

# National Summit on Youth Preparedness



## National Summit on Youth Preparedness Summit Proceedings Report

September 15–16, 2010

June 2011



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## Background

The U.S. Census projected that in 2010 there would be more than 76 million children under the age of 18 in the United States, constituting nearly a quarter of the entire U.S. population (U.S. Department of Commerce 2009). Additionally, nearly 21 percent of the U.S. population living in poverty is children—that is 15.7 million kids who might be disproportionately affected by disasters (U.S. Department of Commerce 2010). At the end of the 20th century, a disaster affected an estimated 66.5 million children each year (Penrose and Takaki, 2006), and this number will most likely increase, owing to shifts within society (e.g., increases in social conflict, hunger) and large climate changes that could lead to increases in vector-, air-, and water-borne diseases.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Quadrennial Homeland Security Review stresses the importance of community resilience where we foster a society that is robust, adaptable, and has the ability for rapid recovery. Engaging and educating youth is a critical element of community resilience and many experts have worked hard to develop resources and programs to meet the disaster preparedness and safety needs of youth. Increased communication among parents, schools, students, emergency managers, and emergency responders has helped but is not enough. There is a continued need to focus on youth, sharing knowledge and strategies among stakeholders to increase youth disaster preparedness and safety competencies. As with all disaster preparedness education, there is also a need to address the cultural, economic, educational, and geographical barriers to effectively preparing youth for disasters.

In September 2010, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Education (ED) collaborated with the American Red Cross to convene the National Summit on Youth Preparedness, a meeting of stakeholders from across the Nation and internationally to focus on youth preparedness education. To increase the quality of discussion during the Summit, read-ahead materials were provided to attendees, including a literature review of youth preparedness education programs (*Bringing Youth Preparedness Education to the Forefront: A Literature Review and Recommendations* [U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Summer 2010]).

## The Summit

The goal of the Summit was to gather input from all participants on grades K–12 preparedness education to increase youth preparedness knowledge, skills, and behaviors, and to address youth of all abilities and backgrounds. The Summit hosts intend to use this input to continue to work with participants to develop a National Strategy on Youth Preparedness Education. The agenda (see Appendix A for Summit Agenda) included both plenary presentations and discussion groups designed to inform key elements of this strategy to include:

- Current resources to support local implementation
- Stakeholders serving the Nation’s youth
- The current research base for effective practices
- Core programmatic elements needed for effective delivery
- Roles and responsibilities for stakeholders.

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Invitees to the Summit were drawn from specific categories that reflected the full scope of the effort, including:

- Stakeholders that reach America’s youth, to include the educational system and youth programs
- Organizations that have developed youth preparedness educational materials
- State, tribal, and local program representatives who have implemented youth education programs
- Researchers and experts in the field of youth education
- Youth active in emergency preparedness.

## Introductory Remarks

Speakers from the three co-hosting organizations: the American Red Cross, ED, and FEMA, as well as from the White House National Security Staff, opened the Summit (see Appendix B for the Attendee List). The speakers addressed the past lack of attention to youth disaster preparedness, the need to increase the emphasis on youth preparedness, and the urgent need to emphasize youth in general emergency preparedness. All of the speakers giving introductory remarks stressed that children can be part of the solution when it comes to preparedness.

“Youth do not have to be passive victims; they can be engaged and they can be empowered.”

Gail McGovern  
American Red Cross



American Red Cross President and CEO Gail McGovern identified the overarching goal of the Summit: “to bring youth preparedness to the forefront and to have a vision for the future.” Her introductory remarks focused on how youth can become ambassadors to others, a recurring theme of the Summit. She spoke about existing programs in school, homes, and the community that teach preparedness to children using child-friendly activities. These children, in turn, can teach preparedness to their family and friends. She stressed that, “Youth do not have to be passive victims; they can be engaged and they can be empowered.”

Bill Modzeleski, Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary for ED’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, continued the theme of youth as empowered partners. He further defined the goal of the Summit from an education perspective to be identifying “innovative ways to ensure that more students are engaged in a variety of ways in the emergency management planning process.” Mr. Modzeleski described ED’s grant programs that have worked to improve schools’ emergency management planning over the last 9 years. Almost all schools have regularly updated emergency management plans. Most also have an infectious disease plan, use a command structure, and illustrate the involvement of community partners in their plans. He noted, however, that two key areas schools need to better address are the role that students can play in the development of their school’s emergency management plan and supporting education and training programs that involve youth.

FEMA Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness Tim Manning’s remarks concentrated on FEMA’s renewed focus on supporting preparedness. In the past, FEMA focused on “writing plans for planners.” In the last 18 months, he explained, the emphasis has shifted toward the need for greater community resilience during a disaster. Mr. Manning stressed that a focus on youth preparedness would be a critical element in strengthening neighborhoods and communities. Mr.

“We need to look at our youth as part of the solution [for community resilience]... we need help to make them stronger.”

Tim Manning  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

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Manning stated, “We need to look at our youth as part of the solution [for community resilience]...we need to help make them stronger.” As he explained, building strong communities today, through schools and other youth-focused programs, will lead to a resilient societal fabric.

The introductory remarks concluded with Brian Kamoie, Senior Director for Preparedness Policy, National Security Staff, The White House. He spoke of the need to find simple messages and reinforce these messages over time. He pointed out that children must play a role in emergency planning and program development. He also stressed that children are extremely effective messengers to their families when it comes to effecting behavior change. Mr. Kamoie challenged participants with this question, “How do we approach [our youth] and how do we leverage the inherent energy, commitment, and skills of our young people?”

## Panel Presentations

### Dr. Kevin Ronan, Promoting Community Resilience in Disasters: The Role for Schools, Youth, and Families

Dr. Kevin Ronan, professor of clinical psychology at Central Queensland University, Australia, presented on the importance of increased youth preparedness, how existing research can inform youth preparedness strategies, and the need for greater preparedness research. Dr. Ronan noted that not only are there increasing occurrences of disasters worldwide but the risks associated with these disasters are also rising as a result of population growth in hazard-prone areas. Echoing the thoughts of Mr. Kamoie, Dr. Ronan stressed that children are a more vulnerable group. Research shows that children become more distressed than adults after a disaster and that disasters rank as 1 of the top 10 fears of children. Dr. Ronan stressed that “prevention is the best form of cure for this vulnerability.”



Dr. Ronan noted that preparedness requires knowledge, skills, and motivation. Knowledge needs to be “stamped in” through interactive discussions and by the experience of practicing appropriate behaviors (“the doing”). Motivation, however, is an emotional element, and an important emotion relative to disaster preparedness is “hazard concern,” where children demonstrate concern for relevant risks. Dr. Ronan warned that a child’s positive response and sense of efficacy depend on whether he or she feels challenged by relevant risks rather than threatened by them. One tool that has been shown to reduce the sense of threat and turn intentions into action is youth-centered education programs.

Dr. Ronan also noted the need to focus on youth because they are a “motivational reservoir in a community.” He cited past research that showed that the presence of a child in a household increased adults’ likelihood to prepare for a hazardous event.

Dr. Ronan then highlighted findings from research that can inform educational preparedness programs:

- Youth preparedness programs increase awareness and knowledge.
- Educational preparedness programs increase emotional resilience. These programs have been proven to reduce fear of hazards and reduce perceptions of parents being fearful. Parents’ willingness to talk about preparedness is also a predictor of increased preparedness. “As parents go in disasters, so too their children.”

“[Youth are] a motivational reservoir in a community.”

Professor Kevin Ronan  
Central Queensland University  
(Australia)

- Emergency management-focused interactive practice and simulations are better than reading and discussion. Specific guidance and interactive practice are also better than simply raising awareness.
- Multiple sources of information are better than a single channel and multiple programs over time are better than “one-offs.” Dr. Ronan stressed starting with a basic message and elaborating over time.
- Fear messages do not work on youth or adults.
- Finally, linking the program to the home is helpful. Youth interaction with parents is a good predictor of increased preparedness.

Dr. Ronan concluded his address to the Summit with a list of what is *not* known including:

- The most effective program content and delivery mechanisms
- The characteristics of youth and families that predict successful uptake of program messages, including important risk and protective factors
- The measurable effect of preparedness education on response and recovery after a disaster
- Whether youth preparedness programs linked with other community preparedness campaigns produce better outcomes.

## Francie Alexander, *The Way Children Learn: Implications for Youth Preparedness Education*

Francie Alexander, senior vice president and chief academic officer, Scholastic Inc., discussed the goals of education and the principles that foster learning. She stressed that “today’s citizens need to be full participants of intellectual, social, physical, political and economic life.” Ms. Alexander stated that health, safety, and preparedness are central to achieving the overall goals of education.



Ms. Alexander listed the seven strategies for effective learning:

1. **This is your brain on learning.** The first strategy in fostering learning is that learning must be brain-based. Examples on how to make teaching brain-compatible include keeping the material brief and relevant and helping children appreciate the importance of the material; “the brain pays attention to what it considers important.” Ms. Alexander also discussed the need to help youth make real connections to the material by stressing, “It’s not just critical to fire them, but to wire them.” In addition to making connections, using new knowledge and repetition of skills can strengthen these connections.
2. **Pay attention to executive learning.** Ms. Alexander indicated the need to engage all types of learners in activities that are self-regulated and require attention (also referred to as executive skills).
3. **Focus on the whole child.** Ms. Alexander explained this strategy using the “five M’s of the whole child: Metacognition, Multisensory, Meaningful, Motivated, and Movement.” Metacognition allows children to figure out how they best learn. Multisensory facilitates learning in different ways whether reading, taking notes, or singing songs. Showing children the “why”

“Today’s citizens need to be full participants of intellectual, social, physical, political and economic life.”

Francie Alexander  
Scholastic Inc.



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behind the lessons make the learning experience more meaningful for them. Relative to preparedness, she noted that *nothing is more motivating* than taking care of yourself and others. Relative to movement, she stressed the importance of making the teaching interactive and physical so it can be internalized.

4. **Collaborative learning deepens understanding and “socializes smarts.”** Ms. Alexander explained that collaborative learning is social, practical, and effective. Collaborative learning works best when the purpose is clearly defined and participants have well-defined roles.
5. **Harness technology tools.** Technology tools do a few things best. They:
  - Differentiate instruction by using data.
  - Personalize education.
  - Communicate results.
  - Extend the reach of the lesson.
  - Provide intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
  - Provide simulated experiences.
6. **Practice makes permanent.** Ms. Alexander explained that effective practice is necessary to move from novice to expert. She stressed that effective practices needed to be properly identified and dosed.
7. **Read every day; lead a better life.**

In conclusion, she stressed that we as a society need to “ensure that children and young people are capable and confident learners.” She then referenced an adage in teaching that she found particularly relevant to the summit and its focus on youth preparedness: “Expect the best and prepare for the worst.”

## Practices From Around the World



To provide participants with a deeper appreciation of the importance of youth preparedness and the initiatives occurring internationally, a panel of speakers offered their country’s unique perspective on how to increase youth preparedness. Jacob (Kobi) Wimisberg—director of Strategy and Cooperation, National Emergency Management Authority, Israel Ministry of Defense—discussed the Israeli Programs for youth preparedness. Chandrika Kumaran—manager for Public Education, New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergency Management—provided an overview of New Zealand’s youth preparedness program, “What’s the Plan, Stan?”

Daniela Penalosa, deputy director of Chile’s National Institute for Youth, then spoke of the powerful effects of Chile’s 2010 earthquake, highlighting the efforts taken to involve Chilean youth in its recovery efforts.

Mr. Wimisberg spoke of the threats faced by Israel, including “mega-terror attacks, cyber-terrorism, man-made accidents, war, missiles, pandemic, and earthquakes.” He stressed the need to build up a resilient society that can face hardships as a result of intentional and natural disaster, recover quickly, and become stronger after the crises happen. Mr. Wimisberg explained that Israel seeks to increase social resilience among its youth using a three-pronged approach: education and training, intervention, and self-responsibility. The combination of these three approaches supports building a culture of preparedness in Israel.

Education and training for preparedness has been incorporated into the public school curriculum. Currently, fifth grade students are presented with a five-lesson unit examining various types of emergencies along with the appropriate ways to cope with them. Mr. Wimisberg stated that in the near future this program will include more hours of classes for several age groups: 2nd and 3rd grades will be taught the basics, 5th and 7th grade lessons will broaden their knowledge, and 9th through 11th grade lessons will focus on incorporating their

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knowledge as they become active citizens in the community. Children from 6- to 17-years-old also participate in an annual national drill called “Turning Point.” The scenario for this exercise is a war between Israel and Hamas, Hezbollah, and Syria that is accompanied by riots and various terrorist acts.

In Israel, the concept of intervention focuses on resilience building and the enhancement of coping strategies while under continuous stress and psychological trauma. Israel has implemented a school resilience program that is teacher-based and supervised by teams in the schools. He noted that Israel has come to recognize that self responsibility can come at an earlier age: “If they can give an 18-year-old a gun to defend his or her country, the youth can also be responsible for themselves and the society from a younger age.” He explained that active involvement of youth contributes to the “self immunity of the volunteer” (i.e., because of higher levels of involvement in emergency preparedness training, Israeli youth have “a better capacity to manage stress...during continuous [threats of] terrorism”).

Ms. Kumaran was the second international speaker. She stated that New Zealand is at risk for many natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, landslides, storms, and floods, highlighting the need to focus on youth preparedness. She noted that New Zealand has two national public education programs: “GET READY GET THRU,” a national social marketing campaign, and “What’s the Plan, Stan?” a learning and teaching resource for students and teachers.

Ms. Kumaran described the many benefits of a national public education program, including raising awareness of hazards, improving understanding of likely disaster impacts and encouraging people to take action to be *and stay* prepared. She explained that it was necessary to have a preparedness program designed specifically for youth in order to build a foundation of preparedness, empower young people by giving them the knowledge and skills to cope when disaster happens, and let them know what to do to keep safe.

New Zealand’s “What’s the Plan, Stan?” is a program designed for children 7- to 12-years-old and is aligned to the New Zealand elementary and middle school curriculum. The program provides information for teachers and school management to support disaster preparedness activities, simulation exercises, and safety drills. Teaching resources include unit plans, templates, and activity sheets. “What’s the Plan, Stan?” also provides information for students and their families, featuring Stan the dog and five children who model what to do to be prepared and how to stay safe when a disaster happens. Ms. Kumaran then described the program development process, which included many workshops conducted with educators, emergency managers, scientists, and researchers. These workshops determined attendees’ wish lists, what was viable given the budgets and resources available, and how to fit this content within the New Zealand school curriculum. Of the educators surveyed at the end of the first year, 89 percent found the resource to be useful or very useful. In-depth research is planned for 2010 to better understand how the program is being used and to identify areas for improvement.

Ms. Penalzoza concluded the Practices From Around the World panel by describing the earthquake that occurred in Chile in February 2010:

- Approximately 79.5 percent of the population (12,880,034 people) was affected in some way.
- There were 342 fatalities; an additional 95 people were missing.
- Forty-five percent of schools in the affected areas were seriously damaged.
- Twenty-five hospitals in the affected areas had over 75 percent damage.
- The total estimated cost of the earthquake was \$30 billion.

Ms. Penalzoza stated that Chile had not been prepared for such a disaster. While there are currently no national programs on youth preparedness, youth served as critical volunteers in the recovery phase. In one example, “Un

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techo para Chile” mobilized over 85,000 volunteers to build over 20,000 emergency housing units. In addition to supporting this volunteer movement, Chile has taken increased steps to educate the population. Recently, Chile conducted a megadrill that simulated an 8-point earthquake and evaluated the level of public participation and the response time. Ms. Penaloza said that Chile is planning future programs designed to educate the population, including campaigns on safe tourism and campaigns on mass care activities.



## **Leveraging Networks To Promote Youth Preparedness: Opportunities and Barriers to National Youth Preparedness Education (Summary of the Working Group Assignment I)**

During the afternoon, Summit attendees were divided into eight small cross-representative groups to discuss their perspectives on the four questions outlined below. Several common themes emerged from those discussions and are highlighted below.

### **Discussion Topic #1: What are the opportunities and challenges to integrating emergency preparedness education in schools/school curriculum?**

The working groups identified several challenges, including:

- Lack of political or social will as evidenced by the absence of legislation or a public demand to bring preparedness concepts into school curriculum. Many suggested that there is a need for formal legislation requiring schools to discuss emergency preparedness.
- Lack of funding relative to integrating the material into the curricula as well as support for implementation. As one group indicated, school districts face some difficult financial trade-offs—“textbooks or emergency preparedness.”
- Gaining buy-in from educators. Teachers have competing priorities, including existing demands related to the subjects already in the curriculum and preparing students for testing. One group noted that teachers may not be interested in incorporating emergency preparedness and may not be educated on emergency management concepts.
- The lack of an evidence base or standards for the development of a curriculum and a consistent methodology to evaluate the success of these programs over time.
- Competition for access to youth through schools. There are many programs competing to get into schools. Some of these programs are on different topics that are important for youth (e.g., health, financial literacy) while others cover similar topics. School bureaucracies that differ based on geography also make it difficult to know how to access school systems.

**Challenge: The lack of an evidence base or standards for the development of a curriculum and a consistent methodology to evaluate the success of these programs over time.**



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- Within this delivery channel, programs need to be tailored to the needs of different segments, including private schools, home-schooling, and multicultural populations. And the hazards that are relevant to the students differ as well (e.g., some live in tornado-prone areas while others may need to consider ice storms or earthquakes).

The working groups then explored and identified opportunities that support youth preparedness education, including:

- Youth in schools present a captive audience, providing an unparalleled opportunity to reach the largest number of youth. The existing curriculum of science and health is well suited for preparedness education topics.
- After-school programs offer another avenue to reach many youth and not compete with school curriculum.
- Emergency preparedness can support the required service learning projects of older children in middle and high school. Emergency preparedness initiatives also provide opportunities for youth interested in peer to peer projects, clubs, honor societies, etc.
- Students are often excited to participate. Youth preparedness initiatives provide opportunities for them to be seen as partners, not victims.
- Current programs supporting youth preparedness education are available providing a platform for implementation. Helping organizations collaborate to support youth preparedness education would reduce competition for access to schools, save money, and create more opportunities to reach youth in diverse ways.
- Teachable moments occur relatively frequently, locally and throughout the world, providing opportunities for discussion and reinforcement.

## **Discussion Topic #2: How do we involve other aspects of the community in youth preparedness (e.g., responders, youth-oriented civic organizations [service, recreational, educational], private sector, faith-based organizations, and parents)?**

Participants believed that community organizations would be interested in supporting youth preparedness, especially if ready-to-use lesson plans and materials were provided. A related theme from several discussions noted the opportunity to have youth-developed programs, peer-to-peer programs, or programs for younger ages that could be taught by older children. Many noted a wide array of organizations that are either currently involved or that might be interested in becoming involved, including:

- Youth-serving groups such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, and 4H.
- Faith-based organizations including their community activities for youth (sports, education, community service)
- Service organizations such as Kiwanis International, Lions Club, and Rotary Club.
- Youth service organizations such as National Honor Society.
- The private sector could also support youth preparedness through their websites and other products or channels focused on youth. This could include local businesses as well as large corporate companies.
- Many groups noted the importance of leveraging social media and social networks.

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### **Discussion Topic #3: What are the linkages and the contact points for children within the community where we can maximize real change for all ages (i.e., elementary, middle school, high school, young adults)?**

Participants listed a wide array of linkages and contact points within local communities—those that are connected to schools and others that have a variety of connection points into the community. Many noted that schools are a center point for communities. An overarching theme focused on the need to acknowledge community differences and for locally focused implementation. Many described local, grassroots efforts with support from the board of education as successful models. In addition, many recognized that each age group may require different linkages. Elementary school youth would be best reached through faith-based organizations, or groups like 4H, Boys and Girls Clubs, Head Start, and television programming such as Sid the Science Kid, Nickelodeon, and Disney shows. Middle school youth can be best reached through social media, the YMCA, Volunteer clubs, and state and local organizations. High school youth are best reached by Teen Community Emergency Response Teams programs as well as social media and volunteer clubs. Discussions related to middle and high school aged children continued to emphasize the need to use peer-to-peer networks. Interestingly, many groups included TV programs as an important channel to reach across all age groups although programs would differ based on age.

### **Discussion Topic #4: What are the most challenging bottlenecks, capacity issues, and needed additional information?**

Participants identified several issues related to bottlenecks and capacity issues during this working group discussion. Themes from these discussions included:

- Recognition that while a lot of information and programs focused on youth preparedness already exist, they are often available in too many places to be practical for those who are interested. Similarly, there is a lack of understanding as to what organizational capacity exists to implement programs. An inventory of both programs and organizational capacity was suggested.
- Current information and messages are too complex. There needs to be a consistent, simplified set of information made easily available.
- The competing priorities and activities for children, parents, and organizations in the community supporting individual and family preparedness need to be addressed. Understanding the importance of youth preparedness education in the context of other priorities is important.
- Messages are often created to resonate across the community and thus do not reach other important segments within the community (e.g., different cultures, languages, special needs).
- Parental involvement is crucial for a total solution to work.

### **Showcasing America's Youth**



On the second day, the Summit showcased three young Americans who each uniquely demonstrated the positive impact that motivated and empowered youth can have on their communities. Kyra Sommerfeld, from Chippewa Falls, WI, told the audience how her interest in emergency preparedness began in middle school when she worked with students with access and functional needs. In high school, this led her to join the Student Emergency Response Team called READY. Members of READY are part of the Chippewa County Emergency Operations Plan and are trained in first aid, triage, fire control, documentation, and the

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incident command structure. Because of her involvement in preparedness exercises, Ms. Sommerfeld noted a need for emergency responders to know basic sign language and other techniques to help communicate with and assist people with access and functional needs in an emergency. As a result, she developed a training program and presented workshops to the Chippewa Falls Police and Fire Department. Ms. Sommerfeld concluded her speech noting “by providing communities with strong programs, not only will youth have the opportunity to strengthen community, but to build a stronger community wherever they go.”

Victoria Elias, from Brooklyn, NY, has been an active volunteer and leader in youth-focused outreach throughout her high school experience and was recently selected to participate in the New York City Citizen Corps Youth Council Program. The program provided preparedness skills training and education for her and 20 other students and provided a behind the scenes look at what is involved in emergency management. Ms. Elias’ remarks focused on the important role of parents as role models for children, and that children really will listen to their parents. She stressed that multiple methods need to be incorporated into teaching children. She also advocated for mandatory student community service focused on emergency preparedness.

“By providing communities with strong programs, not only will youth have the opportunity to strengthen community, but to build a stronger community wherever they go.”

Kyra Sommerfeld  
Youth Participant  
Chippewa Falls, WI



Konstantine Buhler, the final youth speaker, is the founder and president of Always Ready Kids (ARK). He began with a story about the events of September 11, 2001, when he was in fourth grade and his class was told that recess was cancelled due to a lawnmower running over a beehive. This was not the truth and, in his opinion, was a missed opportunity for the teachers to educate the students about staying calm in emergencies. In his conversations with young children, he has realized that the current generation of youth is growing up in an environment where disasters are prominent and prevalent. On the television and Internet, they constantly are exposed to images of violence such as local shootings, bombings, hurricanes, tornados, and terrorist attacks. Thus, today’s youth have different needs relative to being prepared for these types of disasters and can be involved in helping prepare their families. He then described the goal of ARK as supporting a change in our culture from being reactive to one that is proactive about preparedness. He described some of ARK’s accomplishments, including giving interactive preparedness presentations to schools, distributing disaster information, and holding disaster supply kit creation projects at schools. ARK has impacted over 15,000 youth and raised over \$20,000 for disaster relief efforts. Mr. Buhler concluded by saying, “Don’t underestimate the power of youth...If given the tools to do so in today’s threatening world, youth will lead us all to safety.”

“Don’t underestimate the power of youth...If given the tools to do so in today’s threatening world, youth will lead us all to safety.”

Konstantine Buhler  
Youth Participant  
Lake Forest, IL

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## Moving Effectively From Priority to Action (Summary of the Working Group Assignment II)

On the second day, participants were assigned to working groups based on their role in the community. The stakeholder groups represented many perspectives including state and local practitioners, youth, faith-based organizations, researchers, developers and practitioners of youth programs, nonprofit organizations, international collaborators, schools, the private sector, and Federal collaborators at the headquarters and regional level.

The groups were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What do you see as the role of your stakeholder group in preparing/educating youth in disasters?
2. What are the actions that can be taken in the near term? Long term? What actions will have the most impact?
3. What are opportunities to strengthen the linkages between stakeholder groups to allow for a more cohesive approach?
4. What is the role of social media used by your sector?
5. Identify action(s) that would have the biggest impact on youth preparedness, regardless of timeframe for implementation.
6. What are the two-to-three achievable next steps that would help move past challenges and/or leverage opportunities?

During the course of their individual group discussions and the plenary discussion, several overarching themes emerged:

- It is noteworthy that each stakeholder group agreed that they had a role to play in preparing and educating youth in disaster preparedness. Each recognized that it was a piece to a larger puzzle that would require collaboration among organizations at all levels. In order to clarify roles and ensure a cohesive and efficient approach, participants stressed the need for national direction and support (e.g., funding), while recognizing that implementation needs to be localized and supported by grass roots efforts.
- In defining their role and next steps, a first step mentioned by most was the need to locate available resources and best practices. Many suggested a website or portal that could become a comprehensive resource. A place where resources and best practices could be shared between different organizations at different levels was widely viewed as a constructive way to strengthen linkages and support a more cohesive approach.
- To ensure the effectiveness of youth preparedness programs, participants continued to emphasize the need for common, simpler messages. The private sector group indicated that “a consistent engagement and commitment to a specific message” would help collaboration. Many reinforced the need for youth-developed programs that incorporate peer-to-peer education, social media, and pop culture.
- Several groups also indicated that there is a need for the development of methods and measures that can demonstrate achievable results. The research and evaluation group felt that for this to occur there needs to be a consensus definition of the word “preparedness.”
- Several groups noted the increasingly important role of social media, including Twitter and Facebook, which provide brief messaging that is often considered to be from a relevant source. In addition, if social media messages/videos/news articles are considered important, youth will forward them to friends, building on the recurring theme of peer-to-peer learning.



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## National Youth Summit Attendee Feedback Report

As another opportunity to gain input, Summit attendees were provided feedback forms asking what they found useful from the Summit, what types of activities would be most important relative to increasing youth preparedness, and on what topics they could use the most support in their efforts to increase youth preparedness. At the end of the Summit, 35 forms were returned. For many respondents, the most useful/most interesting part of the Summit was the international perspective of youth preparedness and the sharing of successes and information about various approaches from around the world. Relative to those activities that would be most important to increasing youth preparedness, the top three most commonly ranked activities were:

- Including youth preparedness education in school curricula
- Giving youth a voice in community preparedness planning
- Increasing volunteer opportunities for youth in emergency preparedness.

The themes of collaboration and sharing of best practices tended to drive where respondents felt they could use the most help, with the top three being:

- Collaboration between government and civic leaders for community planning to support youth preparedness
- Research on how to motivate children and young people to become prepared
- Use of social media to engage youth

The full summary of the National Summit Attendee Feedback Report is included as Appendix B.

## Conclusions and Recommendations for Improving Youth Preparedness

The National Summit on Youth Preparedness provided a forum for stakeholders from across the Nation and internationally to focus on youth preparedness education and to share information, strategies, and challenges in developing and providing youth preparedness education in preparation for disasters. Participants at the Summit were highly engaged in supporting our Nation's youth overall and appreciated the importance of preparing youth to better cope with the likelihood that they will experience a disaster in their lifetime. The following recommendations are based on the presentations and the working group discussions held at the Summit:



- Consider our youth as a resource and partner for all organizations involved in supporting youth preparedness and our Nation's preparedness overall. Throughout the discussion and resoundingly from the youth representatives at the Summit, participants were encouraged to better appreciate youth as an important resource for policy discussions, outreach, and implementation of disaster preparedness and response education.

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- Catalogue existing programs and provide a central repository to share resources. Stakeholders who have the opportunity to engage youth in disaster preparedness want to be able to leverage existing programs and resources that have worked in local communities.
  - Develop a systematic approach to youth preparedness education. This approach would provide guidelines by age group of appropriate preparedness concepts and drills that would build capabilities over time.
  - Conduct program evaluations to identify those factors that most contribute to youth preparedness, especially longitudinal studies that can demonstrate that learning is maintained over time and that youth who receive preparedness education are more resilient.
  - Explore school- and nonschool-based opportunities. While incorporating youth preparedness education in school curriculum is desirable, there are many other opportunities to engage youth in preparedness. A comprehensive approach will provide more touch points and opportunities and may be more feasible than relying on a school-based curriculum.
  - Identify opportunities where disaster preparedness education can be easily incorporated into existing programs. For example, several youth participants noted that there are community service mandates in middle and high schools and preparedness programs would fit well into that requirement.
  - Ensure youth are involved in the design and implementation of programs. There was strong support for convening a summit on youth preparedness comprised of youth participants to allow them to develop strategies that will work with their peers. In parallel, research with youth should be conducted to ensure program messaging and materials resonate and achieve the education objectives.
  - Identify an organization or set of organizations that will take a leadership role in youth preparedness education and support continued focus on this important initiative.

## Next Steps

There was a universal consensus at the National Summit on Youth Preparedness that a focus on youth preparedness is needed and that the Summit served as a useful kickoff for a long-term commitment to improving youth preparedness in America. In working toward the goal of greater preparedness among youth, several concrete next steps were identified:

- Participants at the National Summit on Youth Preparedness will be asked to help build a catalogue of youth preparedness programs that will serve as the starting point for building a repository of resources geared toward youth preparedness.
- Regional youth preparedness workshops will be held to broaden the discussion and incorporate state and local perspectives.
- The Summit proceedings and a draft framework for youth preparedness education in America will be circulated to Summit participants and to the broader community of stakeholders for discussion in 2011.

Youth preparedness is a shared responsibility. Community organizations should encourage their members to support this initiative as it moves forward. School curriculum should include lessons on emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Involving youth in preparing their communities for disaster can not only increase resilience and guarantee a more robust response to crisis, it can improve children's sense of ownership and belonging within their neighborhoods.

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## APPENDIX A: National Summit on Youth Preparedness

### NATIONAL SUMMIT ON YOUTH PREPAREDNESS

September 15–16, 2010

American Red Cross Hall of Service  
1730 E Street, NW ~ Washington, DC

#### Wednesday, September 15

7:30–8:30 **Registration and Breakfast**

8:30–9:00 **Welcome**

Gail McGovern, President and CEO  
American Red Cross

Bill Modzeleski, Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary  
Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools  
U.S. Department of Education

Tim Manning, Deputy Administrator  
Protection and National Preparedness  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

9:00–9:30 **The White House Perspective: A Commitment to Youth**

Brian Kamoie, Senior Director for Preparedness Policy  
National Security Staff, The White House

9:30–9:45 **BREAK**

9:45–10:30 **Promoting Community Resilience in Disasters: The Role for Schools, Youth, and Families**

Dr. Kevin Ronan, Professor of Clinical Psychology  
Central Queensland University, Australia

10:30–11:00 **The Way Children Learn: Implications for Youth Preparedness Education**

Francie Alexander, Senior Vice President and Chief Academic Officer  
Scholastic Inc.

11:00–11:15 **BREAK**



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11:15–11:45 **Practices From Around the World**

Jacob (Kobi) Wimisberg, Director of Strategy & Cooperation  
National Emergency Management Authority  
Israel Ministry of Defense

11:45–12:15 Chandrika Kumaran, Manager for Public Education  
New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management

12:15–12:45 **LUNCH**

12:45–1:15 Daniela Peñaloza, Deputy Director  
National Institute for Youth, Chile

1:15–2:45 **Working Group Assignment I**  
Opportunities and Barriers to Youth Preparedness Education

2:45–3:00 **BREAK**

3:00–4:00 **Summary of Working Group Assignment I**

4:00–5:30 **Reception and Program Showcase**

**Thursday, September 16**

8:30–9:00 **Breakfast**

9:00–9:45 **Showcasing America's Youth**

Kyra Sommerfeld, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin  
Victoria Elias, New York City, New York  
Konstantine Buhler, Lake Forest, Illinois

9:45–10:15 **Break**

10:15–11:30 **Working Group Assignment II**

Moving Effectively From Priority to Action

11:30–12:00 **Summary of Working Group Assignment II**

12:00–12:15 **Closing Remarks and Next Steps**

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## APPENDIX B: Participant List

### **Francie Alexander**

Senior Vice President and Chief Academic Officer  
Scholastic Inc.  
(212) 965-7233  
falexander@scholastic.com

### **John Allen**

Deputy Director  
USDHS/FEMA /OPIC  
(202) 212-7472  
John.M.Allen@dhs.gov

### **AmeriCorps NCCC-Raven 7**

#### **Raven 7 Team Leader**

#### **Kevin Jones**

(443) 758-4570  
raven7kevin@gmail.com

#### **Raven 7 Team Members**

Christine Adams  
Raymond Bonner  
Amanda Holland-O'Neill  
Nicholas Kaczor  
Danielle Lambert  
Warren Leath  
Victor Matthews  
Katherine Mioni  
Timothy Stowell  
Samantha Troemel

### **Paulette Aniskoff**

Director, Individual and Community Preparedness  
FEMA  
(202) 786-9550  
paulette.aniskoff@fema.gov

### **Jane Aslam**

Director of Disaster Response Services  
ICNA Relief USA (the Islamic Circle of North America)  
(225) 650-3922  
janeaslam@icnarelieff.org

### **Tracey Batacan**

FEMA Private Sector Liaison  
(202) 646-4284  
tracey.batacan@dhs.gov

### **Joe Becker**

Senior Vice President, Disaster Services  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8501  
beckerjoe@usa.redcross.org

### **Lewis Bernstein**

Executive Vice President, Education, Research and Outreach  
Sesame Workshop  
(212) 875-6212  
lewis.bernstein@sesameworkshop.org

### **Stacey Bishop**

DCM Program Analyst  
Department of Health and Human Services  
(202) 401-9331  
stacey.bishop@acf.hhs.gov

### **Rick Bissell**

Chair, Preparedness Sub Council  
American Red Cross/ACFASP  
(410) 455-3776  
Bissell@umbc.edu

### **Lynette Black**

4-H Youth Development Faculty EDEN Homeland Security  
Project Director (4-H)  
Oregon State  
(541) 296-5494  
lynette.black@oregonstate.edu

### **Robert Bohlmann**

County EMA Director  
York County (Maine) Emergency Management Agency  
(207) 324-1578  
rcbohlmann@co.york.me.us

### **Yasmin Bowers**

Project Manager  
American Association of School Administrators  
(703) 875-0759  
ybowers@aasa.org

### **Shari Brand**

Individual and Community Preparedness Officer  
FEMA-Region VI  
(940) 898-5358  
shari.brand@dhs.gov

### **Fred Bretsch**

Community Preparedness Officer  
FEMA-Region X  
(425) 487-4649  
fred.bretsch@dhs.gov

---

**Colin Brody**

Intern  
DHS/FEMA  
(401) 487-6476  
cbb27@georgetown.edu

**Sherri Brown**

Senior Vice President, SAF  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8283  
brownshe@usa.redcross.org

**Joseph Buchanan**

Research and Communications Analyst  
ICF Macro  
(240) 747-4856  
jbuchanan@icfi.com

**Konstantine Buhler**

Founder  
Always Ready Kids  
(202) 786-9620  
konstantine.buhler@gmail.com

**Violetta Kapsalis Buhler**

Parent of Youth Representative  
(202) 786-9620  
konstantine.buhler@gmail.com

**Sarah Bunch**

Associate, Youth and Young Adult Programs  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5899  
bunchsa@usa.redcross.org

**Candace Burrell**

Community Preparedness Officer  
FEMA-Region IV  
(770) 220-5325  
candace.burrell@dhs.gov

**Chaplain David Butler-Tourigny**

Executive Director  
The Four Winds Foundation  
(561) 906-3283  
info@chaplaindavid.com

**Molly Christian**

Member  
Montgomery County Fire Corps  
(301) 253-3430  
mnchristian001@hotmail.com

**Marcus Coleman**

Outreach Specialist  
DHS CFBCI  
(202) 646-7655  
marcus.coleman@associates.dhs.gov

**Michelle Collins**

Emergency Management Specialist  
FEMA  
(617) 956-7544  
Michelle.Collins@fema.gov

**Connie Cordovilla**

Associate Director, Human Rights and Community Relations  
American Federation of Teachers  
(202) 879-4490  
ccordovi@aft.org

**Danielle Cornwall**

Associate  
National Urban League  
(212) 558-5358  
dcornwall@nul.org

**Tom Crane**

Individual and Community Preparedness  
FEMA  
(202) 786-9860  
thomas.j.crane@dhs.gov

**Kathy Crosby**

Senior Vice President  
Ad Council  
(202) 331-9075  
kcrosby@adcouncil.org

**Marc DeCoursey**

Chief of Staff  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5669  
decourcym@usa.redcross.org

**Suzy DeFrancis**

Chief Public Affairs Officer  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5486  
defranciss@usa.redcross.org

**Gerald DeFrancisco**

President, Humanitarian Services  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4749  
DefranciscoG@usa.redcross.org

---

**Jennifer Deibert**

Manager, Program Development  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5193  
DeibertJ@usa.redcross.org

**Carol Delille-Elias**

Parent of Youth Representative  
Youth Parent  
(917) 723-4847  
carole.delille@ingclarion.com

**Jeanne-Aimee DeMarrais**

Director, Domestic Emergencies  
Save the Children  
(203) 919-2219  
jdemarrais@savechildren.org

**Kara Desmarais**

Project Manager, Ready Rating  
American Red Cross  
(202) 412-3450  
desmaraisk@usa.redcross.org

**Chezy Deutsch**

LNO in the U.S.  
Israel-IDF Homefront Command  
(202) 674-6525  
hezi\_d@yahoo.com

**Dan Deutsch**

Director, JCC Maccabi Experience  
JCC Association  
(212) 786-5089  
ddeutsch@jcca.org

**Daniel Dodgen**

Director, Division for At Risk Individuals, Behavioral Health,  
and Community Resilience  
HHS/ASPR  
(202) 245-0719  
Daniel.Dodgen@HHS.Gov

**Victoria Elias**

Youth Representative  
Student  
(347) 254-5124  
Victoriaelias10@aol.com

**Jannon Ellis**

Director of Cadet Programs  
National Capital Wing of Civil Air Patrol.  
(703) 588-5063  
janon.ellis.ctr@pentagon.af.mil

**Stacy Elmer**

Special Assistant to the ASPR  
DHHS  
(202) 205-4246  
stacy.elmer@hhs.gov

**Mary Jean Erschen**

Executive Director  
Center for School, Youth and Citizen Preparedness  
(608) 592-5200  
mjerschen@citizenpreparedness.org

**Daniel Fagbuyi**

Medical Director, Disaster Preparedness and Emergency  
Management, Asst. Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency  
Medicine  
The George Washington University School of Medicine  
(202) 476-2080  
dfagbuyi@cnmc.org

**Pam Farr**

National Chair of Volunteers  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8933  
FarrP@usa.redcross.org

**Aria Finger**

COO  
Dosomething.org  
(202) 786-9620  
afinger@dosomething.org

**David Fortino**

Contract Support for Community Preparedness  
ICF Macro/FEMA Region II  
(212) 680-3667  
David.fortino@associates.dhs.gov

**Margaret Fowke**

Emergency Medical Technician and Registered Dietitian  
National Weather Service  
(301) 713-0258 189  
Margaret.Fowke@noaa.gov

**Carol Freeman**

Vice President  
ICF Macro  
(240) 747-4901  
cFreeman@icfi.com

**Edward Gabriel**

Director, Global Crisis Management and Business Continuity  
The Walt Disney Company  
(818) 560-5280  
edward.gabriel@disney.com



---

**Jenelle Gabriele**

Individual and Community Preparedness Division  
FEMA  
(202) 786-9463  
jenelle.gabriele@dhs.gov

**Megan Gelson**

Intern: Preparedness Health and Safety Services  
American Red Cross  
(908) 770-4146  
mjgelson@loyola.edu

**Banafsheh Ghassemi**

VP, Enterprise Customer Relationship Management  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4399  
ghassemib@usa.redcross.org

**Joseph Gibson**

National Youth Council Outreach Officer  
American Red Cross  
(612) 741-6083  
gibsonjw@usa.redcross.org

**Randy Gnatt**

Policy Advisor  
National Commission on Children and Disasters  
(202) 205-9561  
Randall.gnatt@ACF.hhs.gov

**Kay Goss**

Senior Principal and Senior Advisor for Emergency  
Management and Continuity Programs  
SRA International  
(703) 284-6050  
kay\_goss@sra.com

**Susan Graves**

LCSD Safety Coordinator  
Lincoln County School District  
(541) 270-4367  
susan.graves@lincoln.k12.or.us

**Amber Greene**

Director of Ready New York  
NYC Office of Emergency Management  
(718) 422-4887  
AGreene@OEM.NYC.GOV

**Nathan Groce**

Associate Youth Segment  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4870  
GroceN@usa.redcross.org

**Alison Hathaway**

DHS Detailee  
U.S. Department of Education  
(202) 245-7864  
alison.hathaway@ed.gov

**Sharon Hemphill**

Senior Director, Health and Life Skills  
Boys and Girls Clubs of America  
(404) 487-5826  
shemphill@bgca.org

**Thomas Heneghan**

Manager- Preparedness  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4768  
heneghant@usa.redcross.org

**Kathleen Henning**

President Region 3  
IAEM  
(301) 253-3430  
prepare4@verizon.net

**Alexandra Hochreiter**

Operations Specialist, Domestic Emergencies Unit  
Save the Children  
(202) 640-6600  
ahochreiter@savechildren.org

**Nicole Holtgreffe**

Preparedness Sales and Outreach Director  
American Red Cross St. Louis Area Chapter  
(314) 516-2755  
nholtgreffe@redcrossstl.org

**Brigid Howe**

Manager, Program Services  
Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital  
(202) 274-3311  
bhowe@gscnc.org

**Laura Howe**

Vice President, Disaster Public Affairs  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5713  
howel@usa.redcross.org

**Alexandra Huntress-Reeve**

Volunteer  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4796  
jeleschefi@usa.redcross.org

---

**Kim Hymes**

Director, Policy  
Council for Exceptional Children  
(703) 264-9441  
kimh@cec.sped.org

**Rachel Jacky**

National CERT Program Director  
FEMA  
(202) 786-9543  
rachel.jacky@dhs.gov

**Inga Jelescheff**

Senior Director, Operations; Preparedness and Health and  
Safety Services  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4796  
Jeleschefi@usa.redcross.org

**La'Tresa Jester**

Director of Community Development and Disaster Services  
Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest  
(520) 990-4373  
ljester@lss-sw.org

**Larry Johnson**

Executive Director of Public Safety and School Security  
Grand Rapids Public Schools  
(616) 819-2100  
johnsonl@grps.k12.mi.us

**Victoria Johnson**

Director of Policy  
National Commission on Children and Disasters  
(202) 205-9558  
victoria.johnson@acf.hhs.gov

**Beverly Jordan**

NIH Detailee  
Summit Coordinator  
FEMA  
(202) 786-9620  
beverly.jordan@dhs.gov

**Madeline Joseph**

Chair, ACEP Disaster Preparedness for Children Task Force  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
(904) 244-4124  
madeline.joseph@jax.ufl.edu

**Brian Kamoie**

Senior Director of Preparedness Policy  
White House  
(202) 456-5730  
Brian\_E\_Kamoie@nss.eop.gov

**Scott Kelberg**

Senior Program Specialist  
FEMA  
(202) 368-5490  
scott.kelberg@dhs.gov

**Mary Keller**

Honored Guest  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8283  
brownshe@usa.redcross.org

**Elise Kim**

International Executive Director and CEO  
9-1-1 for Kids: Public Education/Caller Training  
(714) 330-3403  
elisekim@aol.com

**Kurt Klingenberger**

Inspector General  
National Capital Wing of Civil Air Patrol  
(703) 350-6775  
k.klingenberger@verizon.net

**Lauralee Koziol**

Lead Coordinator, Children's Working Group  
FEMA  
(202) 870-4484  
lauralee.koziol@dhs.gov

**Chandrika Kumaran**

Manager for Public Education  
New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Mgmt.  
(027) 244-9356  
Chandrika.Kumaran@dia.govt.nz

**David Lange**

Director, Government Partnerships and Business  
Development  
Scholastic Inc.  
(845) 736-4202  
dlange@scholastic.com

**James Li**

Director of Student Ministries/Director of Security  
Northland, A Church Distributed  
(407) 949-4000  
james.li@northlandchurch.net

**Irene Long**

Co-Chair  
Jurupa Citizen Corps  
(951) 735-5664  
IreneDLong@gmail.com

---

**Roger Lowe**

Senior Vice President, Communications  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4288  
lowerog@usa.redcross.org

**Pamela Lockett**

Chapter Executive  
HOPE worldwide  
(240) 793-7518  
Pamela\_Lockett@hopeww.org

**Peter Macias**

Communication Director for Service to the Armed Forces  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4438  
MaciasP@usa.redcross.org

**Jennifer Malenab**

Special Assistant  
DHS/Office of Policy  
(202) 282-8719  
jennifer.malenab@dhs.gov

**Timothy Manning**

Deputy Administrator, Protection and National Preparedness  
FEMA  
(202) 212-1572  
Timothy.Manning@fema.gov

**Angela Manos**

Individual and Community Preparedness Officer  
FEMA-Region III  
(215) 931-5549  
angela.manos@dhs.gov

**Amelia Marian**

Senior Business Planning Analyst  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8449  
mariana@usa.redcross.org

**Linda Marsal**

Consultant  
Council for Exceptional Children  
(202) 746-8919  
lmarsal@embarqmail.com; lindam@cec.sped.org

**Karen Marsh**

Individual and Community Preparedness Division/Citizen  
Corps  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
(202) 786-9530  
karen.marsh@dhs.gov

**Margaret McCalla**

Senior Staff Meteorologist, NOAA  
(301) 427-2056 25  
Margaret.R.McCalla@noaa.gov

**Jack McMaster**

President, Preparedness and Health and Safety Services  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4794  
McMasterJ@usa.redcross.org

**Jackie Miller**

Community Preparedness Programs Coordinator  
City of Houston, Mayor's Office of Public Safety & Homeland  
(832) 393-0922  
jackie.miller@houstontx.gov

**William Modzeleski**

Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary  
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools  
U.S. Department of Education  
(202) 245-7831  
Bill.Modzeleski@ed.gov

**Andrea Moore**

Youth Resources Coordinator  
PACER Center  
(952) 838-9000  
andrea.moore@pacer.org

**Regina Moran**

Director of Emergency Preparedness  
Serve DC-The Mayor's Office on Volunteerism  
(202) 727-0709  
regina.moran@dc.gov

**Tom Morgan**

Community Preparedness Officer  
FEMA-Region VII  
(816) 283-7962  
thomas.morgan1@dhs.gov

**Monica Muchajer**

Senior Marketing Specialist  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4870  
muchajerm@usa.redcross.org

**Deborah Ann Mulligan**

Director, Institute for Child Health Policy and Pediatric Expert,  
Center for Bioterrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness  
Nova Southeastern University  
(954) 262-1940  
dams@ichp.nova.edu

---

**Paul Myers**

Senior Associate, Preparedness  
American Red Cross  
(202) 642-6421  
MyersPa@usa.redcross.org

**Jerry Newberry**

Executive Director  
National Education Association  
Health Information Network  
(202) 822-7570  
jnewberry@nea.org

**Court Ogilvie**

Senior Director, Business Integration  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8602  
ogilviec@usa.redcross.org

**Craig Oldham**

VP, Digital Engagement  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5161  
oldhamc@usa.redcross.org

**Angela Palombaro**

Individual and Community Preparedness Division  
FEMA  
(202) 786-9557  
angela.palombaro@dhs.gov

**Jan Parker**

Injury Prevention Specialist  
NC Office of the State Fire Marshal  
(919) 624-8252  
jan.parker@ncdoj.gov

**Russ Paulsen**

Executive Director, Hurricane Recovery Program  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8651  
paulsenru@usa.redcross.org

**Gina Payton Lagarde**

Child Health Medical Director  
Department of Health and Hospitals  
(504) 568-3504  
Gina.Lagarde@la.gov

**Daniela Penalzoa**

Deputy Director  
Instituto Nacional de la Juventud  
(562) 620-4708  
dpenalzoa@injuv.gob.cl

**Alan Penn**

President-Elect-Designate  
Kiwanis International  
(330) 421-3283  
apenn@zoominternet.net

**Sally Phillips**

Deputy Director Health Threats Resilience Division  
Department of Homeland Security  
(202) 254-6489  
sally.phillips@dhs.gov

**Kara Praed**

Senior Events Planner  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4246  
praedk@usa.redcross.org

**Karen Quarles**

Director, Federal Relations  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-7833  
quarlesk@usa.redcross.org

**Laurence Raine**

Branch Chief, Health Threats Resilience Division  
Department of Homeland Security  
(202) 254-6112  
laurence.raine@dhs.gov

**Christopher Revere**

Executive Director  
National Commission on Children and Disasters  
(202) 205-9561  
Christopher.Revere@ACF.hhs.gov

**Mary Rhedin**

Individual and Community Preparedness Officer  
FEMA-Region V  
(312) 408-4404  
mary.rhedin@dhs.gov

**Trevor Rikken**

Manager, Mass Care  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5760  
rigger@usa.redcross.org

**Mike Robins**

Federal Relations Liaison  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4239  
robinsm@usa.redcross.org



---

**Kevin Ronan**

Professor of Clinical Psychology  
Central Queensland University  
61-7-4930-6746  
k.ronan@cqu.edu.au

**Lewis Rubinson**

Preparedness Sub Council Member  
American Red Cross/ACFASP  
(206) 615-2024  
Lewis.Rubinson@hhs.gov

**Lynette Sappe-Watkins**

Director of Development  
The Home Safety Council  
(202) 330-4906  
lynette.sappe-watkins@homesafetycouncil.org

**Jannah Scott**

Deputy Director, DHS CFBCI  
US Department of Homeland Security  
(202) 380-6140  
jannah.scott@dhs.gov

**Marci Scott**

Program Manager  
Pierce County Emergency Management  
(253) 798-2218  
mscott@co.pierce.wa.us

**Cheryl Searcy**

Director, Chapter Operations  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8696  
SearcyC@usa.redcross.org

**John Shertzer**

Senior Director of Kiwanis Programs  
Kiwanis International  
(800) 549-2647 122  
jshertzer@KIWANIS.ORG

**Patricia Shinseki**

Honored Guest  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-8283  
brownshe@usa.redcross.org

**Suzanne Simmons**

Voluntary Agency Liaison  
FEMA  
(202) 212-1033  
suzanne.simmons@dhs.gov

**Brian Smith**

Representative  
Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Fire Department  
(480) 362-7292  
brian.smith@srpmic-nsn.gov

**Jacqueline Snelling**

Preparedness Specialist  
FEMA ICPD  
(202) 786-9577  
jacqueline.snelling@dhs.gov

**Corina Solé Brito**

Senior Communications Manager  
ICF Macro  
(240) 747-4766  
csolebrito@icfi.com

**Leanna Soltis**

Retired Vice Principal  
Milan High School  
(734) 344-1279  
leannasoltis@gmail.com

**Kyra Sommerfeld**

Student-Concordia College  
Youth Representative  
(218) 443-1047  
ksommerf@cord.edu

**Lisa Soronen**

Senior Staff Attorney  
National School Boards Association  
(703) 838-6712  
lsoronen@nsba.org

**Olivia Sparer**

Program Analyst  
HHS/ASPR  
(202) 245-0765  
olivia.sparer@hhs.gov

**William Swenson**

Vice President  
Inclusion Research Institute & Inclusive Preparedness Center  
(202) 338-7158 203  
wgswenson@inclusionresearch.org

**Cindy Taylor**

Acting Deputy Director, External Affairs  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
(202) 646-4117  
cindy.taylor@dhs.gov

---

**Mary Troupe**

Executive Director  
Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities  
(601) 969-0601  
mary@msccd.org

**Alec Tune**

Contract Support for Community Preparedness  
ICF Macro / FEMA-Region IX  
(510) 627-7105  
Alec.tune@associates.dhs.gov

**Daniel Valle**

Senior Advisor, Grants  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4862  
valled@usa.redcross.org

**Gordon Vance**

Director of Programs  
National Runaway Switchboard  
(773) 289-1728  
gvance@1800runaway.org

**Deborah Vanderbeek**

Senior Associate, SAF  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-4814  
vanderbeekd@usa.redcross.org

**Randy Vaughn**

Director of Disaster Management  
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.  
(409) 982-6464  
rgheartbeat51@yahoo.com

**Cheryl Vincent**

Program Specialist  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ACF  
(202) 261-4126  
cheryl.vincent@acf.hhs.gov

**Hui-Shan Walker**

2nd Vice President, Deputy Coordinator Emergency  
Management  
IAEM-USA  
(757) 382-6193  
hwalker@cityofchesapeake.net

**Janusz Wasiolek**

Program Analyst  
ICF Macro  
(202) 786-9743  
janusz.wasiolek@dhs.gov

**LaTanya Watson**

FEMA/GPD  
(202) 786-9540  
latanya.watson@dhs.gov

**Francesca Weaks**

National Youth Council Member  
American Red Cross  
(336) 337-3206  
godswill08@yahoo.com

**W. Russell Webster**

Federal Preparedness Coordinator  
FEMA-Region I  
(617) 872-9453  
william.webster@dhs.gov

**Lorna Weese**

Executive Director  
Volunteers in Policing  
(907) 388-9696  
ljweese@gmail.com

**Millicent West**

Director  
DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency  
(202) 727-6161  
millicent.west@dc.gov

**Marcia Weston**

Director of College Goal Sunday  
YMCA of the USA  
(336) 617-0535  
marcia.weston@ymca.net

**Joe White**

Senior Vice President  
American Red Cross  
(314) 516-2781  
Whitejos@usa.redcross.org

**Rosalita Whitehair**

Program Manager, Partnership for Tribal Governance  
National Congress of American Indians  
(202) 466-7767 x591  
rwhitehair@ncai.org

**Jessica Willingham**

Chief Marketing and Communication Officer  
American Red Cross St. Louis Area Chapter  
(314) 516-2712  
JWillingham@redcrossstl.org

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**Laurie Willshire**

Senior Associate, Program Administration  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-5005  
WillshireL@usa.redcross.org

**Jacob Wimisberg**

Director of Strategy and Cooperation  
Israel National Emergency Management Authority  
972-50-6298224  
Kobi\_W@mod.gov.il

**Jacqueline Yannacci**

Program Manager, Emotional Support for Recovery  
American Red Cross  
(202) 303-6724  
yannaccij@usa.redcross.org

**Robin Young**

Program Coordinator, Children and Youth Initiatives  
National Crime Prevention Council  
(202) 261-4126  
Ryoung@NCPC.org

**Anne Zeltinger**

Senior Business Partner, Public Safety Community  
Engagement  
Target  
(612) 696-5555  
anne.zeltinger@target.com

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## APPENDIX C: National Youth Summit Attendee Feedback Report

### Who Participated in the National Summit on Youth Preparedness?

The 2010 National Summit on Youth Preparedness was hosted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Individual and Community Preparedness Division, the Department of Education, and the American Red Cross at its National Headquarters in Washington, DC, on September 15–16, 2010. The Summit brought together approximately 120 attendees from youth-oriented communications channels, programs serving youth, developers of youth preparedness education, practitioners from the state, tribal, and local levels and academia. Attendees were asked to fill out feedback sheets at the end of the Summit; we received 35 completed feedback sheets back. The following table is a breakout of the backgrounds of those who provided feedback.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Attendees Who Completed Feedback Sheets\***

	Attendees n=35
Nonprofit or Community Organization	37%
State, Tribal, Local Government	17%
Federal Government	11%
Faith-Based Organization	11%
Academic/Research	9%
Business/Industry	9%
School/Educational Facility	9%
Advocate for the Underserved	3%
Other	9%

\*Several attendees marked more than one option.

### Most Useful/Interesting Information Learned During the Summit

For many attendees, the most useful/most interesting part of the Summit was the international perspective of youth preparedness. Specifically, the exposure to a variety of perspectives was extremely valuable—this includes the sharing of successes and information about various programs. The networking opportunities were also useful. The speakers, namely Dr. Kevin Ronan and Kobi Wimisberg, were extremely well received.

**Q2. What is the most useful information you learned during the Summit? What did you find most interesting?**

“[Finding that] there are many ‘lessons learned’ not well shared. There is no real solid definition of what preparedness is. There is the potential for this concern to morph into a movement.”

—Nonprofit Organization and Academic/Research

“Most useful: [Using] youth as true role players and participants in a disaster, not just to protect themselves but to be active in helping others. Most interesting—various perspectives based on age, geographic area and culture.”

—Nonprofit or Community Organization

“Networking and sharing ideas to help move forward with a plan of action to actively engage youth and families within their communities. I was happy to hear so many great ideas and hope this process will not stop here.”

—Nonprofit or Community Organization

“Dr. Ronan’s presentation on researching youth preparedness education programs and their effectiveness.”

—Federal Government

## Most Important to Increasing Youth Preparedness

Attendees ranked the top five things that they thought were most important to increasing youth preparedness. “Including youth preparedness education in school curricula” ranked as the most important among attendees with almost 9 in 10 (86 percent) including it in their top 5 and one-third (34 percent) ranking it as the most important thing. “Giving youth a voice in community preparedness planning” ranked second in terms of total rankings in the top 5 with 7 in 10 (71 percent); however, only 1 person ranked this as most important. “Increasing volunteer opportunities for youth in emergency preparedness” was ranked in the top five by just over two in three (69 percent) and was most important to 14 percent of attendees (third in total number of 1s). Less than half (43 percent) ranked “passing federal legislation” in the top five; however one in five attendees (20 percent) ranked this as most important.

**Table 2: What Is Most Important to Increasing Youth Preparedness?\***

	Total Number of Rankings	Total Number of 1s (Most Important)
Include youth preparedness education in school curricula	86%	34%
Give youth a voice in community preparedness planning	71%	3%
Increase volunteer opportunities for youth in emergency preparedness	69%	14%
Provide targeted funding for community-based outreach to youth	66%	9%
Pass federal legislation	43%	20%
Gap analysis of existing educational resources, develop training for lacking areas	43%	11%
Establish a nationwide day for drills	37%	6%
Increase number of emergency preparedness instructors for youth	23%	3%
Increase recognition and awards for youth activities in preparedness	23%	0%

\*Question text reads as follows: With 1 being the most important, please select the top 5 things you think are most important to increase youth preparedness. Indicate 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 on the lines below.

## Most Important for Youth To Know or Know How To Do

Interestingly, attendees considered the importance of youth preparedness education as a useful way of getting crucial information into households and making the entire household safer and more prepared. “Helping prepare their family” ranked in the top five for just under three in four attendees (74 percent) and ranked number one for over one in four (29 percent). Over 7 in 10 (71 percent) considered “learning basic first aid skills” as one of the 5 most important things for youth to know how to do; almost 1 in 4 (23 percent) ranking this as the most

important thing. Over half of the attendees (52 percent) ranked these two as the most important things for youth to know or know how to do. Other skills ranked as important by two in three attendees included “taking protective actions for likely hazards in their area” (69 percent) and “knowing how to contact family members” (66 percent).

**Table 3: Most Important Thing for Youth To Know/Know How To Do\***

	Total Number of Rankings	Total Number of 1s (Most Important)
Help prepare their family	74%	29%
Learn basic first aid skills	71%	23%
Protective actions for likely hazards in their area	69%	11%
How to contact family members	66%	6%
Know their school emergency plan	43%	9%
Practice and exercise responding	43%	9%
Have emergency supplies at home	37%	3%
Know their local community’s hazards	29%	9%
Know how to reduce hazards in their home	26%	6%
Know their community alerts/warnings	23%	0%
Get emergency info during an event	23%	0%
When and how to shelter in place for several hours	20%	0%
How to evacuate from an area	14%	3%
Fire safety	11%	3%
How to be safe from an intruder	11%	3%
How to decontaminate themselves	9%	0%

\*Question text reads as follows: With 1 being the most important please select the top 5 things you think are most important for youth to know or know how to do. Indicate 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 on the lines below.

### Most Important Topics Needing Specific Support

The themes of collaboration and sharing of best practices tended to drive attendees’ needs for specific support. Over half (54 percent) of attendees believed that “collaboration between government and civic leaders for community planning to support youth preparedness” was an important topic that needed specific support and over one in four (29 percent) ranked this as the most important topic for more specific support. “Research on how to motivate children and young people to become prepared” also ranked in the top five by over half of the attendees (54 percent). Seventeen percent ranked this as the most important topic for specific support. Just under (46 percent) ranked use of social media as an important topic; however, only one attendee considered this to be the most important. Just over one in four (37 percent) ranked “information on existing programs available”; however, those who ranked this variable tended to rank it highly, with 14 percent ranking it as most important.



**Table 4: Most Important Topics Needing Specific Support\***

	Total Number of Rankings	Total Number of 1s (Most Important)
Collaboration between government and civic leaders for community planning to support youth preparedness	54%	29%
Research on how to motivate children and young people to become prepared	54%	17%
Use of social media to engage youth	46%	3%
Tools for program evaluation, including effectiveness and return on investment	43%	9%
Resources for implementation, such as program and outreach materials	43%	6%
Information on existing programs available	37%	14%
Web-based mechanism for sharing information and experiences	37%	6%
Research and guidance on age-appropriate instruction	34%	6%
How to design and execute exercises that include youth	34%	6%
Preparing for mental health needs of youth following an event	29%	3%
Guidance for engaging disadvantaged youth/youth with disabilities	26%	9%
Tools for youth volunteer management	17%	0%
Guidance on how to use real world events as teachable moments	14%	0%
Alerts and warnings to reach youth populations	11%	0%

\*Question text reads as follows: With 1 being the most important, please select the top five topics for which you would most welcome specific support. Indicate 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 on the lines below.