

CHILDREN & DISASTERS NEWSLETTER



September 2016 - ISSUE 9

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FROM THE FIELD

Teens Participate in Annual Texas CERT Camp



The [Texas School Safety Center](#) (TxSSC), a research center at Texas State University and Affirmor of the [National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education](#), runs the national award-winning [Youth Preparedness Camp](#) on the university's main campus in San Marcos, TX. This year, the TxSSC and FEMA Region VI officials hosted two extra events while the camp was in session so that different groups—a Region VI Community Preparedness Working Group and a Youth Preparedness Advocacy Forum—could watch the camp in action. Stakeholders from five states—Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico—two universities, and one Tribal Nation observed the camp; they aim to take lessons learned home to their communities.

During the camp, youth divided into teams, and then community preparedness experts from across the region taught them how to develop their own action plans for their communities. They participated in a search and rescue scenario, fire suppression activities, and cribbing exercises. Together the youth gained confidence and focus, and they were eager to put to use the skills they learned in their communities.

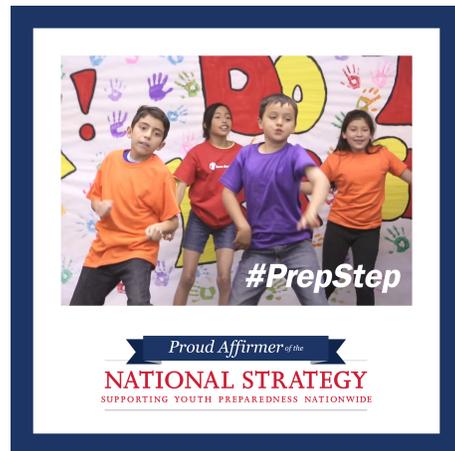
To learn more about TxSSC and the Youth Preparedness Camp, visit www.txssc.txstate.edu/events/youth-preparedness-camp.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dance for Preparedness on National PrepareAthon! Day

The Affirmers of the [National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education](#) will be holding Prep Step events during the last two weeks of September and invite you to join in! “[The Prep Step!](#)” is a fun song and dance that teaches kids the basics of emergency preparedness—and keeps them grooving and moving during break time, at a [Prep Rally](#), or at home. Participants can share their dance photos and videos on social media with [#PrepStep](#).

You can also [register](#) your Prep Step or other preparedness actions in support of the fall [National PrepareAthon! Day](#). Visit www.ready.gov/september for tips on ways to prepare and promote your actions.



Bring Weather Safety into the Classroom

The National Weather Service’s 2016 Back to School Campaign helps students and teachers get weather-ready. The campaign uses friendly mascot [Owlie Skywarn](#) and social media like [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to highlight [NOAA and partner educational resources](#). These resources help educators plan to cover preparedness in fun, practical ways during the school year.

Go to [WeatherReady Nation](#) for a complete list of the [Back to School Resources](#).



Spread Joy through Service

From September 1 through October 17, [generationOn](#) encourages youth to put kindness into action through service projects. How can youth be kind and increase preparedness? They can build an emergency kit for someone else, plan for disasters with neighbors, and help friends create a family communication plan for emergency situations.

The organization will select 100 [Kindness Ambassadors](#) to participate in both the Rules of Kindness campaign and the 7th annual Joy Maker Challenge, which runs from November 23 to December 23 and spurs youth volunteerism efforts to spread joy to people in need during the holidays. Kindness Ambassadors receive a \$50 grant, up to 500 Hasbro toys to donate during the holidays, and generationOn gear.

[Apply today](#) to be a Kindness Ambassador, and spread joy and preparedness in your communities.



Practice Earthquake Response Skills



Next month marks the annual ShakeOut season for earthquake drills. On October 20, everyone is encouraged to take part in a “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” drill at 10:20 a.m. The event also has other earthquake preparedness activities. Check out the [ShakeOut Drill Manual](#) for tips for K–12 schools to determine their level of participation.

ShakeOut also offers manuals for [childcare facilities and pre-schools](#), [colleges and universities](#), and [youth organizations](#). But ShakeOut isn’t just for educational groups—everyone can participate! Individuals, families, businesses, schools, colleges, government agencies, and organizations are all invited to register at www.shakeout.org.

RESOURCES

Promote #YouthPrep

As part of National Preparedness Month, FEMA released its [2016 Children & Youth Preparedness Social Media Toolkit](#). The toolkit includes safety and preparedness messages that can be easily shared on social media accounts. You can also find hashtags to use to join the conversation and graphics, videos, and related links to make your posts more engaging and interactive.

Click [here](#) to access the toolkit today!



Weather the Storm with the FEMA App

The [FEMA app](#) provides tools and tips to help you stay safe before, during, and after disasters. The app sends weather-related alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations you specify. It also gives safety reminders and tips for action like building an emergency kit checklist, discussing a family communication plan, and finding a meeting place. You can use the app to locate emergency shelters and Disaster Recovery Centers where you can talk to FEMA representatives in person.

You can also share disaster photos to help first responders locate people in need and assess damage after a disaster.

The app is currently available for free download on all [Apple](#), [Android](#), and [Blackberry](#) devices. It's also available in [Spanish](#). Learn more about it at www.fema.gov/mobile-app.



Protect Children from Zika



To track the spread of the Zika virus, [Child Care Aware® of America](#) uses a [comprehensive website](#) that provides the latest information on the virus for child care providers and parents.

In June, Child Care Aware's Emergency Preparedness Team hosted a free webinar

with experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Children's Health Team, and Pregnancy and Birth Defects Task Force. [Watch the recording](#), which covers topics including:

- Basics of the virus (transmission, signs and symptoms, risk factors);
- Roles of child care providers in prevention (mosquito control and repellent guidelines); and
- Recommendations for pregnant mothers and parents considering pregnancy.

Additionally, the CDC developed [interim guidance for K–12 district and school administrators](#). It provides stakeholders with information for planning school-related activities, and recommends ways to reduce the potential risk for Zika virus transmission on school premises.

View the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) TA Center's [Keeping Students and Staff Safe from Infectious Diseases](#) web page for additional resources.

Get Parents Focused on School Safety

Published by members of the American Academy of Pediatrics, an article at HealthyChildren.org explains the organized, systematic emergency operations plan schools already have in place, and suggests ways parents can be safety advocates to their children.

It also lists the key words used during school safety drills and outlines how parents are notified in the event of an emergency situation. The article recommends that parents make sure their contact information is up-to-date with the school's records, review their [family emergency plan](#), and arrange for the school to have [extra medication](#) or other necessary items to address the unique needs of

each child.

The article also provides resources, such as [Helping Your Child Cope](#), to ensure children's needs are met in emergency situations and following a disaster.



YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

Arkansas Teen Honored with 2016 Youth Humanitarian Award

Casey Williams, 18, has been honored with the [2016 Arkansas Youth Humanitarian Award](#) for her work as a youth humanitarian in her community in Vilonia, AR. When she was just 13 years old, a long-tracked, high-end EF2 tornado struck the town during the 2011 Super Outbreak. Three years later, a violent EF4 tornado touched down west of Ferndale, AR, and moved along almost the same path, causing many casualties and extensive damage, especially in her hometown.



She took the lead as the town's volunteer coordinator, processing thousands of volunteers in the weeks following the storm. After serving on the Rebuild Vilonia Committee, Williams held various leadership roles in emergency preparedness. She represented Arkansas on FEMA's Region VI Youth Preparedness Council and collaborated with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) to develop the state's own Youth Preparedness Council. While serving on Arkansas' Youth Preparedness Council, she developed an [online independent certification program](#) for youth to learn preparedness skills.

In spring 2015, Williams worked with members of the Vilonia Fire Department to implement preparedness actions in their community through ["Mayhem in May": Vilonia's PrepareAthon! for Tornado Safety](#). Additionally, Williams shines as a positive example for Arkansas students. She regularly speaks at elementary schools throughout the state, playing games with children and showing them how to make a disaster kit for their homes.

To access preparedness resources offered by ADEM, visit www.adem.arkansas.gov/aem/plan-prepare.

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Online: www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness

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