



**MADISON COUNTY
PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PO Box 635, Wampsville, NY 13163**

**SHARON A. DRISCOLL
Public Information Officer**

**315/366-2788
Fax: 315/366-2789**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Citizen Corps of Madison County

The Citizens Corps of Madison County seems to be the best kept secret in town! But, this small group of volunteers is busily spreading the word from Bouckville to Sheds, across the County and back through Chittenango, Canastota, Morrisville and beyond about the importance of being prepared in the event of an emergency, and handing out Disaster Preparedness Kits.

The Citizen's Corps of Madison County in partnership with RSVP meets six time a year. They reach out to the County's senior citizens and homebound folks educating them about the importance of being prepared in the event of an emergency, i.e. snow storm, power outage, fire or flood.

Judy W. Parker, coordinator of the Citizen's Group explained that there are many items that everyone should have available in case of an emergency. "We suggest that dynamo style flashlight and radio, (one that does not require batteries), be part of the kit along with canned foods, water, manual can opener and a First Aid Kit."

Disaster Preparedness Kits contain such items as a thermal blanket, water, pill container, crank flash light, First Aid Kit, etc. An example of a disaster kit will be on display at the Chittenango Library through the month of January and at the Bridgeport Library during the month of February. Funding for the disaster kits comes in part from Home Land Security Grants and a number of other grants secured through the office of the Madison County Fire Coordinator.

To date the Citizen Corp has reached over 600 seniors and assembled and distributed over 100 Disaster Preparedness Kits.

The Citizen Corps of Madison County was established about two years ago, said Fire Coordinator Joe DeFrancisco. “They do good work by improving the survivability of our senior population when local disasters occur.”

During group presentations and follow-ups with senior citizens and the homebound of Madison County a number of points are stressed, according to DeFrancisco. Volunteers present ideas such as having one person living out of the area as a central contact for the family, the importance of discussing an exit plan with all members of a household and practicing that plan at least twice a year.

“It is important to have everyone in the home agree on a gathering spot in the neighborhood if it becomes necessary to evacuate your home,” said DeFrancisco. “It is also important to know who will be responsible for assisting any elderly or unwell members of the household in the event of an emergency evacuation of the home.”

Another key topic is to make copies of all-important papers and to keep one copy of these documents in your disaster kit and another set in a safety deposit box or other off site location.



RSVP Volunteer Bill Donnelly stressed the importance of being prepared for bad weather, such as a snowstorm during a recent Madison County Citizen Corps meeting at the Morrisville Library.