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Featured Article

Alamo Area MRC Enlists Mascots to Teach Kids About Preparedness

When the Alamo Area MRC (TX) was asked to participate in a local elementary school's National Read Across America Day event, they jumped at the chance. Read Across America Day is an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child to celebrate reading. The event typically takes place on beloved author Dr. Seuss' birthday. MRC volunteers started the day by reading to kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classes.

After reading some childhood favorites, the MRC, along with the local health department, took the opportunity to teach the students some preparedness lessons. The health department has several mascots they use to help teach students about preparedness and disaster safety. Tex the "Shelter in Place" Turtle and Agua the "Turn Around, Don't Drown" Frog came to share their preparedness messages with the students ahead of flood and hurricane seasons.

The MRC volunteers and local health department staff gave the students emergency preparedness coloring books and along with the help of the mascots, addressed those messages through the coloring books. The students loved the interactive demonstration about preparedness. They asked a lot of questions and worked hard to understand things like how shallow the water has to be for a car to be swept away or stranded. The hope is that these students will share what they learn with their parents and be active participants in keeping their families safe in the face of extreme weather. The children were allowed to take home both the coloring book and an activity book that provided additional resources for their parents.

The MRC will also be attending a career day at the school this month, which provides the students an extra chance to explore emergency preparedness, and even get a chance to see inside of emergency vehicles. They also hope to recreate the event at another school in the area. It's a great opportunity for the MRC to participate in the community and truly engage whole families on preparedness topics.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

Learn More about the 2015-2016 MRC Challenge Awards

NACCHO has selected winners for the 2015-2016 MRC Awards. More than 200 units applied for the \$15,000 award. After a competitive two-tiered review process, 167 units were selected to receive a Challenge Award. The Challenge Award aims to focus innovation in four areas that are aligned with national and local health initiatives.

The number of Challenge Awards issued per focus area were:

Community Resiliency- 67
Chronic Disease Prevention- 36
Mental and Emotional Wellbeing- 22
Partners for Empowered Communities- 42

To learn more about the Challenge Award winners, visit the [Preparedness Brief Blog](#).

Announcements

Your Unit in MRC Train: What Can You Do?

Every single MRC unit has its own section of [MRC TRAIN](#) and an administrative login that gives access to advanced functionality. This is where unit leaders can upload resources just for the unit and post announcements just for their volunteers. Volunteers are automatically placed into the unit's group in MRC TRAIN when they create their MRC TRAIN account and select the unit.

Unit leaders can also [setup training plans in MRC TRAIN](#), directing volunteers to complete specific courses. Training plans can include local, in person training alongside online courses. MRC TRAIN offers reports that make it easy for MRC leaders to track volunteers as they complete their training plans.

Contact the MRC TRAIN Support Desk at mrctsupport@train.org to get assistance in setting up a training plan on MRC TRAIN or accessing your unit's administrative login.

MRC Featured in NACCHO's National Public Health Week Blog Post

To celebrate National Public Health Week, NACCHO polled its members and MRC units to see how they were planning to promote the importance of public health this week. Some of the respondents were featured on [NACCHO's Preparedness Brief Blog](#), including two MRC units that answered last week's MRC Connect Task Tip Tuesday.

The West Springfield (MA) Health Department is sponsoring Healthy Dining Week April 4-10 and National Walking Day on April 6 during NPHW. The Healthy Dining Week is an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services' Mass In Motion "Eat Better and Move More" campaign and will be supported by volunteers from the West Springfield Medical Reserve Corps. Restaurants in West Springfield will offer the option of half portion sizes for the meals already lower in calories and fat, as well as emphasizing fruits, vegetables, and lean meats. The campaign inspires residents to buy, shop, and eat locally and encourages restaurants to promote their healthy options for people going out to eat.

The Mid-Ohio Valley (WV) Health Department will have a table set up with health education information and staffed by volunteers from the Mid-Ohio Valley Medical Reserve Corps. The volunteers will be near the health department's clinic to reach WIC clients and other patients to raise awareness about NPHW.

National Volunteer Week is April 10-16

[National Volunteer Week](#) is April 10-16. Share the great work your MRC unit does in your community by tweeting using the #NVW2016 hashtag. NACCHO will be sharing great stats and information about the MRC from the [2015 Network Profile](#).



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

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