

[MUSIC]

Stories of...

Safer

Stronger

Communities

ICP Awards

Outstanding Individual and Community Preparedness

Outstanding Citizen Corps Council

New York, NY

Ready New York, NYC Citizen Corps

NYC Community Emergency Response Team

Iskra Gencheva: In New York City the two major hazards are anything that has to do with the weather, weather-related emergencies, and fires.

Everything is possible in New York City. The only emergency that we can't have is a volcanic eruption. But everything else has happened, and it may happen again.

We live in a unique environment where we have about 1.8 million people who speak English less than well. And we recognize that it's extremely important for us to reach out to these communities and make sure that they're prepared.

And the other issue with emergency preparedness that we face is that people don't connect emotionally to the idea of emergency preparedness. They don't take steps to prepare, even if they listen to you and they think it's important.

So we created a toolkit for English-language classrooms.

We produced an episode on emergency preparedness specifically for English-language learners. And it's part of a TV show called "We are New York." The goal of the show is twofold: to teach people English and also to teach them about city services. The episode that we produced is specifically on emergency preparedness to teach people about emergency preparedness and important words that they need to know during emergencies, like, for example, shelter in place, a Go Bag, evacuation. So combining something so important like learning English with emergency preparedness I think has been very successful.

We distributed this toolkit to over 800 classrooms last year. The feedback that we've been getting from teachers and also conversation group leaders is that they love working with it. It helps them develop curriculum. Also, I've worked with some teachers who developed an entire emergency preparedness English-language curriculum for their classes.

And I think that the most important thing that we wanted to get out of this is tell people how to get information when there is an emergency and tell them what to expect. And I think that we've been successful with that.

[MUSIC]

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FEMA