

**Community Emergency Response Team Programs Called to Take Action with America's PrepareAthon!**

Disasters can happen anytime, anywhere. Across the country, natural and manmade hazards, including earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, wildfires, winter storms, as well as active shooters, cybersecurity threats, chemical spills, and hazardous materials, impact millions of people every year. Time after time, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) proves to be an essential component of an area's disaster response. By supporting public safety and professional responders, CERT programs can save lives and help to lessen the impact of disasters.

Since 2013, America's PrepareAthon!<sup>SM</sup>, a national, grassroots campaign to move communities from awareness into action for disaster preparedness, created a movement in our Nation. Each year, CERT programs collaborate with many participants of America's PrepareAthon! Their stories of service continue to shine brightly as beacons of community preparedness.



More CERT programs still need to answer that call. CERT programs across the country can join the movement to help make preparedness a social norm by adding to their community's PrepareAthon! story. This spring, National PrepareAthon! Day falls on Saturday, April 30, 2016. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) encourages communities and organizations to participate on or around that date by holding or participating in an event, class, discussion, or demonstration teaching people to be more prepared for disasters that could happen in their area. . The spring 2016 campaign focuses on specific hazards for media outreach in the weeks leading up to and following National PrepareAthon! Day, which can be customized to the hazards relevant to your community.

Week	Dates	Hazard-Focused Media Outreach
1	April 10–16	Flood Preparedness
2	April 17–23	Tornado Preparedness
3	April 24–30	Lead-up to National PrepareAthon! Day on April 30
4	May 1–7	Wildfire Preparedness (National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day is May 7)
5	May 15–21	Hurricane Preparedness
6	May 22–28	Extreme Heat Preparedness

America's PrepareAthon! provides a great opportunity to move from awareness to preparedness action. These are stories of how CERT programs have already taken action with the campaign.

**CERT Members Take Tornado Safety Training**

FEMA's Youth Preparedness Council member from Region VII, [Austin Witt](#), is an active member of the Mahaska County CERT program in Iowa, and he currently serves as CERT team captain and vice president of the Mahaska County CERT Board of Directors. On National PrepareAthon! Day—April 30, 2015—he led a technical discussion with his CERT program about the science behind a tornado and ways

CERT can help keep people safe relaying life-saving information to emergency officials and the National Weather Service when the situation warrants it.

### Los Angeles County CERT Programs Host Partner Events

In support of the [America's PrepareAthon! Children's Day](#), Los Angeles County's Office of Emergency Management partnered with the San Fernando Valley CERT and Tri-City CERT, which includes members from Gardena, Hawthorne, and Long Beach, CA. Using free resources provided on the America's PrepareAthon! website, in addition to their own, the CERT programs co-branded their events with the America's PrepareAthon! Children's Day for consistent messaging. As part of their PrepareAthon! events, the San Fernando Valley CERT conducted a training focused on first aid, splinting, and bandaging, as well as disaster planning inclusive of the entire community. In collaboration with the Los Angeles County Public Health Department, Tri-City CERT hosted its second emergency preparedness and safety fair in the City of Gardena, which attracted about 800 attendees from the city and surrounding neighborhoods and communities. Both the San Fernando Valley and Tri-City CERT events increased the preparedness of non-English-speaking community members by providing resources in Spanish, Korean, and Japanese.

Both CERT programs viewed [America's PrepareAthon! Children's Day](#) as a great opportunity for their members to interact with the public and other trained volunteers, including medical professionals, scout masters, and more people interested in taking CERT trainings. It served as a great time to recruit and educate everyone because the more you know, the better off you are.

### Guam's Teen CERT Members Volunteer with Guam's PrepareAthon!



Members of Guam's Teen CERT program participate in team building exercises, and the team regularly participates in Guam's PrepareAthon!

As part of [Guam's Youth Preparedness Program](#), FEMA's Youth Preparedness Council member from Region IX and Founder and President of the Harvest Christian Academy CERT Club, Kiahna Lee Espia, coordinates the island's Teen CERT program. She led CERT trainings for five AmeriCorps programs, and plans to establish Teen CERT programs in several public and private high schools; villages; and nonprofit, faith-based, and youth sports organizations on the island.

On September 26, 2015, Espia led a National Preparedness Month grand finale for Guam's PrepareAthon! During the event, Teen CERT members recruited new members for the school Teen CERT Clubs. Also, they distributed brochures about the Guam Youth Preparedness Program Service Learning Program facts sheets in English, Tagalog, Chamorro, and other Micronesian dialects;

and program brochures for CERT and Teen CERT.

**Be Smart. Take Part. Join In Today!**

Read more America's PrepareAthon! stories about how communities took action for disaster preparedness at [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare). Learn about the [10 Ways to Participate](#), and register your community's activities by visiting the [America's PrepareAthon! website](#) today!