



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Mark A. Hartwig**  
*Fire Chief / Fire Warden*

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**CONTACT:** *Tracey Martinez, Public Information Officer*  
*(909) 387-5950, 800-426-8689, pager #3307*

## **San Bernardino County Fire, Office of Emergency Services Recognized at The White House**

On January 28, 2015, County Office of Emergency Services (OES) Emergency Services Officer Cheryl Nagy attended FEMA's National Strategy for Youth Preparedness (National Strategy) recognition event at The White House representing San Bernardino County Fire, OES.

In September 2014 FEMA announced a new strategy to educate young people about disaster prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. The *National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education: Empowering, Educating and Building Resilience* couples its attention on emergency and disaster preparedness with community action that focuses specifically on youth readiness for disasters and related events. The National Strategy was developed in partnership with American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Education.

Research shows that children under the age of 18 make up nearly a quarter of the U.S. population, and it is imperative to educate and empower them to prepare for disasters. Almost 14% of the children and teens in the U.S. have experienced a disaster during their lifetime and 4% percent have been in a disaster within the past year. The most commonly experienced disasters are earthquakes, fires, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

Children have the ability to play an important role in preparing themselves, their families, and their communities for disasters. Working in partnership with Lake Arrowhead Girl Scout Troop 1186, the Rim Communities COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) and Lake Arrowhead CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) volunteers have been able to assist in educating the girl scouts and youth of the mountain communities on preparedness and sheltering in place for the shut-in population living within the mountain communities. In other areas of the County, preparedness education is now becoming more important than ever imagined.

As one of less than 50 national partners supporting the National Strategy, County OES' National Strategy priority steps include: supporting the implementation of youth preparedness learning programs, creating positive relationships between youth and the first responder community, linking youth preparedness to family and community participation, especially in communities where English may not be the primary household language, and building and strengthening productive partnerships among stakeholder agencies and organizations.

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In addition to County OES being recognized, San Bernardino County VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) member, Building Resilient Communities, has also become a recognized affirmer of the National Strategy. BRC President, Debra Williams along with three additional BRC board members also traveled to The White House to be recognized for their new Ark of Safety Youth Program. Throughout 2015 County OES will be partnering with BRC and other organizations/agencies located in San Bernardino County to promote Youth Preparedness within the County.

Following the recognition event at The White House the National Strategy affirmers met at The White House to convene for the first time and discuss the nine steps of the program. Cheryl Nagy assisted Karen Marsh, FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness Division Deputy Director, in facilitating a session about the future goals of the National Strategy program.

To learn more about the National Strategy for Youth Preparedness Education visit [www.ready.gov/youthpreparedness](http://www.ready.gov/youthpreparedness) or contact Cheryl Nagy at [Cheryl.nagy@oes.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Cheryl.nagy@oes.sbcounty.gov).

Courtesy photos can be located at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) under latest news.

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