. OFD investigators work closely with the Oakland Police and agents from the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to solve arson cases, and also with insurance adjusters to help establish the validity of fire insurance claims.

One type of arson that the Fire Department needs the public's help to stop is fires in vacant houses. In many cases there are no witnesses and no other information available to investigators. We stand the greatest chance to keep arsonists out of our neighborhoods when people report suspicious activities. Call 911 to report trespassers, especially around vacant buildings.

Anyone with information about a fire that happened in Oakland should call 510-238-4031. A Fire Department investigator will take your information, and your identity will remain confidential if you wish. Callers receiving a voice mail are asked to leave a phone number where an investigator can return the call and still protect the caller's identity.



Arson Prevention Tips for Homes and Neighborhoods:

- Call 911 to report suspicious activities in progress.
- Remember specific details about suspicious persons and vehicles. A good description may help police and fire officials to identify them.
- Install motion activated lights to illuminate dark areas of your yard
- Always lock your doors and garages.
- Let neighbors know when you plan to leave for extended periods. Ask them to report suspicious activity to the police.
- Keep your property free of trash and debris. (Get yard clutter removed for free with a Bulky Pickup. Call Waste Management of Alameda County at 510-613-8710.)
- Homeowners and vacant lot owners in the Oakland Wildfire Prevention District may schedule free tree and brush chipping services by calling the Oakland Fire Dept. at 510-238-7388.
- Get involved in your Neighborhood Watch, or start one on your block. Call the Oakland Police Department Neighborhood Watch Coordinator at 510-238-3091.

Arson Prevention Tips for Businesses:

- Doors and windows must be in good repair and locked when not in use.
- Gaps under doors should be as small as possible.
- Mail slots installed in doors or walls should have metal containers fitted on the inside.
- Stored material of any kind should not be stacked outside where matches or cigarettes can be thrown into them.
- Get involved in Oakland's Merchant Watch Program by calling 510-238-6200.

Arson Prevention for Congregations:

Call the OFD Investigation Unit at 510-238-4031 to request a copy of FEMA's publication: "Arson Prevention for America's Churches and Synagogues".



CORE recognizes that individuals with functional needs, including people with disabilities and older adults, may require additional assistance preparing for and responding to an emergency. In addition to general disaster tips recommended for all people, incorporating the recommendations below will enhance your level of preparedness.

Make a Plan

- Discuss your disaster plan with the important people in your life. Be sure to identify how these individuals might be of assistance to you in an emergency. Create a support network and ask them to check on you and offer assistance in the case of an emergency. In addition to your immediate family or friends, your support network may also include coworkers, classmates, caregivers, transportation providers, and faith-based or community organizations.
- Communication during and after a disaster is critical for survival. During an emergency, information will be available to you via telephone or TTY by calling 2-1-1.
- Make copies of all your vital documents as recommended by CORE, and include files related to your needs such as copies of prescriptions and emergency medical contacts. If you rely on medical equipment, write out simple directions for use in case someone else needs to help you operate it in an emergency.
- Consider participating in the Oakland Fire Department's 911 Registry for people with functional needs. Call 510-238-3938 or 510-238-2382 for more information or to request an application form. (Frequently Asked Questions and Registry Form are also available at www.oaklandnet.com.) By participating in this registry, when firefighters are dispatched to your home in a day-to-day emergency, they will be notified of your unique needs before they arrive. *This registry applies to daily emergencies and calls to 911, but may not be used in a large scale disaster.*
- Be aware that in an emergency, everyone from consumers to service providers to first responders will want to check on their families before going to work. Consider how service interruptions may impact your ability to function in a disaster, including the availability of transportation, treatments or caregivers.

Build a Kit

- In addition to the food, water and general supplies recommended by CORE, include tools related to your specific functional needs such as extra glasses, hearing aids & batteries, a manual wheelchair, extra medication and a cooler or ice pack if necessary for medicines.
- If you are dependent on electricity for survival, have a back-up generator on hand in case the power goes out in your home.
- If you have a sensory or speech disability, think about how you will communicate in an emergency. Have a pad of paper and pen available, use pictograms or picture cards, and teach your support network the best ways you will be able to communicate with them.
- Keep a copy of your vital documents in your emergency supplies. You may want to write out directions for taking your medicines or using your medical equipment in case you cannot communicate those things yourself in a disaster. Write down serial numbers for any medical equipment in case they will need to be replaced.

Get Involved

- Communicate your emergency needs to your employer or school, and participate in any drills or other preparation activities they may organize.
- Voice your opinion and community needs to City boards and commissions that may be able to influence policy, such as the Oakland Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities (MCPD). The MCPD meets on the second Monday of every month, except August, between 1 P.M. and 3:30 P.M. in City Hall Hearing Room 3, located adjacent to the 14th Street entrance. Call 510-238-6919 to receive more information about the MCPD.
- If you are not already involved with your neighborhood CORE group, contact your local group leader or become one! Let your neighbors know how you can help them. Participation in CORE training and neighborhood planning activities is open to individuals with and without functional needs. All roles within CORE training and neighborhood planning activities are essential, including monitoring emergency broadcasts, greeting other people coming into the Neighborhood Incident Command Center, preparing food for neighbors, caring for children, or providing counseling to volunteers. Awareness of what to expect in your neighborhood is a critical step in an emergency.



Additional Resources:

Ready America: People with Disabilities & Other Special Needs

<http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html>

FEMA: Individuals with Special Needs

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/specialplans.shtm>

Disability Preparedness

<http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov/>

National Organization on Disability

www.nod.org/emergency

Spanish CORE Update

By Rocio Giles-Flores

It has been a very interesting and successful quarter for Spanish CORE I classes. I have provided training to 165 individuals including parents, students, teachers, community organizers and volunteers from different countries. All of them are very thankful and appreciative to have the opportunity to learn more about disaster preparedness. I have visited a variety of schools and organizations to provide the training in different locations such as Stonehurst School, St. Louis Bertrand School, Cesar Chavez Public Library, Jefferson School, Chavez School, Fruitvale School, World Achieve School, Cox Academy, Ascend School and Mujeres Unidas Y Activas.

The interesting part of this training is that the majority of people I've encountered at these schools and organizations are interested in taking all three levels of CORE, and getting involved in other similar programs in the community. A good group participated in the annual CPR Saturday class provided by The American Red Cross on March 14th, and some of them participated as Spontaneous Volunteers during the CORE Citywide Exercise on April 25th. Many of these organizations are scheduled to receive CORE II training from April to May.

Are you fluent in Spanish, Cantonese or Mandarin?

The Office of Emergency Services would like to hire additional volunteer instructors to help provide CORE training to members of our Hispanic and Chinese community.

If you would like to become a volunteer CORE instructor for our Spanish or Chinese CORE Outreach programs, please send a cover letter and your resume to the CORE Coordinator at 1605 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Oakland, CA 94612, or core@oaklandnet.com.

Chinese Speaking CORE Graduates Support Chinese Community

By Ann Li

On January 23, 2009, the Oakland Chinatown branch of the Salvation Army held their annual Lunar New Year giveaway of food gift bags to seniors, new immigrants, and low-income families from the Bay Area. This is their 9th year passing out the gift bags, with this being the first year held at their new building, located on 12th Street in Oakland Chinatown.

Beginning at 10 a.m., people were already lining up in the lobby area, creating a festive atmosphere. Due to the high number of people who needed the gift bags, hundreds of highly experienced volunteers were needed to make the distribution process smooth and efficient. Chinese speaking CORE graduates and Oakland Fire Department representatives participated to show support and to help giving away the gift bags.

From left: Chinese speaking CORE instructor Ann Li, Engineer Melvin Shima, Paramedic Brian Petrie, Firefighter Noe Rosales, City Council District Two Councilmember Patricia Kernighan, Chinese speaking CORE graduate Laura Chung, Oakland Fire Department Fire Chief Gerald Simon, and Chinese speaking CORE graduate Howard Chiu.



SUMMER SEMESTER CORE TRAINING SCHEDULE

Basic Training*

CORE I	Monday	May 4, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	The Crucible 1260 7 th St.
CORE II	Monday	May 11, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	

CORE I	Wednesday	May 27, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Mills College - CPM 114 5000 MacArthur Blvd.
CORE II	Wednesday	June 3, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Class A (FULL)	Wednesday	June 10, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Class B (FULL)	Wednesday	June 17, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Class C (FULL)	Wednesday	June 24, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Hands-On (FULL)	Saturday	June 27, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	

CORE I	Tuesday	June 16, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Oakland OES 1605 MLK, Jr. Way
CORE II	Tuesday	June 23, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Class A	Tuesday	June 30, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Class B	Tuesday	July 7, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Class C	Tuesday	July 14, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	
CORE III Hands-On	Saturday	July 18, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	OFD Training Division 250 Victory Ct.

Advanced Training**

CORE Refresher & Disaster First Aid Workshop	Saturday	May 16, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	OFD Training Division 250 Victory Ct.
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Events

Summer CORE Graduation	Wednesday	July 29, 2009	6:30pm – 8:00pm	Oakland City Hall 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
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Early registration is encouraged as classes often fill up far in advance.

**Participants must complete CORE I and II before beginning CORE III.*

Eligibility to graduate from the CORE program and receive volunteer certification is dependent upon completion of CORE I, II and all four classes in the CORE III series (Class A, B, C, and Hands-On).

***Advanced training is designed for individuals who have already completed CORE I, II and III.*

CORE I and II classes are also conducted at neighborhood sites and require at least 15 participants. Call 510-238-6351 or email core@oaklandnet.com to schedule a class in your neighborhood.

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

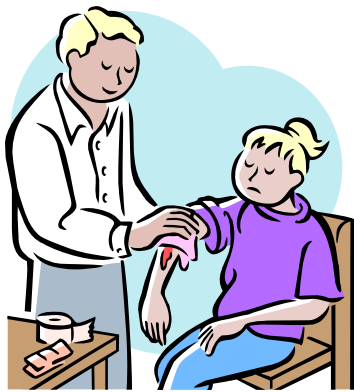
core@oaklandnet.com ~ 510-238-6351 ~ www.oaklandcore.org

CORE Refresher & Disaster First Aid Workshop

Saturday, May 16, 2009, 9:00am - 3:00pm

REVIEW

basic emergency preparedness and response
principles & practice response skills
including safe lifts & carries, systematic searches,
Disaster First Aid treatment and triage.



UPDATE

your CORE Photo ID badge
and Disaster Service Worker form.

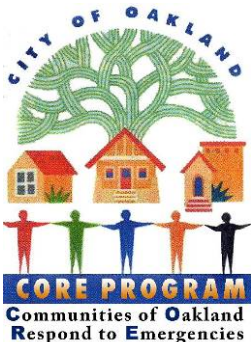


ENHANCE

your knowledge of Disaster First Aid & apply your
CORE training during a tabletop exercise.



Featuring the debut of CORE Jeopardy!



**Recommended for all CORE volunteers
who completed CORE III prior to 2008**

Advance Registration Required.
Call 510-238-6351, email core@oaklandnet.com,
or visit www.oaklandcore.org.

Network with CORE Volunteers Using our Online Discussion Group:

http://groups.google.com/group/Oakland_CORE

Use the Google Group to:

- Familiarize yourself with the CORE Program.
- Network with others in your area to form new or strengthen existing neighborhood CORE groups.
- Communicate with the CORE community about issues that matter to you.
- Share ideas with your peers and let CORE staff and volunteers know how we can help make CORE a more inclusive, efficient program to reach out to all members of the Oakland community.

Membership in the Google Group is reserved for individuals who have already participated in at least one CORE class.

Next Steps in Preparedness: Retrofitting Your Home

By Sue Piper, Policy Analyst, Council Member Quan's Office

After the disaster, will your home be habitable?

Experts predict that Oakland could lose 30,000 homes in the next big earthquake. Older single or two-family wood-frame homes and multi-family, soft-story homes (with garages or large open spaces on the ground floor) are not strong enough to withstand a 6.7 or greater earthquake in the Bay Area.

But for a relatively small investment of a few thousand dollars, you can literally save lives and continue to live in Oakland in the face of a major earthquake by seismically retrofitting your pre-1989 Loma Prieta home.

Over the past two years, the City Council has initiated several retrofit incentives. First, the seismic retrofit permit is only \$250, no matter how large your retrofit project. Second, low income homeowners who live in one of Oakland's seven redevelopment districts can receive up to a \$10,000 matching grant that will cover both a new foundation and the seismic retrofit. No-interest loans through the City's Low Income Home Owner Repair Program help cover full cost. The City is seeking additional funds to expand this program beyond its current limitations, and to include people on fixed incomes throughout the City.

A new homeowner program, funded in 2008 and 2009 through the real estate transfer tax, was so popular that we ran out of funds in 18 months. More than 200 homeowners took advantage reimbursements of up to \$5,000 if they met the City's seismic strengthening standards. The current recession has halted reimbursements for now, but the City is hoping to tap into the Economic Stimulus funds to continue to fund this program for new homeowners. Nevertheless, even without the reimbursement incentive, new homeowners continue to consider retrofitting because it will protect their investment in their home.

Council Members Jean Quan and Nancy Nadel are working closely with the Association of Bay Area Governments on a number of other initiatives, including incentives for soft-story, multi-family retrofits that will hopefully significantly reduce the number of earthquake vulnerable homes in our City.



Two identical Santa Cruz Victorian style homes were built more than 100 years ago. In 1989, the architect/owner retrofitted one of them. Before retrofitting the other one, the 7.1 Loma Prieta earthquake hit. The retrofitted one cost \$5,000 to repair. The other one cost \$260,000.

Resources:

Association of Bay Area Governments Plan Set A:

<http://quake.abag.ca.gov/fixit>

Oakland Homeowner Seismic Strengthening Incentive Program: <http://www.oaklandnet.com/homeownerseismicstrength.pdf> or 238-3891

City of Oakland's Residential Lending and Housing Rehabilitation Program (for low income residents): 238-3909.