

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



MARCH 2015 - ISSUE 3

Welcome to the March issue of the *Children and Disasters Newsletter*! As spring arrives and winter subsides, now is a great time to renew your commitment to youth preparedness!

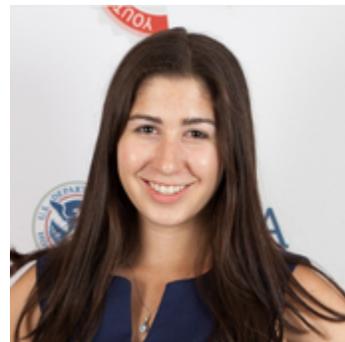
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"GOT PREPAREDNESS?" VIDEO COMPETITION FOR TEENS

Sophie Friedfeld-Gebaide, a FEMA Youth Preparedness Council member from Region II, is running a preparedness video competition, as a part of her membership legacy project.

Do you know any young people who are interested in preparedness, online videos, or both? If the answer is yes, they could be a great fit for "Got Preparedness?", a new national Facebook video competition for teens in grades 7–12 who live in the United States or its territories. The competition runs from March 12th to April 29th. The submission period for videos begins March 12th and ends April 22nd. The voting period will occur between April 22nd and April 29th.



To enter, teens will create a video (the topic depends on their grade level—the list of topics can be found at www.gotpreparedness.com) and upload it to the competition's Facebook page (facebook.com/got.preparedness). It is an excellent opportunity for students interested in disaster preparedness to make a difference and get their voices heard on a national level. It also provides them with a platform to raise awareness about natural disasters and to educate the public on how best to prepare for natural disasters. The winners (based on whichever video in each category gets the most likes, so be sure to vote!) will be announced following the competition.



Got Preparedness? was created to engage America's youth in disaster preparedness by providing a fun and exciting platform for them to learn about preparedness and to educate others on preparedness. The competition is also my activity for the spring [America's PrepareAthon!](#)

For more information, please visit www.gotpreparedness.com or click on the image to the left.

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS: 2015 FEMA INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AWARDS

The [Individual and Community Preparedness Awards](#) are a yearly opportunity for FEMA to recognize individuals and organizations around the country that are making their communities safer, stronger, and more resilient. The application period is now open, and we encourage you to apply or nominate the people and programs that are making a difference in your community.

One of the award categories, Outstanding Achievement in Youth Preparedness, may be of particular interest to readers of the *Children and Disasters Newsletter*, and we hope you will nominate any youth preparedness programs in your community! The [Awards website](#) showcases the winners from past years, and several have also been featured in this *Newsletter*—including last year's winner for Outstanding Achievement in Youth Preparedness, the [Mississippi Youth Preparedness Initiative \(MyPI\)](#).

Applications for the Individual and Community Preparedness Awards are being accepted through April 10, 2015, and the winners will be announced later this year. Additional information and application materials are available on the [Awards website](#).

MARCH IS AMERICAN RED CROSS MONTH

This March, celebrate [American Red Cross Month](#) by taking time to lend a hand to your neighbors, disaster victims, the elderly, or those in need in your community.

The American Red Cross' mission is to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. March is a great time to make or reinforce a commitment to get involved! Potential American Red Cross Month activities include [giving blood](#), [taking a class](#), or [volunteering](#) with your local chapter.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt established American Red Cross Month in 1943. Every year since, it has become a tradition that the sitting president issues a proclamation declaring March American Red Cross Month.

To learn about American Red Cross Month activities in your community, reach out to your local American Red Cross chapter. Contact information is available at <http://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter>.

CLOSING THE FLOODGATES

After last month's *Children and Disasters Newsletter* article on the flood threat from melting snow, a reader from Massachusetts wrote in to share another type of disaster that his family faced—flooding inside their house. What started as a small drip escalated into multiple leaks as frozen gutters prevented melting snow from draining properly. Ultimately the water even began causing electrical problems, when it caused a short in a light switch box. In the face of this fire hazard and the significant water damage elsewhere in their home, the family relocated to a hotel pending repairs.

While interior flooding is a serious problem, so too is the anxiety felt by children in the aftermath of disasters of all kinds. The [American Psychological Association](#) offers these tips to help adults monitor stress in children:

- **Observe Interactions:** A stressed child or teen may exhibit negative behavior changes such as irritability, moodiness, fear, or worrying. Be mindful of any changes to their eating habits or sleeping patterns. Any of the above can be symptoms of stress.
- **Listen and Translate:** Parents should take care to try to identify words that reflect stress. Children and teens might not explicitly say they are stressed but instead use phrases like “nothing is fun” to indicate stress.
- **Seek Support:** If a child or teen is exhibiting strong symptoms of stress, it may be beneficial to reach out to a licensed mental health professional like a psychologist.

To learn more about protecting your home from flooding and winter weather, check out these resources from [FEMA](#), the [American Red Cross](#), and the [Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety](#). To learn more about helping children manage stress, check out the “[Helping Children Handle Stress](#)” resource from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: THE NEXT GENERATION



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

By Alex Pasculle, Member Emeritus, FEMA Youth Preparedness Council

When kids daydream about what they want to be when they grow up, their first thought might not be emergency management. However, that could be because many kids haven't learned about the different types of emergency management careers. So this

month, let's talk about building positive relationships and ways kids can learn about the profession. If you know any kids who might find this interesting, please share it with them!

Building relationships and getting information is easier now than it ever has been. In particular, social media is great for career exploration. A good start can be helping kids find reliable accounts to follow. Here are a few examples from Twitter that can get you started: [@fema](#), [@Readygov](#), [@RedCross](#), [@CDCEmergency](#), and [@CraigatFEMA](#), which are all official, verified accounts.

I also suggest that kids visit local fire departments, emergency management offices, ambulance stations, and police stations to conduct “informational interviews.” During these interviews, kids can ask questions and hear firsthand accounts of what it’s like to work in emergency management. If they are eager to get involved immediately, kids can even ask about volunteer and training opportunities. I have a few recommendations for kids about conducting these informational interviews:

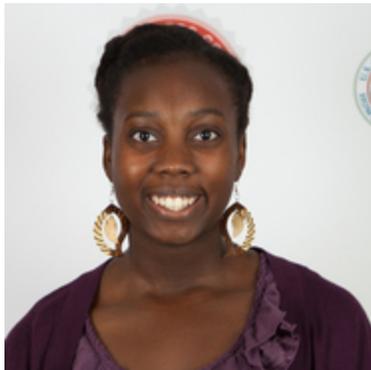
- Try to call or stop by in advance to set a time for the interview.
- Prepare a list of questions.
- Dress appropriately.
- Behave properly for a professional setting.

Following the recommendations above will help kids be taken more seriously. That helps to make a good impression, and can open up volunteer opportunities or even be the start of a career.

COUNCIL CORNER: SOMETHING TO TWEET ABOUT

Many of the FEMA Youth Preparedness Council members are active on social media, and last month we challenged them to design a preparedness social media post.

Here are some of their posts:

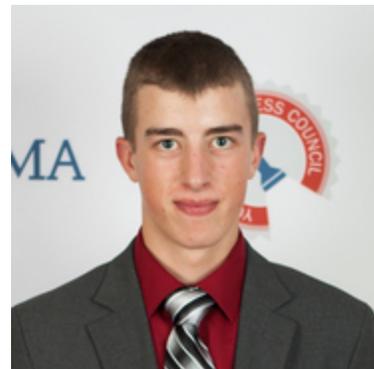


Sahara Duncan, Region III

Being prepared is not hard. Get younger kids involved and make it a group effort to put a kit together. Gather first aid supplies, etc. at a local store and put in a book bag, pillowcase, anything you have available.

Matthew Mayfield, Region IV

Go to www.ready.gov! Get prepared and stay safe, America!!!!



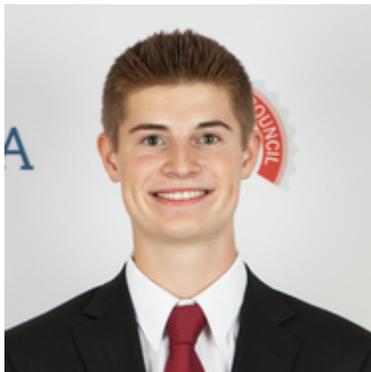


Daniel Wernsman, Region V

The best way to be prepared for a disaster is to know the possibilities that could happen and have survival/safety kits on hand because every disaster is unique.

Obie Jones, Region VI

Make sure you have access to ALL important papers in case of emergency. #preparedness #beprepared



Weston Lee, Region VIII

Take action to be prepared in your home and community! Build a kit, be informed, or volunteer. Visit Ready.gov or Redcross.org/prepare for more information.

Emily Rosenblum, Council Chair

Emergency Preparedness is the best form of community service because it helps everyone! Not only does it make you and those you're helping feel good but it makes you safer as well!



CONTACT US

Email: FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov

Online at <http://www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness>

Disclaimer: The reader recognizes that the federal government provides links and informational data on various disaster preparedness resources and events and does not endorse any non-federal events, entities, organizations, services or products. Please let us know about other events and services related to youth preparedness that could be included in future newsletters by contacting FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov.

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