



THE GREEN HELMET

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

April 2025

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO SAVE CERT!



FAIRFAX COUNTY

CERT

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TEAM

Sponsored by
Fairfax County
Fire & Rescue



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Save CERT

Fairfax County CERT is in Danger of Being Eliminated!

Watkins G.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP
TO SAVE CERT!**



The County Executive Has Presented His Proposed Budget to the Board of Supervisors

On February 18th, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors published the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget (FY2026). Much to our shock and disappointment, the proposed budget recommended the complete elimination of the CERT program and its tiny \$34,000 budget. A Save CERT group was created and we began a multi-pronged approach to defeating CERT's elimination. This includes creating a letter writing campaign, updating the website, creating a petition, attending Board member budget meetings and an extensive media campaign. **The Board will hold public hearings on April 22nd-24th and make its decision on May 13th. The new budget will take effect on July 1st.**

How Can You Help?

1. Read more about our campaign on Save CERT webpage: Fairfaxcountycert.org/save-cert
2. Write letters with your objection to the Chairman of the Board Jeff McKay and each district supervisor
 - Please write to all of them, if possible (a total of ten letters)
 - Board of Supervisors Contact Information: Fairfaxcountycert.org/save-cert/board-of-supervisors-contacts
 - Sample Letter Templates Here: Fairfaxcountycert.org/save-cert/sample-letter-templates
3. Sign our petition Petition: Change.org/p/save-fairfax-county-cert-from-being-eliminated
4. Take the county's online budget survey: Engage.fairfaxcounty.gov/fy26budget
5. Sign up to speak as an individual at the board of supervisors' budget meetings
 - Register to Speak before the Board: Fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form
 - Board of Supervisors' Meetings: Fairfaxcountycert.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Board-of-Supervisors-Meetings-and-Speakers-2025.xlsx
 - ▶ April 22 starts at 4:00 pm
 - ▶ April 23 starts at 3:00 pm
 - ▶ April 24 starts at 3:00 pm
6. Attend the board of Supervisors meetings Board of Supervisors' Meetings - We can use the visual impact of CERT members in uniform in the audience
7. Submit comments to the virtual town hall meetings
 - Ways to Submit Testimony: Fairfaxcounty.gov/clerkservices/ways-provide-public-hearing-testimony
8. Speak to your district supervisor – If you have a connection or opportunity, speak with your supervisor
 - Contact Board of Supervisors: Fairfaxcountycert.org/save-cert/board-of-supervisors-contacts
 - To find out which district you are in, use My Neighborhood website: Fairfaxcounty.gov/myneighborhood
9. Share this with everyone (friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, associations/organizations, ...)

Please Make Your Voice Heard, and Your Presence Known

The future of our CERT program hangs in the balance. If you have any questions, contact:

Watkins Gray at DeputyLead@FairfaxCountyCERT.org

Introducing Robby Drapela

New Deputy Program Manager

Robby D.



Hello Everyone!

I'm excited to officially join the Fairfax County CERT team as your new Deputy Program Manager. Many of you already know me from my work with the Springfield Volunteer Fire Department, which I joined upon returning to Fairfax County in 2020. I often brought the canteen known as V-021 to the food distribution events. I've been incredibly impressed by how much CERT has grown over the past decade, and I'm eager to be a part of its continued success.

For those I haven't met yet, service has been a constant in my life. I've been a first responder for over 20 years, starting as a teenager in a small Texas town and continuing through my nearly 17 years of active duty in the Coast Guard, and rising through the ranks at Lorton Volunteer Fire Department to serving as Fire Chief in Laguna Vista, Texas. In doing all of this, I've seen firsthand how vital a strong team is during emergencies.

Currently, I work in the Major Acquisitions Directorate at Coast Guard Headquarters, primarily focusing on Human Resources. However, my Coast Guard experience is diverse—ranging from search and rescue

and law enforcement to serving as a training officer, EMT, and even a "Locker Leader" (the shipboard equivalent of a Battalion Chief). Each of these roles has equipped me with valuable skills that I'm excited to bring to CERT.

Outside of work, my time is filled with my three amazing daughters—Lucy (9), Maymay (12), and Jojo (14). I currently have a softball coach shirt on its way if that tells you how busy they actually keep me. And then there's the fire department where I'm a line officer, over membership and the canteen coordinator.

As many of you know, I initially joined to assist with the transition for Jeff's upcoming retirement, and I've since stepped into the role of Interim Training Director. I'd love to hear from you—what training would you like to see? Do you have a skill you'd like to share? Please don't hesitate to reach out; my email is always open.

I look forward to working with all of you to make Northern Virginia even safer and more prepared!

Robby Drapela, Deputy Program Manager
DeputyProgramManager@FairfaxCountyCERT.org

CERT Volunteer Testimonials

Sharing Their Real World Experiences

CERT Volunteers

“I realize the skills and confidence CERT afforded me, led to affording her medical professionals on site sooner, thereby providing her the greatest likelihood of survival and recovery.”

“As a recent Fairfax CERT graduate, I had entered a Starbucks café and observed an older, heavyset female vomiting in a trash can, while the people in the café moved away from her. I approached the woman, explained I was medically trained and asked if I could be of assistance.

She agreed, and in response to my questions, revealed that she’d sustained a head injury the night prior where she was unconscious for several minutes and that her husband was shopping in Target. She was vomiting, nauseous, dizzy, and confused. I directed the barista to call 911 and had a Target employee contact the husband via the intercom, while CERT grad positioned her safely, comforted her, and relayed the situation and vitals to the 911 operator on the barista’s phone.

I protected myself from any harmful fluids and kept her talking to help her maintain consciousness. EMS arrived within 4 minutes, where I relayed the situation, her known medical history (e.g., high blood pressure) and provided her valuables (purse, iPad, etc.) to her husband. As EMS moved her to the ambulance, she lost consciousness and they took immediate steps to revive her. I relay this situation because I realized that even though I’ve maintained up-to-date first aid training throughout my adult life, had I not recently taken CERT, I would likely have handled things very differently, if not at all.

- 1- Given COVID, the flu, and other communicable diseases, I may not have engaged at all, failing to realize there is a safe way to provide aid in most situations.
- 2- Given that she was overweight, I may have given in to biases that may have allowed me to construct a story as to why she was ill, rather than inquire if she needed help.
- 3- If I’d engaged before my CERT training, I’d have likely tried to do it all-call 911, track down the husband, etc.
- 4- I wouldn’t have been as confident in what information was relevant to EMS personnel.
- 5- Lastly, I realize the skills and confidence CERT afforded me, led to affording her medical professionals on site sooner, thereby providing her with the greatest likelihood of survival and recovery.”

“My wife and I had a house fire, which could have been devastating. Instead, our damage was minimal, our family and animals are alright, and my CERT training was directly responsible for that.”

“My wife and I had a house fire, which could have been devastating. Instead, our damage was minimal, our family and animals are alright, and my CERT training was directly responsible for that:

- The fire safety portion of the training taught me how to use the fire extinguisher, which I was able to use to put out the fire before it caused major damage.
- I only bought that fire extinguisher because of the CERT course.
- CERT taught us how to plan and practice our emergency action plan. Because I came home and told my wife we needed a plan, we sat down and created one, walked through it, and refreshed it often. During the emergency, we were able to quickly get the cats and get ourselves out the door. We would not have been prepared otherwise. My wife, who has not taken the course but learned from me passing along what I learned, was ready and knew exactly what to do to take action immediately.
- In the aftermath of the fire, I had the skills and equipment necessary to safely navigate the house - PPE, hard hat, headlamp, etc. I used the CERT supplies that were provided with the program, and the ones I had bought since, to make sure we could safely enter the house, turn the electricity back on, and start cleanup.

Since then, we have informed many neighbors and friends about the fire, but also why we survived and why our house was relatively unscathed. It's prompted many other friends directly to check their fire alarms, and buy extinguishers."

"I heard them banging on the next door and I heard "HELP!". I opened my door, and as soon as I did, the lady who lives in the apartment across from me, ran up and grabbed my arm, begging for help."

"Many members of CERT can tell you stories where their training was used in a real-life incident. For me, my story happened last year.

Late one night, I heard loud banging on my apartment door. At first, I thought maybe it was someone who came home drunk knocking on the wrong door, but something told me that wasn't right, so I walked quickly towards the door and looked out the peephole. It took me 5 seconds to get to the door, but it felt longer. Then I heard them banging on the next door and I heard "HELP!". I opened my door, and as soon as I did, the lady who lives in the apartment across from me, ran up and grabbed my arm, begging for help. She said her husband passed out and hit his head and was not responding.

I felt a pit in my stomach and slight fear that I wouldn't know how to help. I pushed that down fast. I looked at my husband, who was now at the door too, and told him to call 911. She ran back inside her place. I put on my slip-on shoes and walked over. As I knocked on her door to ask if I could come in, a neighbor from downstairs ran up and asked how they could help. I told her they are having a medical emergency and 911 has been called. Since we live in a gated community and the gate never opens to sirens like it is supposed to, I asked her to get her gate clicker and make sure the emergency vehicles could get in and to guide them to this apartment.

Then my neighbor next door, let's call him Stan, comes out and says he knows first aid; I told him to come with me. We went inside. Her husband, the patient, was now up and walking towards the bedroom with her help. My husband came in and handed me the phone with 911 on it and left as he didn't know what else to do. I put 911 on speaker, gave them my name, the patient's current status, and said the wife was here to answer questions about the patient.

The patient began asking for water and Stan said "I will get water!" and the 911 water operator and I both yelled "No water!". Stan asked why not, and I said "because there is a concern that he may throw up, making things worse" and the 911 operator agreed. At this time, the patient passed out again. This time he was in a very confined space. I guided the wife and Stan to put him in the recovery position on the floor as I could not reach him easily and they were closer.

The wife became very distraught and could no longer communicate with 911, so I took that over fully. The wife was now completely covering her husband's head with her body. Since we did not know why he was passing out, I kept checking on him in case he stopped breathing and I had to administer CPR. It took minutes for the first responders to arrive, but it also felt like forever. 911 then said we could hang up now. Stan and I cleared a path in their very cluttered hallway so that the gurney could get through easier and then left the apartment so the professionals could do their job.

I was amazed how calm and clear headed I felt throughout the incident. And to be honest, I didn't really do much. However, my husband and my neighbors told me that they were impressed by the way I helped without hesitation, that I knew what to do, gave clear directions to everyone, and stayed calmer than they could have. And for that, I truly have CERT to thank."

“The Stop the Bleed training I received through our CERT organization was utilized two months later to help assist my neighbor...Thankfully, the emergency room was able to save his life along with his artery and leg. It was an extremely close call.”

“The Stop the Bleed training I received through our CERT organization was utilized two months later to help assist my neighbor, a sleep-deprived young father and Marine, after he accidentally discharged his concealed weapon into his upper thigh while entering his doorway. I and another neighbor (a nurse), who was also outside and nearby, provided pressure to the wound in an attempt to slow things down until the police and first responders arrived. Thankfully, the emergency room was able to save his life along with his artery and leg. It was an extremely close call. While the young father provided quick action by using his own belt as a makeshift tourniquet, based on the type of wound and location, I’m not sure he would be alive today if it wasn’t for the quick action of his neighbors also applying pressure until the cavalry arrived.

All this to say, I’m extremely grateful for the training I’ve received through the organization. The impact, training, and resources that the CERT program has provided is invaluable to our community and residents. These benefits far exceed the annual cost of the program and I hope we can secure its continued funding.”

“We all learned that working together we can all grow in our skills and support each other and the mission.”

“I took my CERT Basic training 15 years ago. A lot has changed in the Program since then. So, I took one of the recent Cadre Training classes. This provided a lot of information on how the CERT Basic class is done today. However, the best part was helping with Class 199 at the Sully Community Center.

I learned how much work goes into preparing, planning, and presenting the class. Being there for each of the classes through the final helped to put the pieces together so far as what is being taught and how to teach it. Sometimes, what you think you are communicating isn’t what is being heard. This taught me to look, and listen, for feedback from the students. If one person doesn’t understand, then maybe I need to try something different.

Helping with the class trained, or retrained, me on my CERT skills. If you don’t practice the skills they will be forgotten. I learned from both the trainers and the students.

Maybe the most satisfying part of helping with the class was seeing the students grow and bond with each other. We all learned that working together we can all grow in our skills, and support each other and the mission.”

“CERT has given me a strong sense of purpose. It showed me that people from all neighborhoods, districts, and cities come together to learn these skills to assist during emergencies.”

“Community service and emergency preparedness are vital to building strong, resilient communities. By dedicating time and effort to helping others and planning for potential crises, individuals enhance the well-being of those around them and foster their own personal growth. In times of need, preparedness and service can mean the difference between chaos and stability, making these efforts essential for a thriving and secure community.

I am a sophomore in high school and a certified member of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), having completed my training in December 2023 with CERT Team 186. Initially, I joined CERT as an intriguing activity to do with my dad. Coming out of COVID, I have to admit that the thought of having some mastery over an emergency situation brought me comfort. As the course went on, I became deeply invested in learning how I could potentially bring relief in an emergency.

Beyond the basic CERT training, I took CERT Advanced First Aid and Simple Machines: Leveraging and Cribbing

classes. Through my CERT trainings, I learned how to respond to both small-scale emergencies and large-scale disasters. I gained knowledge in first aid, stroke safety, and search and rescue, as well as hands-on practice in life-saving techniques. I participated in high-stress drills that simulated real emergencies, allowing us to practice patient assessment and teamwork in chaotic environments.

A highlight of my CERT training was when my younger sister volunteered to be a victim actor, impaled and stranded in an abandoned house. I had the opportunity to find her and carry her on a stretcher. Being in a drill like this gave me familiarity and confidence in what would undoubtedly be a stressful and harrowing real-life experience. This hands-on experience made me realize how physically demanding emergency response can be and how many people are needed to transport an injured person safely. The drills gave me a newfound appreciation for first responders and the importance of teamwork during crises. More profoundly, I let myself believe for a moment that the fake blood was real, and it struck me that without the others there to help me, I wouldn't be able to carry my sister to safety. I knew then that being in CERT is as much for me as it is for the people I'm trying to help.

CERT has given me a strong sense of purpose. It showed me that people from all neighborhoods, districts, and cities come together to learn these skills to assist during emergencies. The camaraderie among CERT members is inspiring—we are all working toward a common goal of making our county safer. My interactions with current CERT leaders have shown me the lasting impact of a lifelong commitment to community service, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to train alongside dedicated individuals who prioritize safety.

Being part of CERT has been a transformative experience, equipping me with life-saving skills while strengthening my connection to the community. This program benefits not only its volunteers but also our neighborhoods by ensuring more people are prepared for emergencies. Starting this journey of public service at a young age lays the groundwork for further strengthening this connection into adulthood. While many of the current CERT leaders take time from their busy workday to serve, I also observed that many leaders are retired government or military workers who freely give their time and energy. They demonstrate that public service should be a lifelong passion. I've learned that every young person can't just wait for this burden to serve to suddenly spring up from within their heart but sometimes you have to take a step forward and you'll be surprised how the heart follows after your feet. More than anything, our youth need the opportunity to join programs like CERT because the return on investment goes beyond what can be calculated. I believe it produces a lifestyle of service and a passion to help others that will extend well past our youth.

I strongly encourage the Fairfax County Board to continue supporting the CERT program. The skills taught in CERT training are invaluable, and the program fosters a culture of preparedness that makes Fairfax safer and stronger. Investing in CERT means investing in the resilience and well-being of our citizens, encouraging a culture of service within our youth, and ensuring we are ready to face any emergency together."

Do You Have an Experience You Would Like To Share? Please Contact Kelly O. at:
Marketing@FairfaxCountyCERT.org

CERT Canteen and Flight 5342

Supporting First Responders at the Scene

Char S.



Midair Collision at Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) - January 29, 2025

When the incident at DCA happened, it originally came through the First Due App as a 6-passenger plane and helicopter accident. I texted the other County Units on WhatsApp to see if they were watching the incident. Both 422 Greater Springfield and 417 Centreville responded they were.

Once the TV broke in with the Breaking News, all three of the County Canteen Units were scrambling to come up with crews. I texted them that this was going to be a long incident since it had been corrected to be a 60-passenger plane and a helicopter.

At 10:15 pm, a Fairfax County Canteen was "officially" requested. Both CAN422 & CAN417 decided to roll out at the same time. Since it was so cold and by the water, I offered CERT as a relief for CAN417 in 4 hours. In the meantime, I set up three CERT teams for the event. Team 1 to relieve CAN417 at 3 am, Team 2 to relieve Team 1 at 7 am, and Team 3 to relieve Team 2 at 11 am. I was coordinating with the County Canteen Coordinator as well as CAN417 and CAN422.

We sent our CERT Team 1 out to get the vehicle going around 2 am so they could relieve CAN417 at 3 am - as CAN417 requested relief. I figured since CAN422 had another vehicle, that they would take care of relieving themselves, especially since they went down immediately when the call came in.

Our CAN400 arrived on scene at 1724 South Capitol Street SE at the police helipad at 3:50 am to relieve CAN417. The Team was briefed by CAN417 and told someone would be coming back to bring supplies for both CAN417 & CAN400. CAN417 said they hadn't seen anyone come back and to please accept any supplies brought over for ourselves although no one ever returned with supplies.

We mostly served hot coffee and hot chocolate due to the cold and wind by the water. As Lani Y. stated "all the responders were appreciative of our presence and 'thanks' were heard many times. The area was very solemn and there were quite a few weary faces".

At 5:30 am, we were dismissed and picked up to leave the scene. We were back at CERT Station and back in service by 6:00 am. A huge thank you to Marshall L. and Lani Y. who were Team 1; James S. and Aaron C. as Team 2; and Mary S. and Andrew B. as Team 3. Even though Team 2 and 3 didn't go out, they offered their availability and helped me have a plan of action to be sure we took care of not only the first responders but also

our own CERT Teams at the site should the need have been extended.

On a totally separate note, the Uniformed Fire Officer (UFO) called me later that afternoon to ask me to call a Captain Floyd down at the DCA Command Post. I immediately phoned him and he was asking if I was the person in charge of coordinating the Fairfax County CERT Canteen. I told him I was. He thanked us for coming down to the site at 3 am and I asked him if there was anything else we could do to help the situation. He said he wasn't in need at the moment but wanted the direct contact information just in case. I informed him we were available for anything they needed. I hung up and immediately phoned Jeff Katz to let him know of the conversation. I'm pretty sure CERT did a great job in a very trying, sad, and chaotic situation for him to personally track us down. Or at least that's what I choose to believe. Great job team!!

Be Prepared!

At Home and Everywhere Else

Julie T.

Preparedness should be a continuous and intentional effort. The preparedness cycle indicates that we need to keep revisiting what we have done and find any gaps. Last issue, I discussed some ways to prepare at home. Now you need to think about preparing if a disaster strikes when you aren't at home. Do you have supplies for yourself at work? What emergency supplies might you need, and what is already available?

You should watch for locations of emergency supplies everywhere you go. Whether it's church, work, school, theaters, etc. you should be noticing locations of things like fire alarms, fire extinguishers, AEDs, and first aid supplies. Watch for other supplies that could be used in an emergency. What supplies would you like to always have available? There are key chain CPR masks or first aid kits. If you regularly carry a purse or backpack, you can include something slightly larger.

Another thing to think about is escape routes. How would you get out of the area in a large disaster? How would you get home, if that's your destination? How would you leave your location? If it's an office building or something else big, notice emergency exits and find out where they go. If you want to find your car in the parking garage, you need to know how to get there from the exit you take. Particularly at places you spend a lot of time, try to check out all of the emergency exits, or at least find out where they lead.

The disaster cycle implies that you're actually experiencing a disaster. Since we haven't had any large scale disasters, think about what disasters are most likely in our area. Storms are likely. Flooding can be a factor depending on where you live or drive. With our proximity to DC, manmade disasters are possible. Think about how you would react to each scenario. Many of the preparations are the same. Continuing training is a great way to keep your skills up so, not only are your supplies there, but you're set to use them.



Are You Prepared for a Flood?

Flooding Can Happen Anytime and Anywhere

Ginny K.



Prepare Now

As we have seen recently, flooding can happen anytime and anywhere. Floods can be the result of rain, snow, storm surges, and overflow from dams and other bodies of water. Prepare now for yourself and your family.

- ▶ Prepare a Family Disaster Plan: [Ready.gov/Plan](https://www.ready.gov/Plan)
- ▶ Make sure that you have insurance coverage
 - Most homeowner plans do not cover flooding - check out [Floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) to find a plan
- ▶ Know your risk: [msc.FEMA.gov/Portal/Home](https://www.msc.fema.gov/Portal/Home)
- ▶ Photograph and make a list of all personal property
- ▶ Keep insurance and other documents safe in a safe deposit box and/or with an out-of-area relative
- ▶ Prepare your disaster supply kit
- ▶ Make an evacuation plan in case you need to leave the area

Resources:

[Redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)
[FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov)
[Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)
[Weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)
[Weather.gov/Flood](https://www.weather.gov/Flood)
[Water.Weather.gov/ahps](https://www.water.weather.gov/ahps)
[Weather.gov/ilm/Mobile](https://www.weather.gov/ilm/Mobile)

NOAA All Hazards Radio:

[Weather.gov/nwr](https://www.weather.gov/nwr)

Wireless Emergency Alerts for Flash Flood Warnings:

[Weather.gov/wrn/wea](https://www.weather.gov/wrn/wea)

The Moulage Team

Applies Makeup and Prosthetics to Role-Player Patients and Victims

Susy L.

What is Moulage?

Moulage is the art of creating simulated injuries to assist with training emergency response and medical personnel. It involves making and applying simulated wounds (called “appliances”) or special effects makeup to simulate traumatic injuries such as broken bones, bruises, impalements, or lacerations, as well as medical symptoms such as paleness, shock, hives, or sweatiness. The goal of moulage is to create a more realistic training environment, both helping students to properly identify, diagnose, and treat injuries and symptoms, as well as to expose students to the real world stresses that seeing such injuries or symptoms presents.

Who Uses Moulage?

Since the beginning of our CERT Program, we have used moulage for basic training final exercises to add a new element to training for the students – live “victims” with realistic looking injuries to triage and treat. As our moulage team has grown both in size and experience, we have become a “go to” resource for other emergency response organizations to call upon when they need moulage services. For example, CERT moulage team regularly provides moulage support to the following groups:

- ▶ The Fire & Rescue Academy’s (FRA’s) volunteer EMT program, assisting with mass casualty exercises, ambulance operations classes, testing of psychomotor skills, and more recently, a Basic Life Support (BLS) Lead Provider class
- ▶ The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA), assisting with triennial emergency response exercises at Dulles and Reagan airports
- ▶ Virginia Task Force 1 (VA-TF1) urban search and rescue exercises
- ▶ Falls Church Academy’s mass casualty exercises and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program testing

It has also supported a wide variety of other customers and events including:

- ▶ A zombie-themed emergency preparedness events for City of Manassas employees and Northern Virginia Community College
- ▶ Manassas CERT training exercises
- ▶ CERTCON training exercises
- ▶ Moulage for kids visiting the Ready-Set-know tent at the Burke Centre Festival
- ▶ Moulage training for military personnel at Ft. Belvoir and Navy Reserves
- ▶ Active shooter training exercises for the FRA, NRO, and Fairfax County Police Department

How Do I Get Involved?

The CERT Program periodically offers a moulage class for those individuals interested in learning about moulage supplies and techniques and in joining the CERT Moulage Team. Although we don’t currently have a class scheduled, more informal “on-the-job training” (OJT) is also possible. CERT members interested in learning more should contact Susy Ledgerwood, Moulage Team lead, at Moulage@FairfaxCountyCERT.org to see if there are upcoming opportunities to observe the moulage team in action and learn basic techniques through hands-on OJT.



If You Are Interested in Joining the Team, Contact Susy L. at: Moulage@FairfaxCountyCERT.org

Supporting the Community

CERT Volunteers Have Been Busy With Events Around the County This Year!

Ginny K.

Get Alarmed:

A program put on by Marlon Murphy, Brad Cochrane and the Risk Reduction Department of the Fire & Rescue. The volunteers go out on a pre-planned basis to install smoke alarms as well as the combo smoke/CO alarms in mobile home communities. While there, volunteers educate the residents about fire safety, preparedness, and other resources available to them.

This is a big effort that also includes volunteers from the Fire & Rescue Department, CERT, Neighborhood and Community Services, Itzia Vasquez and her team of ambassadors from United Community, as well as Supervisor Storck with support from Cassidy Donaghy, Diego Rodriguez Cabrera and others on his team. Fire Stations 11 and 24 have been wonderful hosts for logistics, staging and support.

Gwyneth's Gift:

A nonprofit organization that teaches hands-only CPR in the State of Virginia. CERT volunteers have been helping the organization in this effort by assisting with the training of students at local middle schools. Volunteers help the students with their technique in doing the CPR and the use of the AED. Volunteers have found that this is a good review for them as well.

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

Patient Actors:

These volunteers are tasked with acting out symptoms or conditions for the VCU Paramedic students to diagnose and treat. Having a live person that the students can actually interact with really enhances their training. Sometimes moulage (disaster makeup) is used to complete the scene. Generally, there are four run-throughs of each scenario for the morning shift and another four for the afternoon. CERT volunteers have found these scenarios very educational. It is also wonderful to see the progress of the students over time. This volunteer opportunity is during the daytime and during the work-week at the Fire & Rescue Academy.

The Fairfax County Police Department Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU):

The CDU utilizes CERT volunteers to practice their skills. They have been doing exercises at the Fire & Rescue Academy as well as at their own location in Chantilly. CERT, as well as other volunteers, are encouraged to protest, get in the way, and generally, get unruly with the students. Most of these exercises are held in the evening. It is a good way to learn what NOT to do if you are in a crowd that the police are trying to control! Alas, sometimes you will get "arrested." Volunteers have found that this is a good review for them as well.



Building Resilience

Workshops Presented by the Health Federation of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Alex V.



HEALTH FEDERATION
OF PHILADELPHIA

The keystone of community health since 1983

Workshops Presented by the Health Federation of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

For several years, I have been attending online workshops presented by the Health Federation of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They are geared towards first responders and their family members to help them understand day-to-day experiences, as well as coping mechanisms to deal with challenges first responders experience in performing their jobs. The Resilience Project is funded by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Division of Substance Use and Harm Reduction.

The moderator/presenter has been a counselor and licensed social worker involved in this work for many years. After she explains the subject matter, the group is divided into sections for breakout sessions to discuss their own experiences. Then the entire 'class' reconvenes to gain further knowledge and insights from the breakout groups' conversations. I have found that the attendees have a wide variety of professional experience and work in different venues. Many attendees are not first responders in the way that is normally defined. There are social workers, emergency agency supervisors and support personnel as well as members of the general public logging in from around the country. I believe these courses are beneficial for anyone who wants to grow their involvement with CERT, as well as improve their wellness.

This Resilience Project content is also offered for community members dealing with the stress of caring for others. It has been shown that this stress can affect our bodies and minds. This free virtual series is here to support our workplaces and community and is open to anyone.

To Learn More About the Project and Secondary Traumatic Stress
Visit the Website: TakeCarePHL.org

You Can Also Register for Any of the Upcoming Workshops!

Battalion 401 Exercise

Fairfax County CERT's First Battalion Wide Training Exercise

Julie T.

Battalion 401 was chosen for the first Battalion-wide training exercise. A local neighborhood, home to one of our CERT members, was the location. For the exercise, members of teams within Battalion 401 were told to report to the exercise on Tuesday, March 25th. Participants reported to the command center and were put into teams. Teams were supplied with radios and did a hasty search. No actual disasters were created, but pictures were posted around the neighborhood. There was an actor playing multiple victims, so we could practice triage and tagging concepts.

This had great visibility in the neighborhood. People were interested in CERT and what we were doing.

Watch for future exercises in your area.



The Outreach Team

Come Join Us!

Ginny K.

Do You Want To Share the CERT Message on Preparedness?

Come join the Outreach Team! Outreach is where we participate in events put on by various organizations and promote our CERT training and Program. Volunteers speak directly with residents about preparedness, the CERT Program and the CERT Basic training. We also get the word out about the free public classes like Stop the Bleed and Stroke Smart.

Recently, Outreach has been participating in preparedness events put on by the Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS), City of Fairfax Office of Emergency Management, McLean Community Center, Pentagon, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and Centreville Day. We also will set up an outreach table at family events such as Fire Station Open House, Clifton Day, and the Maker Faire. Other events include Volunteer Fest and Venture into Volunteering where we recruit from an audience of willing volunteers. Events take place in different areas of the County.

The Springtime is very busy with events. Does Outreach sound like something you would like to try? We can train you on the job!

For More Information You Can Check In VMS for Upcoming Events
or Contact Kim At: Community@FairfaxCountyCERT.org



CERT Trivia Quiz

Test Your Knowledge

Alex V.

New April Trivia Quiz!

Answers in the July 2025 Edition of the Green Helmet

- 1 According to the CDC, what is the most common way that COVID and the Flu are spread?
A) Touching contaminated surfaces
B) Respiratory droplets from an infected person
C) Failing to wash your hands thoroughly before eating
D) By getting a COVID or Flu vaccination
- 2 When arriving on the scene of a structural disaster with a CERT group, what should we do if we smell natural gas?
A) Do not attempt to locate the source of the odor
B) Evacuate the premises immediately
C) Have a team member call 911 and the gas company 'emergency leak line'
D) All of the Above
- 3 According to the American College of Surgeons, what is the number one cause of preventable death from trauma?
A) Lack of access to clean water
B) Uncontrolled bleeding
C) Lack of access to nutritious food
D) Shock
- 4 Which skill listed below is not included in CERT basic training?
A) Provides training in personal and family preparedness
B) Disaster medical operations
C) Light search and rescue
D) Major disaster response
- 5 When you are awakened by the smoke alarm outside your bedroom, what should you do?
A) Do the touch-test before you open the door
B) If the door is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out
C) If you can not get out due to flames or smoke, keep the door closed and cover vents and cracks around the door with cloth or towels
D) All of the Above

Answers from January's Green Helmet Trivia Quiz

- 1 When trying to treat an open wound that is bleeding, when should you use a tourniquet?
ANSWER: D) All of the above
- 2 In CERT operations, what does the acronym CALMeR stand for?
ANSWER: C) Command, Accountability, Logistics, Medical and Rescue.
- 3 When setting up an operations Command Post at a disaster site, which feature is not of paramount importance?
ANSWER: B) Access to a stream or other source of running water.

CERT Word Find

Find Words Used in This Newsletter

Kelly O.

Find the following words hidden below:

- ▶ Supervisors
- ▶ Flood
- ▶ Workshop
- ▶ Save
- ▶ Battalion
- ▶ Moulage
- ▶ Triage
- ▶ Patient
- ▶ Extinguisher
- ▶ Smoke
- ▶ Outreach
- ▶ Plan

E	X	T	G	Q	T	B	A	T	T	A	L	I	O	N	M	M	N	O
T	P	A	T	I	E	N	T	J	S	R	V	Z	X	Z	O	O	Q	U
X	L	W	S	R	Y	U	A	C	W	E	R	Y	C	E	U	I	L	T
D	A	Q	A	S	D	F	C	F	B	Y	O	L	V	X	L	C	Z	R
X	N	R	V	I	Z	S	Q	L	X	T	R	T	R	I	A	G	E	E
S	U	P	E	R	V	I	S	O	R	S	H	J	K	X	G	L	M	A
M	N	Q	W	E	R	T	W	O	R	K	S	H	O	P	E	Y	I	C
O	U	A	S	X	C	V	B	D	F	G	H	R	T	Y	W	X	G	H
K	Q	S	R	G	Y	H	U	J	I	K	D	T	X	S	Z	N	B	J
E	X	T	I	N	G	U	I	S	H	E	R	Q	F	D	P	M	W	X

Know Your CERT Acronyms!

A Quick Refresher

Kelly O.

CERG

Community Emergency Response Guide

Emergency preparedness guide created by The Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security

ICP

Incident Command Post

Predesignated temporary facilities and signifies the physical location of the tactical-level, on-scene incident command and management organization.

SAR

Search And Rescue

The search for and provision of aid to those in distress or imminent danger.

WAS

Wide Area Search

Systematic searches over a large affected area.

Do You Have Special Skills or Talents?

If you have vocational or recreational skills that might be useful to CERT, contact:

Jeff Katz at

Jeffrey.Katz@FairfaxCounty.gov

Green Helmet Needs You!

Do you enjoy writing, research, photography, communications, PR?
Then join the *Green Helmet* team. Your skills are needed.

Contact: Newsletter@FairfaxCountyCERT.org

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FairfaxCountyCERT.org

APRIL 2025

■ Training
■ Outreach & Comm Engagement
■ Operations/TCM
■ Planning/Meeting
■ Lead Meetings
■ Canteen
■ Fundraiser
■ Role Play/Victim Actors
■ Not CERT Related (Holidays/Special Days)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 MWA - Dulles Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers	2	3 Class 200 MWA - Reagan National Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers	4	5
6	7 Role Players for CERT Basic class final exercise Class 200 Final	8 MWA - Reagan National Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers	9 Role Players for VCU Paramedic Program	10 Role Players for VCU Paramedic Program MWA - Dulles Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers	11 Community Assessment Program	12 Passover Begins Springfield Town Center Blossom Fest TCM McLean Earth Day
13	14	15 Role Players for VCU Paramedic Program Pre-Meeting Program MWA - Dulles Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers	16 CERT Training Division Clean-Up	17 Cadre for CERT Basic 201 MWA - Reagan National Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers	18	19 Passover Ends Tent Team Training TCM McLean Community Parking
20 Easter Sunday	21 Easter Monday Class 201	22 Opioid Overdose Training MWA - Dulles Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers SaveCERT: Full Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Meeting	23 Hands Only CPR w/ Gwyneth's Gift Team Time Chat	24 Hands Only CPR w/ Gwyneth's Gift Pentagon Preparedness Day Class Reagan Nat. Airport K9 Decoy Vol. Cadre for CERT Basic 201	25	26
27 CERT Radio Team Workshops	28 Class 201	29 Introduction to Hazardous Materials MWA - Dulles Airport K9 Decoy Volunteers	30 Hands Only CPR w/ Gwyneth's Gift			

MAY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Cadre for CERT Basic 201 Class 201	2	3
4	5 Cinco de Mayo Hands Only CPR w/ Gwyneth's Gift Class 201	6 Hands Only CPR w/ Gwyneth's Gift Role Players for VCU Paramedic Program	7 CERT Incident Management	8 Cadre for CERT Basic 201 Class 201	9 CERT Incident Management	10 CERT Incident Management Class 201 - Final
11 Mother's Day	12 CERT Emergency Preparedness Workshop	13	14	15 CERT Emergency Preparedness Workshop	16	17 CPR/AED/First Aid for CERT Tentative - Mary Moon Memorial Service
18 TCM Braddock Bark	19	20 Pre-Meeting Program Meeting	21 Mental Health First Aid	22 Mental Health First Aid	23 Mental Health First Aid	24
25 CERT Radio Team Workshops	26 Memorial Day	27	28 Cadre for CERT Basic 203 Class 203 Team Time Chat	29	30	31



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FROM THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

While we all wish we had journalism degrees to use in the production of this newsletter, we don't. We are volunteers just like you. We appreciate your feedback and input. Look for our upcoming newsletter in **JULY 2025**

Do you have any questions you want answered? Have a story idea? Read a good CERT-related book you want to recommend? Want to contribute an item? Send them to us at Newsletter@FairfaxCountyCERT.org. Neighborhood teams – we'd love to hear what you are doing. Let us know!

More Contact Information

FairfaxCountyCERT.org/members/fairfax-cert-program-organization/leadership

Read Previous Editions of The Green Helmet:
FairfaxCountyCERT.org/news-events/newsletter