

[MUSIC]
Stories of...
Safer
Stronger
Communities
ICP Awards
Excellence in Volunteer Sustainability
City of Irvine, CA
Community Emergency Response Team

Bill Whalen: We have a very robust CERT program. But what really, I think, sets us apart is about four or five years ago we set out on a mission to maintain that connectivity with the people we've trained. We recently graduated our 50th CERT class. We've trained over 1,500 community members in the CERT basic curriculum. We've, over the years, added to that curriculum to make things specific to our city.

Frank Southern: We have daytime classes, we have evening classes, we have teen classes. We have classes for businesses. We've already worked with our FedEx drivers. We're looking at working with our local Google organization, places of worship. So we try to do a lot of that. We work with our LDS church to do a program for how to cook during a disaster, and they put a series of classes out for us. We have a first aid program where we offer first aid CPR AED training. And through this training we've had three different incidences where the people we've trained actually have saved lives.

Bill Whalen: We created our volunteer leadership teams, so the program, although it was run by a small cadre of paid employees, really our volunteers run the program as far as organization goes. We divide it along ICS lines, so we have a planning group, an operations group, and a logistics group. Our CERT members are truly ambassadors of our police department, and if you look at a pin map of our city you will see a CERT-trained member virtually on every, in every neighborhood in our city of almost 80 square miles. And these are people who really have a positive contact with the police department and our advocates out there.

How do you build that bond with the community? You hear that every day. And this is one way. And I think what you have to do is not think traditionally of what a CERT member is. Yes, traditionally these are people who have additional skills and training who after a disaster can rise up to help themselves, help their family, help their neighbors. But there's so much more they can do.

And really what we've done is just given them the opportunity.

Frank Southern: The Irvine Police Department is like a family. The Chief of Police comes in, talks to every class. The Lieutenant comes in and talks to every one of our classes, as well as the fire chief which is assigned to the city of Irvine.

And it makes it like a family. They've become part of the public safety family.

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