

Texas Disability Integration Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

Lex Frieden Employment Awards Ceremony

October 21, 2015, 11:30am to 1:30pm, Fort Worth Convention Center, Fort Worth, TX. To register, email: mcpdconference@gmail.com

2015 Preparedness Coalition Symposium

November 4 – 6, 2015, Galveston Island Convention Center

HHS GIS-based Tool for Health Disaster Readiness

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2015pres/06/20150623a.html>

The [HHS emPOWER Map](#), an interactive online tool, was launched in 2015 to aid community health agencies and emergency management officials in disaster preparedness as they plan ahead to meet the emergency needs of community residents who rely on electrically powered medical and assistive equipment to live independently at home.

The new tool is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), as part of its ongoing efforts to support community resilience and build

City of Corpus Christi Functional Needs Support Team (FNST)

Billy Delgado

Corpus Christi Emergency Management Coordinator

Judy Telge

Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living (CBCIL)

In the city of Corpus Christi, the Functional Needs Support Team (FNST) plays a critical role in inclusive planning of the whole community for emergency readiness.

The FNST evolved as a result of Hurricane Katrina and the need to assist evacuees with temporary housing following city sheltering. The role of the FNST expanded into preparation for the evacuation of individuals with disabilities for Hurricane Ike, at a time when two evacuations (special needs and general population) occurred. Corpus Christi Emergency Management realized that the FNST would play an important and significant role in planning and training staff for major emergencies. The Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living, under the leadership of Judy Telge, Executive Director, received a one-time federal grant to assist with training and technical assistance during post-Katrina activity specific to individuals with disabilities.

A cross-disability and cross-agency initiative developed, called Special Needs Support Team, which at the local level, authored and published with city support a training curriculum geared to the front line workers and volunteers to help them work with people with "special needs" in planning for evacuation. The training was provided by individuals with disabilities to the Corpus Christi Office of Emergency Management, city staff, and volunteers.

The goal has been to expand the training and “tip guides” to all jurisdictions in the Coastal Bend. The name changed to Functional Needs Support Team following the national initiative for inclusive planning and emergency evacuation.

The role of the local FNST further expanded with Corpus Christi becoming inclusive in all planning efforts and evacuations. FNST was enlisted to review and make recommendations on evacuation sites, travel modes, and communications for inclusiveness and accessibility, accommodating the whole community; especially individuals with disabilities, the elderly, families with small children, and others with access and/or functional needs.

The FNST is also now part of our local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). Linda Fallwell Stover, CBCIL ED, is the VOAD Secretary. In addition to CBCIL, members of the FNST include: the Behavioral Health Center, Texas A&M University Disability Services, Deaf Hard of Hearing Center, Area Aging on Aging, the Aging-Disabilities Resource Center, Regional Transportation Authority Mobility Management, home health and hospice, 211 Texas, and Texas Legal Rural Assistance. Team members are considered among the “front line” workers at the evacuation site, providing assistance to other volunteers or to individuals with disabilities experiencing specific issues/needs. Advantages include the exposure everyone has to various types of disabilities, better understanding of the rights of individuals with disabilities to be treated with the same respect as others in emergency situations, and how to accommodate various possible needs that may arise among a very diverse population. This includes not just shelter accessibility, but getting to the shelter (transportation, communications) areas utilizing FNST participation. FNST members are directly linked to their “constituents” and serve to facilitate information and education pre and post event; they become better educated citizens in

preparatory, evacuation and post-event. Corpus Christi is committed to continue our partnership with the FNST to ensure all our plans are inclusive to the whole community during times of an emergency.

[San Antonio Fire Department-Shelter Management Team Training Addresses Disabilities in Evacuation Sheltering](#)

Brandon Murray, Fire Engineer

San Antonio Fire Department

Eric Jones, Captain

San Antonio Fire Department

James Reidy, Lieutenant

San Antonio Fire Department

The San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) Shelter Management Team annually conducts a training class for potential shelter managers to prepare for a disaster declaration in the event of a hurricane or any other disaster involving mass evacuation and sheltering. The curriculum is taught by the leaders of the shelter team and covers such topics as shelter set-up, planning, feeding, registration, medical aspects, mental health, pets, transgender issues, and demobilization. In addition, durable medical equipment and consumable medical supplies are discussed at the annual training. Service animals, hearing impairment and bariatric guests are also covered as part of the curriculum.

As part of the training, the importance of inclusion of all evacuating “guests” to San Antonio is emphasized and discussed in detail. In accordance with federal and state mandates, the discussion includes reasonable accommodations for guests with limited mobility and the need for caregivers and/or personal attendants. The SAFD shelter team has gone to several jurisdictions near the states coastline to instruct on the importance of shelter set up and management. The training program encompasses many promising practices that help jurisdictions to make sure that their shelter environment is inclusive for all evacuating “guests.”

The SAFD shelter team has instructed approximately 400-500 firefighters over the last seven years and has kept up with the federal mandates of American with Disabilities Act regulations. By being proactive through training, the shelter team for any jurisdiction can be prepared for acceptance of all guests at any time.

The class is taught annually at the San Antonio Fire Department EOC and is open to the public. The class can also be taken through the TEEEX system. Contact Brandon Murray, Brandon.murray@sanantonio.gov, for more information

Houston Getting it Right Workshop

Shari Myers
Portlight Strategies, Inc.

Marissa Demaya
Southwest ADA Center at ILRU

The Getting It Right Workshop in Houston was presented last month as a collaborative effort of the Southwest ADA Center/ILRU and Portlight Strategies, in cooperation with the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), the city of Houston, the Houston UASI, and with the generous sponsorship of Amerigroup Corporation. Emergency managers, disaster planners, health and medical personnel, and disability stakeholders representing a wide cross-section of our state, came together to share experiences and expertise, to further facilitate inclusive disaster planning and preparedness. Attendees engaged in a tabletop exercise facilitated by Jay Stiteley, of the Houston Mayor's Office on People with Disabilities, and



focused on accessible emergency transportation, communication and sheltering. Attendees heard from a diverse group of speakers, including

Chief Nim Kidd of the Texas Division of Emergency Management; Dr. Jeff Masters, Chief Meteorologist of weatherunderground.com; Marcie Roth, Director of FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination; Brandon Murray of the San Antonio Fire Department; and Christy Dunaway, former director of LIFE of Mississippi, a network of Independent Living Centers serving the entire state.

On day one, a disability stakeholder's panel shared their experiences in disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Ike. The following day, emergency management representatives shared best practices and future plans. Chief Kidd closed the discussion with a reminder that each agency and organization must practice its individual part repeatedly, in order to orchestrate an effective group response when disasters strike.



By all accounts, the workshop was a great success, with many attendees forging new relationships, and taking away fresh insight into serving their communities as a whole. Thank you to all who attended and to all of our guest speakers and panelists. We heard your requests for more of these workshops, and we hope to see you again soon!

Disability Task Force on Emergency Management Elects New Chair



Chair:

Russell D. Cook has served as the Business Continuity Coordinator and the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) since 2011.

Mr. Cook joined the State of Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management in 2011 to further his mission of ensuring that services, supports, opportunities, and safety for persons with disabilities remain a top priority of the state. He chaired the State of Texas Disability Outreach and Effective Communication subcommittee prior to being elected as the Chair of the Disability Task Force.

Mr. Cook attended Tuskegee University where he majored in Accounting and minored in Political Science. He graduated from Tuskegee University with a B.S. in Accounting.

Vice-Chair:

Danielle Hesse is a Public Health Emergency Planner in the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Section at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in Austin, Texas. She has worked at DSHS for three years and in that time has served as the chair of the Training Subcommittee of the Texas Disability Task Force, supporting the development of trainings focused on planning for the whole community and people with disabilities and/or access and functional needs.

Ms. Hesse received her bachelor's degree in anthropology from Louisiana State University, and then earned her master's degree in anthropology with a focus on medical anthropology from the University of Alabama.

About this Newsletter

This newsletter is published by the *Texas Disability Task Force (DTF) on Emergency Management*, an advisory group sponsored by the Texas Division of Emergency Management. The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis. *If you would like to submit a proposed article, please send an e-mail to denita.powell@dps.texas.gov.*

Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management Membership

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Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

Danielle Hesse, Vice Chair
Texas Department of State Health Services

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Texas Centers for Independent Living
Texas Mayor's Committees for People with Disabilities
Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
Texas Association of the Deaf
Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Texas Council of Community Centers
Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders
Texas Chapter for the American Foundation for the Blind
American Council of the Blind
National Federation of the Blind of Texas
Texas Paralyzed Veterans of America
Texas Deaf Blind Multi-Handicapped Association
Texas Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America
Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services
Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
Texas Department of State Health Services
Texas Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Management
Dr. Lex Frieden, Texas Health Science Center at Houston
Texas Association of Regional Council
FEMA Disability Integration Coordinator Region VI
City of Corpus Christi Office of Emergency Management
City of San Antonio Office of Emergency Management
City of Austin Health Department
