

TO: Church Team Coordinators and Members

FROM: Paul Hundley
Sandra Titus

DATE: April 4, 2008

We want to thank you for working so hard to coordinate your disaster response teams. We hope you will forward this update to your team members.

Our Manager of Disaster Services, Paul Hundley and our Red Cross Church Team Coordinator, Sandra Titus are interested in maintaining closer communication with our teams. We are willing to visit your facility and meet with you and your team members to answer questions, plan for additional training, plan simulation drills, or help in any way to keep your team energized and interested. We are aware of the fact that occasionally team members lose interest because we do not have many serious disasters in the area. In that sense, we are fortunate. We do, however, want to make sure that we have a large force of trained personnel ready to respond when we do face these serious challenges. We remember that during Hurricane Isabel and the following year during Tropical Storm Gaston, we needed all of our regular Red Cross volunteers and several of our church teams to meet the needs of our clients.

Last year we began an annual disaster simulation exercise. We want to make this a regular part of our planning. The shelter exercise focuses on operating and running a shelter, shopping for and preparing a lunch meal, closing the shelter and critiquing the exercise.

Last year, 2007, our participating teams were from: Ramsey United Methodist Church on Hull Street, Ft. Lee Baptist on Charles City Road, Beulah United Methodist Church on Hopkins Road, Bon Air Baptist on Buford Road, Poplar Springs Baptist on East Charles City Road, St. Marks United Methodist Church on Lucks Lane and Bon Air United Methodist Church on Buford Road.

This year, our 2008 exercise included the following: Hope Chapel in Amelia, Salisbury Presbyterian on Salisbury Road, Bon Air United Methodist Church on Buford Road and St. Augustine Catholic on Beulah Road.

We would like to include you and your team members in the next exercise or you may be interested in having one at your church only. Your team members could gain experience opening and closing a shelter and feeding a group of clients from your congregation.

May we offer some suggestions:

- Maintain an active participant's roster. Discuss with your team members the most expedient method of contacting them for an emergency.
- Create an "Availability List" of team members each month. If you wish to forward the list to the Red Cross, that could reduce the amount of time it takes to locate available shelter teams.
- Have regular meetings. For example: quarterly meetings to focus on one or two topics. Go over team members' responsibilities and cross-train members. It is important to have 'back up' trained people for all of your team positions. Use the Red Cross staff to support your meetings.
- Request additional training. We can train at your facility or include you in training at another facility.
- Use a regular event at your church as an opportunity to train. For example, set up a registration table at your next pot luck dinner to give your registrars practice.

We very much appreciate you and your willingness to help support our area disaster response program. Please let us know how we can assist you.

With regards,

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