



THE GREAT SHAKEOUT

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BECOME A TRANSFORMER!

By Sherry Colgan Stone,
RCCD Emergency Planning & Preparedness Coordinator

Over the last year and a half of my employment at RCCD as the Emergency Planning and Preparedness Coordinator, the most frequently asked questions I've received are regarding the purchase of equipment, tools, and technology. I have heard statements like "We need a rapid alert system" and "We need more emergency kits."

And YES, we need these and are working on making sure that all staff and students are safe and that we have the right tools to respond to disasters. When supplying more "tools" to the colleges, however, we run the risk of being caught up in technological change, which doesn't always solve the main problems.

A perfect example of this is our fire extinguishers. We have them all over the college campuses, however, when I have conducted trainings, and have asked participants, how many people know how to use a fire extinguisher, very few people have raised their hand. An incredible tool we have, but if people are not trained to use them, or even worse, refuse to use them, then they are of no advantage to us.

In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins states that "good-to-great companies used technology as an accelerator of momentum, not a creator of it." We can buy the latest system in rapid alert (mass communication) and write the best plans, but the real change

will come about as we become more transformational in our mental model of emergency preparedness. When we start thinking about emergency preparedness as everyone's job (not just the job of College Safety and Police) and start acting on that type of thinking, we will begin the road to more transformational change in this area. It will take a shift in thinking and behavior at all levels.

I am inspired by people like **Terry Welker** and **Henry Bravo** in the Digital Library at Riverside City College, who have a holistic mental model of their jobs and mission within the realm of academia. In addition to providing the normal day-to-day operational support to the college, they understand they have the responsibility to keep themselves, their staff and any students in their care safe. They know what the potential threats are and have talked about them at staff meetings; they drill for those threats (fire, earthquake, active shooter, etc.), they involve their entire staff on a regular basis, they empower their staff to improve their own knowledge base by providing time for training and exercises AND they purchase tools that will help the Library staff and students in a disaster, but more importantly, they train and drill with those tools to increase proficiency and familiarity. Terry and Henry are modest when they talk about the work that they have done, and when they give credit, it is to their staff who have taken ownership of emergency preparedness.
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START THE TRANSFORMATION

Some ideas for moving staff towards ownership and transformation;

- Set the standard, by taking ownership of emergency preparedness (get your own kits together, make your family plan, evacuate the next time the fire alarm goes off—even if it is a false alarm)
- Talk about emergency preparedness in a staff meeting (even if it is as simple as pointing out an emergency exit, or reviewing how to use a fire extinguisher.)
- Have members of your office/department do their own research on lessons learned and best practices in emergency preparedness and have them make a presentation during a meeting.
- Participate in the ShakeOut by conducting a "Drop, Cover and Hold-On" drill.
- Provide release time for staff to attend CERT training (Community Emergency Response Training). What you will get in return is a well trained, inspired team member who will probably want to take on emergency preparedness projects. CERT Training is usually free or about \$25.

Visit The Great ShakeOut website at <http://www.shakeout.org/>

Visit RCCD's Emergency Preparedness Website at

<http://www.rcc.edu/administration/emergencyPreparedness>

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BECOME A TRANSFORMER! (CONT.)

I doubt that Terry and Henry ever think about the fact that they are engaging in transformational leadership and change - that by their unwavering resolve to keep people safe they are taking the Digital Library to new levels. If you have the chance to talk to members of the Digital Library staff, I think you will see that they have an understanding that “Emergency Preparedness” may be in my job title, but that by virtue of their roles on campus (and not by any piece of paper in

human resources or any oath they have taken) “emergency preparedness” is in their job description, and their behavior clearly demonstrates this understanding.

I know that there are others out there who “own” emergency preparedness at the colleges; you serve on safety committees, you go over emergency procedures in classes, you hold table-top exercises in staff meetings, you have your kits at home, in your car and under your desk at work, etc. For all of

you who have embraced it— Thank you.

I may have the job title, and I can help facilitate preparedness, but truly, you are the ones with the power in this area - to use the fire extinguisher, to lockdown the office/classroom, to have your home prepared so you can serve as a Disaster Service Worker, to practice your office’s/classroom’s response during an emergency... you will be the person on the frontline when an incident happens.

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH



Tornado at Ben Clark Training Center on May 22, 2008. Tornadoes have become more prevalent in California. Do you know how to respond during a Tornado?

The State of Colorado developed a “**Top 10 List for Preparedness on a Budget**” The suggestions are practical and can be life (& money) saving.

1 Plan for the types of disasters that can happen in the area where you live. (Did you know that California has been experiencing more tornadoes in recent years? One went right through Moreno Valley College annex sites).

2 Create your own personalized list. You may not need everything included in “ready made” kits and there may be additional items you need based on your personal situation. For example, if you have pets, you may need special items. Don’t forget to have supplies in your car and at work.

3 Budget emergency preparedness items as a “normal” expense. Even \$20.00

a month can go a long way to helping you be ready. Buy one preparedness item each time you go to the grocery store.

4 Save by shopping sales. Make use of coupons and shop at stores with used goods. Don’t replace your ready kit items annually, just replace and cycle through those items that have a shelf life (e.g., batteries, food). You may want to test the radio and flashlight every September to make sure they are in good working order.

5 Store water in safe containers.

You don’t have to buy more expensive bottled water, but make sure any containers you use for water storage are safe and disinfected.

6 Request preparedness items as gifts. We all receive gifts we don’t need or use. What if your friends and family members gave you gifts that could save your life? Don’t forget to protect them by

sending preparedness gifts their way, too.

7 Think ahead. You are more likely to save money if you can take your time with focused and strategic shopping. It’s when everyone is at the store right before a storm hits that prices are going to be higher. Use a list to avoid duplicating items when you are stressed or panicked.

8 Review your insurance policy annually and make necessary changes. When a disaster strikes, you want to know that your coverage will help you get back on your feet. Renters need policies too, in order to cover personal property.

9 Update contact records. Have an accurate phone list of emergency contact numbers. If you are prepared, you may be able to help friends and neighbors who need assistance. By sharing preparedness supplies, you can help each other.

10 Trade one night out to fund your 72-hour kit. Taking a family of four to the movies can cost upwards of \$80-\$100. Just one night of sacrifice could fund a 72-hour ready kit.

HELP!!!

Sherry Colgan Stone, Emergency Planning & Preparedness Coordinator, can help you! Types of things she can do/help you with:

- Recommendations for emergency kits
- Hazard assessments

- Presentations/trainings for staff/classes
- Table-top exercises
- Drills

Contact Sherry at (951) 218-6869 or sherry.stone@rcc.edu



Help comes in many different forms!

