

The monthly FEMA *Children & Disasters Newsletter* is a resource for youth preparedness practitioners, educators, parents, children, and teens. It shares timely research, examples of successful youth preparedness programs, safety tips, and resources related to youth preparedness. To subscribe to the *Children & Disasters Newsletter*, please visit www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness.

CHILDREN & DISASTERS NEWSLETTER



FEMA



DECEMBER 2013 – ISSUE 9

In the December issue of the Children and Disasters Newsletter, FEMA shares how the White House is fostering innovations in disaster response and recovery and showcases the Urban Assembly School of Emergency Management – a new high school in New York City with a very unique focus. Youth involvement continues through a recap of the American Red Cross' Youth Involvement Month and presents the FIRST® LEGO® League's new challenge to "Conquer Nature's Fury." The Children and Disasters team also discusses how to get involved in the National Preparedness Community and introduces a new document that helps communities learn how to collaborate on reuniting youth with their guardians as quickly as possible following an emergency.

THE FIRST® LEGO® LEAGUE INVITES YOUTH TO HELP CONQUER NATURE'S FURY

The [FIRST® LEGO® League](#) (FLL) is an international program that aims to get children between the ages of 9 and 16 excited about science and technology. Any group of ten or more youth (with at least one adult coach) can participate, making it perfect for classes or organizations like a scout troop. This year's [extreme-weather-themed challenge](#) is twofold: present a project on how the team believes they can help with disaster preparedness, resilience, recovery and/or response; then, teams create an innovative solution to a disaster-caused problem. ([an image of the competition map can be found online](#)).

This year, guided by the [core values of the FFL](#), teams create their own projects and then compete in the Robot Game. The project will be presented to judges at a tournament using visual elements such as slide shows, models or research materials. Teams will face a series of challenges that their robot will be need to overcome.

Children can create brilliant devices as they harness their expansive imaginations to bring their ideas into reality. Last year's contestants tackled creating solutions for challenges faced by senior citizens. Rather than assuming the target audience's needs, teams chose a senior partner and conducted a needs assessment to ensure that their creation would be useful to the specific individual. This year is no different and FEMA is excited to work with teams across the country to better the teams' knowledge of a disaster's impact.

To join in with a team of your own, or to look over FAQs for any aspect of the challenge, visit the [FIRST® LEGO® League's page](#).

POST-DISASTER REUNIFICATION OF CHILDREN: A NATIONWIDE APPROACH

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the American Red Cross (ARC) recently released the [Post Disaster Reunification of Children: A Nationwide Approach](#). This document reflects our nation's first attempt to establish a baseline foundation and whole community approach for reunifying children separated from their parents or legal guardians in the aftermath of a disaster.

To ensure that this initiative was truly comprehensive, whole community partners from across the country were engaged in the development of the Post Disaster Reunification of Children: A Nationwide Approach, to include inter-governmental partners, pediatric experts and voluntary, faith based, children and disability organizations, as well as other applicable stakeholders and advocacy groups. This initiative strives to:

1. Assist state, local and tribal governments in determining processes, communication lines and the identification of roles and responsibilities necessary to facilitate the expeditious reunification of children separated as a result of disaster;
2. Encourage stakeholders and community leaders to develop and build upon existing and pre-disaster relationships;
3. Establish an understanding of how all parties (leading and supporting) can work together to support each other's missions and;
4. Identify tools and resources that could assist states and localities in disaster related reunification efforts.

The Post Disaster Reunification of Children: A Nationwide Approach could be applied to new or existent emergency preparedness plans and/or reunification procedures for educational, child care, medical, recreational, and juvenile justice facilities.

Additionally, the NCMEC recently launched the Unaccompanied Minors Registry (UMR), our country's first national repository created to support the NCMEC's ability to collect, store, report and act on information related to children separated as a result of disaster. The UMR is available during all disasters (not only Stafford Act) and is accessible at the [NCMEC's website](#).

FEMA AND THE WHITE HOUSE COLLABORATE ON INNOVATIONS IN DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Disaster response and recovery is a growing field. Beyond finding new ways to communicate information about

safety and preparedness, FEMA and the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) understand that technology and tools can be created to serve communities in an emergency.

FEMA and OSTP conducted a "Data Jam/Think Tank" to generate new ideas in disaster response, reaching out to dozens of innovators, including representatives from Zappos, Airbnb, Marriott International, the Parsons School of Design, AOL/Huffington Post's Social Impact, The Weather Channel, Twitter, Topix.com, Twilio, New York City, Google and the American Red Cross (ARC).

The event began with an examination of the needs of survivors and responders in the wake of a disaster. Subgroups then formed to discuss not only how to address challenges but also to vote on the best solutions and commit to the path forward.

The proposal for various innovations covered a plethora of issues; examples included a communications platform, an aggregation of approved supply vendors, a crowd-funding process for small businesses affected by disaster and a "power-go-round" that could be pushed like a merry-go-round to generate emergency electricity.

To learn more about FEMA and OSTP's joint efforts to promote innovation in disaster recovery, read the rest of the story in the press release on [The White House Office of Science and Technology's website](#).

AMERICAN RED CROSS AID TO TYPHOON HAIYAN SURVIVORS HAS REACHED \$11 MILLION, AND CONTINUES TO RISE

In mid-November, the American Red Cross raised five million dollars to support the survivors of the Philippine typhoon, bringing the total to \$11 million of support, so far. The funding is able to supply survivors with needed materials such as food, blankets, hygiene kits and mosquito nets. The generosity of the donors allows additional specialists to travel to the affected areas to assist with recovery.

The Philippine and American Red Cross presence consists of thousands of volunteers, organized into teams, who are engaged in logistics, disaster assessment, shelter, health, water, sanitation and search and rescue efforts. Organizations in the area are partnering with the American Red Cross and the Philippine Red Cross to allocate experts where they can be most effective, to utilize the volunteers to the fullest and safest extent and to determine the best way to continue with disaster recovery.

To help with the continuing recovery efforts in this devastated area, please visit the [Red Cross Typhoon Appeal page](#), or spread awareness through Twitter ([@RedCross](#)) and [their Facebook page](#).

THE URBAN ASSEMBLY SCHOOL OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TRAINS THE NEXT GENERATION OF EMERGENCY PERSONNEL

From the list of core values, you may not guess that the recently opened New York City Urban Assembly School of Emergency Management (UASEM) was different from any other high school. Students are taught to be resilient and sympathetic to others in distress as a part of their focus on emergency management training.

Each of the core values of UASEM apply to the students' lives and aid in and the practical

comprehension of how these qualities impact the structure, cooperation and cohesion of an entire community. Students attending develop qualities necessary for any community leadership, emergency management or disaster response role that they wish to pursue. In that way, these high school students are considering their collegiate future and possible careers.

The NYC [Directory of New Schools & New Programs](#) includes a description of the unprecedented opportunities that the attendees of the magnet school have: “Students at UASEM have the unique opportunity to participate in career-related courses, internships and emergency simulations with our partners FEMA, American Red Cross, Department of Homeland Security and many more.” Over one hundred students have begun as freshmen this year, showing an interest in emergency management.

For more information about UASEM, please read through the [UASEM website](#).

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY: EXPANDING FEMA TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The National Preparedness Community is an online network of individuals who share resources, teach one another, connect with emergency management personnel and coordinate preparedness activities. The site is instrumental in spreading awareness about the vital need for communities to take action now, rather than waiting until it's too late.

Anyone can sign up and begin sharing lessons learned, discussing best practices or learning from one of the many experienced fellow members. In addition to preparedness on a national scale, some areas of the site are divided into regions or by topic. The site provides two-way dialogue, a platform for event promotion (through which you can post your own events) and file sharing.

Don't just conduct public outreach, become involved in public engagement by signing up on [the National Preparedness Community website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AMERICAN RED CROSS' NATIONAL YOUTH INVOLVEMENT MONTH

November was the American Red Cross's National Youth Involvement Month (NYIM). As mentioned in last month's newsletter, every week throughout November presented a different theme: Preparedness, Holiday Mail for Heroes, Blood Services & Fundraising and Recognition. To see what people are saying about NYIM events, search Twitter for the official hashtag, “[#NYIM](#)”. As part of week one's theme, Preparedness, [Red Cross sent out Twitter updates](#) to remind their followers about the importance of fire safety. The post included an informative video about smoke detectors with the humorous title, “[Smoke Detectors Are Annoying for a Reason](#).”

The NFL got in on the action for the second week as the Indianapolis Colts honored 175 families of fallen soldiers. Just before their November 10th game, fans received camouflage ribbons and had the opportunity to sign holiday cards for service members through ARC's [Holiday Mail for Heroes](#) program. 125 members from all branches of the military then presented a full-field flag during the national anthem. Finally, the team delivered care packages to veterans at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center.

To join the Colts' efforts by supporting your local Red Cross programs, look over the ways that they have listed online that you can help on the [ARC website](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates people about emergency preparedness for disasters and hazards that may impact their community and trains them in basic disaster response skills. CERT team members are trained to help in an emergency until first responders are able to arrive.

A variety of resources on [Teen CERT programs are featured on Ready.gov](#). Download the official Teen CERT Brochure, learn how to launch and maintain a Teen CERT program in your community and watch the CERT webinar!

Please email FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov if you have additional questions regarding Teen CERT.