

## **Teen School Emergency Response Training (Teen SERT)**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) "*Are You Ready*" handbook provided the curriculum for the pilot and was augmented with videos, pictures, presentations, and hands-on activities. The future course will be taught from the traditional Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) curriculum, but edited to focus on school, self and family basic awareness and preparedness. Many speakers participated in the program lending credibility and experience. The students responded favorably to these speakers and the education they received from them.

Medical training was taught by American Medical Response (AMR). This training was somewhat advanced than even the CERT training, as students received their CPR certification, along with advanced splinting and stabilization training. As a result, the final exercise was more realistic due to the students' level of training and the victims were students from the school's Drama Club.

### **Course Snapshot and Instructors (9 week course/1 hour per day):**

- Overview: Classroom teachers
- Disaster/Emergency Preparedness: Classroom teachers, Emergency Management Speaker
- Fire Safety: Representative from the Fire Department
- Disaster Medical Operations: AMR (Local ambulance company)
- What to Expect When You Dial 911: County Communications Officer (Dispatcher)
- Weather Spotter: National Weather Service
- Moulage: Emergency Management
- Disaster Psychology: American Red Cross, CERT
- Terrorism & Household Hazardous Materials: Sheriff's Office
- Exercise & Final Participants
- Hotwash & Survey

### **Daily Classroom Attendance:**

- 46 students
- Classroom teacher

### **Family Lessons:**

- Family disaster plan creation
- Supply kits

### **Pilot School Specific Activities:**

- Lockdown: aggressive procedures and exercises
- Safety scan: fire extinguisher status evaluation
- Hazard assessment: building safety and door evaluation during lockdown

### **Exercise & Final Participants:**

- 46 student responders, 45 successfully completed the exercise, 1 did not due to the intense and realistic play of the exercise
- 2 AMR, 3 teachers, 5 administrators, 13 Drama Club members, 4 CERT, 1 School Safety Officer, 1 School Newspaper Reporter observed the exercise (the students choose and Incident Commander and they are the responders-not the adults)
- *For anyone planning a Teen SERT program, make sure you document (still photo, video, etc.) the exercise for future promotion, accountability, etc.*

### **Hotwash & Survey:**

The Hotwash was very instrumental in indicating to the students/participants what worked well in the exercise and how they felt after the exercise. The students presented a volunteer appreciation banner on which they wrote personal messages to the volunteers. This was very special to the volunteers, as it gave an intrinsic reward for all of their interaction with Teen SERT and it provided proof of that it bridged a gap allowing personal relationships to develop between the volunteers and the students. These relationships could prove critical in a true incident.

*For anyone planning a Teen SERT program, make sure you document (video, etc.) the hotwash for future promotion, accountability, etc.* The students are very graphic in their discussion and class participation and PWHS regrets not videoing their responses. It is critical for this discussion to get back to the state and federal level for awareness support and potential funding.

The students were very vocal in their support of the program and very interested in additional training. Of the 47 in the two classes, 46 completed the survey and 16 expressed interest in the first response field.

### **Resource planning**

Due to the lateness of the receipt of the grant money, AMR filled in with medical supplies and CERT for moulage. The “*Are You Ready*” handbooks are free from FEMA for programs that don’t want the customized, basic awareness/preparedness CERT curriculum. It is very important to conduct a survey before the students open the book and after the exercise, as part of the hotwash. Include a level of measurability in the survey to determine the student’s understanding of first response, as well as what they learned from taking the course. Included in this report are the summarized results of the survey, as well as a template of the survey for other communities’ use.

### **Unique situation**

A day was scheduled for a panel to teach Disaster Psychology and on the day prior, a rumor circulated the school about a “list” of people regarding a “Columbine”-type incident. Needless to say, the kids were shaken. Unbeknownst to the panel that was there to teach Disaster

Psychology, an assembly was scheduled just prior to the class where the speaker spoke in a relatively uncalled for manner to the kids that made the kids emotions fly. The kids felt their emotions were not being addressed (relative to the threat of the incident). The panel began a session where they would ask a question with the kids to write one-word answers and then the kids were to write five questions about anything they wanted.

The kids seemed relieved after their classes with the panelists. One of the panelists gathered up what the children had written and used this as a tool to the PWHs administration for any future incidents.

### **Future planning**

Many areas that are currently being reviewed for implementation into the Teen SERT program are Homeland Security Alert Status change information, Terrorism and Hazardous Materials (home, road carrier, and meth lab chemical awareness), and more hands-on activities. Also being considered are the different ways Teen SERT can be offered to the students. For the spring semester, it is incorporated into the Life Skills class; however, if the popularity of the program continues to grow, administration may want to consider offering Teen SERT as a standalone program.

Due to the internal focus of this semester's pilot program, little exploration was made into developing middle or elementary school programs. However, as Teen SERT grows, more emphasis will be placed on external training to the younger students in a "big brother, big sister" type of peer pressure in an effort to make being prepared for any type of emergency, "cool."

### **Summary**

There is no question that the Teen SERT program is a success. The students' feedback has provided insight into how the program needs to be adaptive to the current needs of the community and to the school itself. The community's interest in CERT will be strongly enhanced in the collaboration between the students and their parents with the homework assignments.

## **Survey Results**

## Teen SERT (School Emergency Response Training)

### Final Survey Results

#### **1. What have you learned in Teen SERT that will help you in your life?**

- CPR-21
- To act in a situation, both responsively, and professionally.-20
- Basic treatment and triage-19
- Helping people/save lives-7
- Head to toe assessment-3
- Leadership-1
- “Surprised at what I learned and how I can use it through my life.”
- Many other things-3
- “More things than I could write, that will help me and other people in crisis situations.”-3

#### **2. What participation did your parents/guardians have in your homework assignments/discussions. What were some of their thoughts/comments?**

- Supportive-20
- Great/cool-9
- Didn't (know about it) – 9
- Surprised at course's focus on family plans, etc. – 5
- “Mom's now getting a kit for her car.”-1
- “(My parents think) it should be a high school requirement.”-1
- “Proud that I can save a life.”-2

#### **3. Do you feel better prepared to respond to an emergency, as a result of your participation in Teen SERT?**

- 40 - Yes- Know what to do in an emergency situation/less scared
- 2 – Yes-More comfortable
- 2-“Really proud that (I) can make a difference.”
- 1- “Yes-and with new and more effective training techniques.”
- 1- (“I feel 110% better with simple lessons to help me in everyday life.”-1
- 2-“Would have to be there to know.”
- 1-“... controlled chaos, not just plain chaos.”
- “Before I took this class, I would have no clue in the world on what to do.”-1

#### **4. As a result of your taking this class, do you know more about first responders? Explain**

- Now I know what they do and go through-30
- “Bravest people” “Super Heroes” “compassionate”
- Hard workers, but after responding, they have a great sense of accomplishment-3
- “Didn't realize how much patience, time, and separation from your personal feeling is involved” – 2
- “What they mean to our community.”-1
- “Yes, before this, I never knew about first responders.”-1
- “You can do so much before the paramedics get there to save someone's life.”-1

### **5. What did you like the most about Teen SERT?**

Moulage-13                      Treatments-4                      Real life scenarios/final-11  
CPR-9                              Teamwork-9                      Hands-on- 10  
Triage-3                          Search & rescue-2                      Fire safety-2  
Everything-5                      Talking to speakers-1                      Car kits-1                      Course knowledge-1  
Meeting new people-1                      Making new friends-1                      Natural hazards-2  
Ambulance tour-1                      Simple & effective techniques-1                      Psychological separation-1  
Teaches something that is not well known-2  
“I liked all (of) the hands-on participation and learning the things that everyone should know.”-1  
“I’m glad we were offered this course. Thank you.”-1

### **6. What do you think should be changed to make the class better?**

Great, as is (“blast”)- 15                      Longer-9                      More classes-3                      More hands-on-3  
More stories/pictures/experts-4                      Pairing of teams balanced in stature-1  
More mass casualty situations-2                      Would be better with Health Class-1  
More moulage training-3                      “Teach more!”-1

### **7. Would you encourage other students to take the class? Why?**

Y-42                      Everyone needs this, it can save lives-33  
“Fun”- 8                      Learned a lot-7                      Increase in responder base-1  
Great experience-1                      New career options introduced.-1  
Depends on the school.-1                      No, only unless serious about the training.-1  
“Will need to know it someday, it’s better to start early.”-1  
“All students should know how to handle these situations (not just PWHS)”-1

### **8. Do you think this training is important enough for it to become a regular class in school? (Like DECA) Why?**

Everybody needs this training (should be a requirement)-36  
“Absolutely. It’s part of being a responsible citizen.”-1  
“I think so, but I don’t know how interested other students would be.”-1  
“I think it is important enough, but maybe offered as a different class-separate from Life Skills.”  
“More important..., it’s a real life situation.”-1  
“Yes, but (the course) needs more time.”-1  
“Makes me want to come to school-we need it.”-1

### **Successes to date:**

1. Granddaughter (Teen SERT student) diagnosed heart attack symptoms and helped to get her grandmother to the hospital.
2. Teen SERT student was skiing and a snowboarder fell - compound fracture to his arm. She splinted the arm and stabilized him, then helped him to the bottom.

**Template: Survey**

1. What have you learned in the Teen SERT (school emergency response training) that will help you in your life?

2. What participation did your parents/guardians have in your homework assignments? What were some of their comments/thoughts?

3. Do you feel better prepared to respond to an emergency, as a result of your participation in Teen SERT? (Circle one) Yes No Explain your answer.

4. As a result of your taking this class, do you know more about first responders? Explain.

Before you took this course, you were asked if you planned to be a first responder. (EMT, Law Enforcement, Firefighter, etc.) By taking this course, have you changed your mind?

(Circle one) Yes No

Do you plan to be a first responder? (Circle one) Yes No If you circled yes, what do you want to do?

5. What did you like most about Teen SERT? (you can list as many as you want)

6. What do you think should be changed to make the class better?

7. Would you encourage other students to take the class? (Circle one) Yes No Why?

8. Do you think this training is important enough for it to become a regular class in school like DECA? Why?