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One Neighborhood.

CERT ACROSS FLORIDA UPDATE

First Edition 2018



RESPONSE TO MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS SCHOOL SHOOTING

By Carol Sjursen, Vice President, Florida CERT Association

On February 14, 2018 CERT members from Coral Springs/Parkland CERT, Margate CERT and the Deerfield Beach CERT Teams responded to a mass shooting incident at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida where seventeen individuals were killed and another seventeen were injured. South Florida Rehab and Emergency Support Team was also on scene to assist in supporting our First Responders. Members of the Fort Lauderdale CERT were on standby in the event that additional CERT resources were needed.

CERT members from the three North Broward teams kept the 500 plus responders hydrated and nourished as they worked through this horrific incident. Water was distributed and meals were served. CERT had an area set up with tables and chairs where those responders on break could sit and relax and get a bit of food. Agencies with whom CERT teams in Broward have never had the opportunity to work with before, were pleasantly surprised to see us on scene and thanked us for being there in such a supportive role. CERT members were professional and they stayed focused on their job at hand, despite what was going on right next to them. CERT members should be proud to be a part of such a wonderful organization.

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Due to the magnitude of this incident and what the members of the various CERT teams on scene experienced, CERT members were included in the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) process, starting with a Defusing session, the first level of critical incident counseling, immediately following their release from duties on the scene.

CERT members, along with other First Responders, gathered at an off-site location where professionally trained counselors explained that the feelings the responders may be having immediately following an event of this magnitude are normal and likely shared by others that were on scene. Counselors explained that critical incidents such as this one affect people differently and they encouraged CERT members, as well as the other responders, to reach out to the professional counselors if anyone felt the need.

Before CERT members left the Defusing session, CERT members were made aware of the resources available to them and how any CERT member would be able to contact these resources 24/7.

Two Critical Incident Stress Debriefing peer to peer counseling sessions were set up just for CERT members to attend and professional counselors took CERT members through the entire seven phase debriefing process. Crisis counselors from as far away as New York City met with CERT members.

In the days following the shooting, Coral Springs/Parkland CERT, Margate CERT and the Deerfield Beach CERT Teams were activated two more times for school walkouts. Many schools in Broward and surrounding areas organized walkouts in support of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas student body. Students were exhausted and some dehydrated as they walked from their schools, some well over ten miles,



CERT serving meals at the Parkland Active Shooter incident

to Marjory Stoneman Douglas in Parkland. Not only did CERT provide hydration needs for the students, they assessed the students as they passed the water stations and identified individuals that needed further evaluation by Fire Rescue. During the smaller of the two walkouts, and one of the longer walks, Margate CERT and Deerfield Beach CERT played a game of adult leap frog with their CERT trucks down one of the main roads leading to Marjory Stoneman Douglas to keep participants hydrated.

The Deerfield Beach CERT Team had their regularly scheduled monthly meeting shortly after the incident and they invited the Coral Springs/Parkland and Margate CERT Teams to join them and speak about the CERT response to the incident. One of the Broward Sheriff's Office Deputies that was on scene joined the CERT teams in attendance, and, although he could not answer questions regarding the active investigation that was currently underway, he spoke on how important it is to communicate with our kids every day and know what's going on in their lives

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and at school. Deerfield Beach District Fire Chief Richard “Rusty” Sievers, Deerfield Beach Assistant City Manager David Santucci and Deerfield Beach Fire Inspector Rick Brown each said a few words of thanks and offered support to any CERT member who may have a need. The meeting was then led by CERT Program Managers Mike DiTocco from Coral Springs/Parkland CERT, Hank Rocker from Margate CERT and Carol Sjursen from Deerfield Beach CERT. It’s amazing how the leadership from not only the CERT teams, but the Municipal Fire Departments truly care about the well-being of CERT members.

In a continuing effort to help the First Responders (including CERT), faculty, students and their families start to heal from this tragic incident, the City of Coral Springs hosted a Day of Healing – Community

Cookout. The event had no agenda, no speeches... it was just a moment to meet, hug and heal over food and friendship. Coral Springs city personnel volunteered their time to staff the event.

The outpouring of support from the community in the healing process has been amazing. Memorials were set up at both the high school and at one of the local parks where the community could gather to honor those that lost their lives or were injured that day.

This was the first time for this type of a response for the CERT teams in Broward County, and, hopefully, will be the last. Thoughts and prayers continue for those not just at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, but for all of those persons who have been affected by this senseless act of violence.



CERT had a full dining setup at the Parkland Active Shooter incident



The Memorial at Pine Trails Park – showing an outpouring of community support



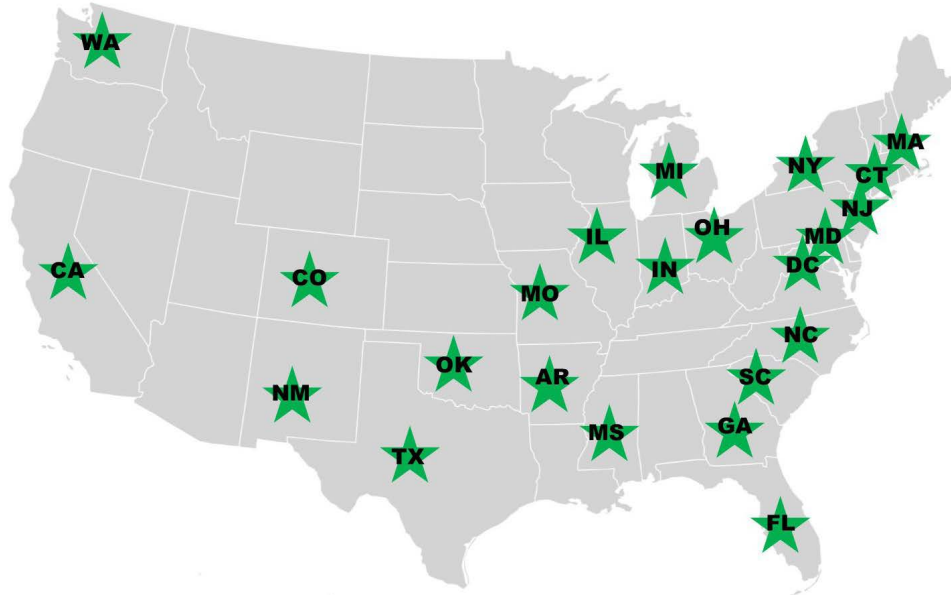
CERT members who responded to the Parkland Active Shooter incident were invited to attend a “Day of Healing”



CERT Program Managers from Deerfield Beach, Coral Springs/Parkland and Margate CERT teams, plus Tom Savoca with Coco, the CERT Therapy Dog

2018 FLORIDA CERT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The 2018 National CERT Conference hosted by the Florida CERT Association in partnership with Volunteer Florida will be held in Naples, Florida from August 23-25, 2018. Reservations are coming in at a rapid pace with attendees coming from all across the nation.



Pre-conference certification classes will be held August 20-22. In addition to some great education, what would a conference be without some fun? We have a golf outing planned for Wednesday and a welcome reception planned for Wednesday night. We have a trip to the casino planned for Thursday evening. There will be a hospitality room open nightly so that you can network with CERT members and emergency management personnel from across the nation. You'll have a chance to visit over 20 vendors before and after the breakout sessions. We have a huge HSEEP compliant drill planned for Saturday.

All this in addition to two full days of breakout sessions. This is a conference you won't want to miss. Visit the Florida CERT Association website at www.FlaCERTassociation.org for complete details and registration information.

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2017 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

2017 STATISTICS

- 151 attendees
- Held in Daytona Beach August 24-26, 2017 at Hilton Daytona Beach Resort
- Pre-Conference Training August 21-23, 2017, which included G-428 CERT Train the Trainer, G-288 Local Volunteer and Donations Management, and G-489 Management of Spontaneous Volunteers in Disasters

CAPE CORAL CERT HONORED WITH AWARD

Cape Coral CERT was honored today with the Volunteer Agency Service Award. They received this at the annual Governor's Hurricane Conference being held in West Palm Beach. The Volunteer Agency Service Award is given to an individual staff member or volunteer of a non-government organization (NGO) or a unit of an NGO that has made an outstanding contribution to the fulfillment of hurricane preparedness, response, recovery or mitigation activities in the State of Florida.



2017 FLORIDA CERT ASSOCIATION AWARD WINNERS



CERT Member of the Year
Gerry Brummer, Citrus County CERT



CERT Team of the Year
The City of Fort Lauderdale CERT Team



Silver Star Award
Chief Bruce Caruso, Broward Sheriff's Office
Cooper City District
(for truly superior and outstanding achievement)



Distinguished Service Award
Leonard and Jean Nacht
North Collier Fire District CERT
(Award accepted on their behalf by Heather Mazurkiewicz)



Corporate Award
Volunteer Florida
Kenneth Skalitzky and Christy Rojas-Kasten
(for providing expertise throughout the years and
for dedication in making Florida CERT Association
conference a success)

COOPER CITY CERT SHUTTER PROGRAM

The hurricane shutter program became part of Cooper City CERT's assigned tasks shortly after the first team was trained and certified in April 2007. This was briefly after Hurricane Wilma wreaked havoc on South Florida in 2005. Fortunately, the team never had to activate for the shutter program until Hurricane Matthew threatened to hit South Florida in 2016.

The team secured 9 homes, with accordion type shutters, aluminum & steel panels, and plywood for Hurricane Matthew in 2016. As the luck of the wind would have it, Matthew skipped past Broward County as only a rain event. The team then re-activated to "de-shutter" the homes.

On September 6-8, 2017, the team activated once again for Hurricane Irma, this time to shutter 15 homes, assisting others in neighborhoods where they were already shuttering and adding more homes because the fire department was getting calls daily, leading up to the storm, with residents asking for assistance. There were several larger homes and even the Cooper City CERTeam received assistance from members of Potential Church, a local church in Cooper City, because the job was so big. All homes were de-shuttered. Sixteen (16) Cooper City CERT members (which is almost half of the active membership) participated either in the shuttering or de-shuttering process for Hurricane Irma.

Physical welfare checks were also conducted by team members to vulnerable residents who could not be contacted by Cooper City via phone, post storm. The shutter program was designed for the elderly and disabled residents of Cooper City who were unable to shutter their own homes, and, who do not have other family or neighbors to assist them. Now, Cooper City will require that the residents are also officially registered on their "vulnerable population" list.

The Cooper City Commission has recognized its CERT members for their assistance in this program at commission meetings, thanking them for helping to keep the residents of Cooper City safe.



HURRICANE CONFERENCE IN WEST PALM BEACH

(May 17, 2018) FCA President James Cunningham and Christy Rojas-Kasten from Volunteer Florida attended the annual Governor's Hurricane Conference in West Palm Beach where they shared with all conference attendees the story of CERT. Thank you for serving the residents of Florida!



BEST WISHES TO CHRIS THOBOIS

Our Florida CERT Association secretary, Chris Thobois, took ill this past month. She is now at home recovering.

The Florida CERT Association hopes that each passing day brings her closer to a full and speedy recovery. We miss you Chris!

