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Emergency Preparedness – How to Get Yourself and Others Ready



On June 21, 2013, Asian Health and Social Services Council (AHSSC) held its monthly meeting at United Healthcare (168 Centre Street) to address the timely and important topic of Emergency Preparedness. We have entered hurricane season on June 1, and this monthly meeting provided pertinent information and the latest updates so that attendees would become equipped in emergency situations. Furthermore, we were provided with the tools to conduct Emergency Preparedness workshop at our own organizations.

At the start of meeting, Council President Teresa greeted members and guests, and Carol Yam, business manager of United Healthcare welcomed us into their newest space of 3 locations (the other two are at Flushing, NY and Edison, NJ). Then Teresa introduced our expert speaker: Daniel Lim, Emergency Preparedness Specialist at the NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM)/Ready NY.

Daniel Lim is the manager for the OEM volunteer program where he trains community and organization trainers as well as trains volunteers. Accompanying him was Iskra Gencheva from OEM who specializes in working with immigrant communities. The training consisted for two parts: 1) includes a video and information on emergency preparedness for

agencies; 2) discussion on how agencies will disseminate information to the communities they serve.

Daniel explained that OEM is the office of emergency management for the city of New York. It is the city's response to emergencies of any shape, big and small including but not limited to:

- heat waves
- flooding
- power outages
- other events/things that might interrupt everyday living in the community

The Ready NY campaign by OEM helps the community to prepare for any disaster, natural or man-made. Ready NY has multi-lingual and vulnerable population specific materials in print, pdf or audio format available to the public where interested individuals/agencies may order or download for free (http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/ready/ready_guides.shtml). To order printed booklets, you can also call 311.

1. Business
2. Kids
3. Adults
4. Teens
5. Pocket guide
6. Pets

Engaging and informational videos on emergency preparedness are also available on OEM's website:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/news/videos.shtml>

Daniel shared a video that discussed the key To-DO's in preparation for an emergency:

1. Be prepared with GO bag and Family Emergency Plan
2. Gather supplies needed for a GP bag: a collection of items you may need in the event of an evacuation (http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get_prepared/prepared_evacuation.shtml). A Go Bag should be easily accessible if you have to leave your home in a hurry. Make sure it is ready to go at all times of the year. Also, you should have supplies needed to shelter in place. Keep enough supplies in your home to survive on your own, or shelter in place for at least three days (http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get_prepared/emergency_sip.shtml).
3. Get informed either through Notify NY via email or text, and through battery powered or crank radios during emergencies when other forms of communication such as use of internet and telephone are not available.

Daniel then carefully reviewed the ReadyNY booklet and made the following points:

- One booklet should be filled out per person
- A separate card should be created for special needs and the card should be carried around with you in a pocket or bag
- Difference between Evacuation Center v. Shelter:
 - 10 Shelter locations are kept secret
 - Evacuation centers are places for registration not for shelter

Lastly, Daniel reminded us of the following when we teach our community about emergency preparedness:

- Understand your audience
- Be sensitive and give information they can use (e.g. consider the audiences' accessibility to resources)
- Only ask them to do things they are capable of doing
- Understand where your audience lives
- For homeless populations, encourage them to seek help from service providers
- Help clients fill out the booklets as completely as possible.

Additional booklets can be ordered by calling 311. There are many different guides to choose from: 1. Business 2. Kids 3. Adults 4. Teens 5. Pocket guide 6. Pets