



# Building Resiliency: Emergency Preparedness and Vulnerable Populations

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# Why Prepare?



# Video: A well planned escape

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuhZI3oC9xc>

Ready New York: What's Your Plan?  
@2014 NYC Emergency Management Department

# Vulnerability in Emergencies

- In New Orleans, people aged 60 and older comprised 15 percent of the population prior to Hurricane Katrina, but made up 70 percent of the related deaths.
- A study released in 2008 found that of the 986 people who died as a direct result of Hurricane Katrina, nearly half were aged 75 or older
- Other significant event:
  - Hurricane Sandy
  - California fires
  - Heat Waves

# Elder Vulnerabilities

- Physical or mental impairments
- Medical issues (chronic & temporary)
- Social isolation
- Difficulty self-advocating
- Dietary requirements
- Reduced transportation options
- More likely to suffer from one or more chronic illnesses, including:
  - Hypertension
  - Diabetes
  - Obesity
  - Depression
  - Mobility issues (chronic or temporary)

# Growing Elder Population



- According to the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau, there are nearly **51 million** people (15.6%) in the US aged 65 and older
- The population of individuals aged 65 and older is projected to exceed **73 million** by 2030. That's an increase of 50%, and more than 20% of the total population.



# Who else is vulnerable?

- Adults with access and functional needs
- People with chronic health issues
- Pregnant women
- Children
- Below or near poverty
- Non-English speakers
- People without cars
- People with pets



# Social Isolation



- About 28% (14.3 million) of all non-institutionalized older persons in 2018 lived alone. The proportion living alone increases with advanced age. Among women aged 75+, almost half (44%) lived alone.

[http://www.aoa.acl.gov/Aging\\_Statistics/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.acl.gov/Aging_Statistics/index.aspx)

- According to a 2012 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, both social isolation and loneliness are associated with a higher risk of mortality in adults aged 52 and older.



# How it all started

## Hurricane Irene - 2011



# Brookline's Emergency Preparedness Buddies Program

- Who are we? “COACHES”
  - Trained volunteers: Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) & CERT) who work with elders to improve preparedness & resiliency on an individual level
- Who we help? “BUDDY”
  - Elders or adults with disabilities most of whom live alone

# Brookline's Emergency Preparedness Buddies Program

- What do we do?
  - Assist elders to better prepare for and respond to emergency situations therefore improving resiliency
  - EP coaches provide preparedness training and supplies to Buddies via a series of one-on-one home visits
  - EP coaches assist Buddies with individual preparedness efforts (FOL, Go Bag prep, 911 Disability Indicator Form...)
  - Coaches contact Buddies before known events, and after known/unknown event

## TIME COMMITMENT:

Initially 3-4 hours

Annually 2 hours



# Recruitment, Referrals, & Resources

COACHES	BUDDIES
Brookline MRC/CERT members	Elders living alone/socially isolated
Known to Emergency Management Team	Referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brookline Senior Center/Brookline Council on Aging</li> </ul>
CORI/SORI checked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brookline Housing Authority</li> </ul>
Emergency preparedness training/experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brookline Community Mental Health Center</li> </ul>
Training focused on working with the elderly & those with access and functional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brookline Food Pantry</li> <li>• MA Office of Disability</li> <li>• Independent Living Council</li> <li>• Visiting Nurses Associations</li> <li>• Faith Based Organization</li> </ul>

- Strong backing from Town officials
- Metropolitan Boston Homeland Security Region grants 2014-2019
- Part-time program coordinator (currently 19hrs/week)

# The 1 on 1 Buddies Program



## PROS

- Individualized and tailored to the specific person's need
- Modest resources necessary (start-up go bag)
- Continuity of care
- Accountability
- Coaches know their Buddie's living situation and have access to emergency contacts if needed.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Hard to recruit and match coaches and buddies
- Significant time lag between recruitment and retention
- "Buddies" connotes more than just a few visits
- Supplies must be lightweight and easy to use

# The Buddy Village



## PROS

- Monthly events located in community rooms
- Increases scalability
- Language translations
- Residents meet other residents – Buddy system within building

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Do they actually take the necessary steps towards preparedness?
- No continuity
- No relationship with the buddies

# Emergency Preparedness Buddies Programs

## One-on-One

- About 40 coaches trained
- 20+ active coaches
- 18 Buddies enrolled
- 10 EP Buddy “deployments” to date

## Buddy Village

- In two years – 2017-2018: 48 events, 6 locations, 425 residents
- Materials & Presentations offered in English and Mandarin Chinese

# Moving Forward – Brookline and Beyond



- Faith Based Organizations
- Translations in more languages
- Community outreach
- Neighbors to Neighbors approach
- Help other communities to start similar programs



# Program Achievements



- Awards
  - April 2019: National MRC Award: Community Preparedness & Resilience Award
- Presentations:
  - MRC Well Check Webinar, September 2016
  - MEMA 2019 All-Hazards Preparedness Conference June 2019
  - MHOA Emergency Preparedness Annual Conference November 2019
  - Needham Public Health workshops, Fall 2019
- Information Requests:
  - Nationwide



# Presenter Contact Information

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