

Bridges of Love Ministry Society

PROGRAMS



CHURCHES HELPING NEIGHBOURS (FEPI) – NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS (CERT)

INTRODUCTION:

Alberta Floods - Waterton Fire - H1N1 Alberta labelled “Disaster Capital of Canada”

After a large-scale disaster, local governments may not have the capacity to manage the over-whelming needs of an entire community. With dependence on municipal services, residents are exposed to long-term recovery efforts. Networks of prepared individuals and local agencies that collaborate effectively reduce dependence on municipal services and mitigate the damage caused by large scale events.

My name is Marg Pollon, founding director for Bridges of Love Ministry, a registered charity that recognized the need for a coordinated grass roots approach, when over-whelming disasters make it difficult to maintain, a sustained level of care.

In 2006, Bridges of Love began a quest to engage community members in emergency preparedness and response. Three projects have been developed and tested to address solutions for safer and more resilient communities.

They are:

1. The **Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI)** facilitates the development of a network of coordinated local churches to complement and enhance performance with existing secular emergency management agencies.
2. **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** training educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks. Through CERT, the capabilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters, is built and enhanced.
3. **Alberta.Recovers.Org** website matches donations on-line, with disaster victims.

Bridges of Love promotes community resiliency, connecting people, churches, and networks through coordination, resources and training.

Churches helping Neighbours, Neighbours helping Neighbours - a BRIDGE to Community

BACKGROUND:

Bridges of Love Ministry was incorporated as a Religious Society in 2004 and attained Charity Status in 2007. Our mandate has remained constant providing opportunities for churches to be a catalyst for change – reaching out with greater concern for, and influence on, those in their communities. The vehicle, to provide these opportunities, has varied but our mantra remains constant – **Love is ACTION**. Our faith foundation provides strength, resilience, and sustainability through challenging times. We encourage *anyone* over the age of 16 to attend our CERT basic training, building teams of community members, who are ready to respond to any disaster at a moment's notice. **NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS**



In the initial few years our ministry was involved in mobilizing churches in support of the Micah Challenge – a global initiative mobilizing Christians against poverty in support of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals. Involved at a National Level, this period was an excellent training ground, while connecting with leaders across Canada.

In 2006, an unexpected call came from Dr. Tim Foggin, a Burnaby doctor. Dr. Foggin was in Shanghai during the SARS out-break and since returning home to Canada, he and his brother, a biologist in China, were watching the progression of the Avian Flu. An Influenza Pandemic was over-due! They recognized a need for Canadians and especially the local church to be educated and ready to respond to such a catastrophic event. Tim came across our website, noting we were mobilizing churches for the Micah Challenge. After considerable prayer, he invited Bridges of Love to help raise awareness for pandemic preparedness. As a former Medical Laboratory Technologist, it was a good fit with my background and Bridges of Love's mandate. Tim and I collaborated for a year developing a discussion paper, *"Of Churches, Pandemics, and Emergency Preparedness" - Reconnecting the Church with the Community* in which it is found, to assist churches how to respond effectively to such a devastating out-break. This discussion paper is still posted on our website and has been used extensively as a base template for churches pandemic plans.

In 2007, the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) formed with support from an Advisory Council of representatives from all levels of government - the private sector, non-governmental agencies, and church communities. In 2008, a Regional Faith Community Pandemic Summit and Response was facilitated as well as a number of workshops incorporating many of our partners who acknowledged the value and validity of this mission.

The key to FEPI's effectiveness is collaboration, coordination, and integration. The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative facilitates the development of an integrated network of local churches to complement, strengthen and enhance performance with existing secular emergency management organizations, thus creating a climate of mutual respect and understanding.

Gaps in community emergency preparedness and response were identified after the 2013 floods. Funds were made available for initiatives showing promise to address these gaps. Bridges of Love received a substantial grant from the Calgary Foundation that allowed two CERT Canada Summit pilots to test our training material and structure. After showing success and interest in the Calgary communities, we were given a second smaller grant from the Calgary Foundation with additional funding coming from the Insurance Bureau of Canada over a two year period. With donations from churches, individuals, and agencies we have facilitated 9 successful events in Calgary since 2014.

Michel Sigouin, former Regional Director Public Safety Canada, challenged Bridges of Love to develop a template that could be duplicated across Canada. A decision to take our training to the communities of Southern Alberta was initiated with a move to Claresholm, in July 2018. We know there is much work ahead to have a truly prepared Region but we will take one incremental step at a time. Having CERT teams in every community across Southern Alberta is our goal to encourage the rest of Canada, to follow and implement this tested and tried template. Unfortunately, the MD of Willow Creek 26 and Willow Creek Ministerial was not prepared to accept our initiatives so a difficult decision was made to relocate to High River; in hopes we would find a positive reception to duplicate our templates.

THE CHALLENGE:

By definition emergencies are those events which can be managed -- disasters on the other hand cannot be managed so overwhelm the capability and capacity of emergency services personnel. Managing resources during a major emergency is a significant challenge. Emergency response typically requires personnel, facilities, supplies and equipment from multiple organizations, and jurisdictions. Over the past few decades, Canadian communities have learned, often through tragic events, the importance of having comprehensive emergency management programs. Our communities are facing new challenges and experiencing more intense impacts from once familiar hazards. While the community's response to a major crisis is typically generous – uncontrolled mobilization and over-response are still common problems.

The damage caused by natural disasters, such as fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding, from man-made/technological events such as explosions or hazardous materials accidents, or from health risks such as an Influenza Pandemic can affect all aspects of a community – from government services to private enterprise to civic activities. These events can:

- Severely restrict or overwhelm our response resources, communications, transportation, and utilities.
- Leave many individuals and neighbourhoods cut off from outside support.

Damaged roads and disrupted communication systems may restrict the access of emergency response agencies into critically affected areas. Thus, for the initial period immediately following a disaster—often up to 3 days or longer—individuals, household, and neighbourhoods may need to rely on their own resources for:

- Food
- Water
- First Aid
- Shelter

A do-it-yourself approach to emergency planning may not prove to be the most effective methodology for building a disaster-resilient community in these times. No one organization can manage a complex event. While government agencies do their best during emergencies and disasters, they too may be confronted by the disaster's consequences and have limited resources. Individuals in the affected area may well find themselves having to fend for themselves for some time before government help arrives.



A “Whole Community” philosophy in its catastrophic preparedness planning shifts from a “government-centric” response to an approach which considers trained community volunteers as collaborators and partners, as assets rather than liabilities. An effective community-wide emergency response must begin with community-wide planning and preparation through multisector collaboration.

A *multisector collaboration*, the partnership that results when government, non-profit, private, and public organizations, community groups, and individual community members come together to solve problems that affect the whole community; can solve “systemic” problems rather than one isolated situation, as they draw on the resources of all sectors. They can wield more power than one organization or even a group of similar organizations, as they are empowered through the collaborative process. That’s when communities learn to lead institutions in reaching the goals that the communities themselves determine, rather than the other way around. The more obvious the need, the more likely it is that people will be ready and willing to work together and get the job done. This ideology is very applicable for community emergency preparedness and training.

For most groups, the first part of the work of multisector collaboration is to build relationships and trust, so that people can begin to work together on solving community problems. For this collaboration to be realized, strong leaders are needed to provide a vision, instill confidence, wield influence where necessary, handle crises, and move the process forward. This collaborative leader can be an individual representing any involved organization or coalition, or—as may sometimes be preferable—a neutral party from outside the community.

As community builders, we can accomplish more if we can work together, laying the groundwork for a stronger and more resilient community, where different kinds of people work together to solve difficult problems, overcoming conflicts, communicating effectively, making proposals, solving problems, and making decisions.

Until now, emergency disciplines have mainly worked in isolation on every niche aspect, so knowledge and best practices have become siloes. Following the 2013 Alberta Floods, however, we saw a greater impetus on resource sharing and collective responses to planning for sustainability and resilience. Efforts to build community resilience focus on growing the capacity to “bounce back” from disruptions, like those caused by climate change. Climate change, and extreme weather conditions are not the only crisis we face, however, so preparing for disruption must include any crisis and consider all the challenges that might occur in a locality.

Partnerships between government and community leaders focused on engaging the whole community in collaborative planning and capacity building; integration of community resources; outreach and localized preparedness education and training; emergency communications to all population segments; drills and exercises; and, volunteer programs, will support safer communities that are more prepared, and have greater resiliency when incidents occur.

Community-based preparedness planning allows us all to prepare for and respond to anticipated disruptions and potential hazards following a disaster. As individuals, we can prepare our homes and families to cope during that critical period. Through pre-event planning, churches, neighborhoods and worksites can also work together to help reduce injuries, loss of lives, and property damage. Church and community preparedness and training will enhance the ability of individuals and neighbourhoods to reduce their emergency needs and to manage their existing resources until professional assistance becomes available.

Individual preparedness, planning, survival skills, and mutual aid within neighbourhoods and worksites during this initial period are essential measures in coping with the aftermath of a disaster. What you do today will have a critical impact on the quality of your survival and your ability to help others safely and effectively. Residents who learn about the likely hazards in one’s community and the community’s plans and protocols, understand hazard-specific protective actions and response skills, assembling important emergency supplies, and mitigating potential hazards in the home, will be more resilient to any disruptive event. They will be an important asset to the family, neighbours, and other members of the community.

Mitigation is more than infrastructure. It is essential to invest in emergency preparedness, training, planning and equipment. Mitigation should be transparent with community involvement. What we have on hand, or what we are trained to do when a disaster or an emergency strikes, can vastly improve comfort and safety in the initial hours and days of an event. We can achieve great success and build a disaster resilient community while still pursuing day-to-day challenges. To achieve this, we need to plant the seed of prevention, nurture it, and let it become viral. In this manner, our daily decisions will address daily issues, making our communities stronger, even for events no one wants to see happen.

Community residents are often the first on the scene which makes them the first responder. They are in greater proximity to those in need (especially true in a rural setting) and often react quicker than formal organizations. It is important to fully appreciate the value of citizen response. With some basic training, equipment, and coordination, community members do remarkable things, and even under the most difficult conditions, they can undertake most any task. Practiced community engagement assists in creating a more resilient community, shifting response from improvisation to coordination.

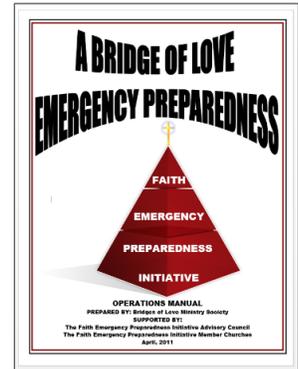
A SOLUTION – An Innovative and Cost Effective Approach

1. Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) <http://www.bridgesoflove.net>

When responders are over-extended, Bridges of Love’s Coordination Centre, a network of local churches, provides an alternate place to call. The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) promotes and provides assistance and resources for **Churches helping Neighbours**.

- **FEPI ADVISORY COUNCIL**

In the initial days of Pandemic Preparedness, Michel Sigouin, Regional Director of Public Safety Canada and I met to discuss the mobilization of churches. To be ready to assist should there be an Influenza out-break was our goal. After some discussion, he agreed to assist with this endeavor, giving credibility to the initiative. Many years were spent building relationships of trust with 16 members from the Public, Faith, and Private sectors. We met quarterly developing FEPI’s Policy and Guidelines, Terms of Reference, Project Charter, and Operating Manual. Public Safety’s Operations Manager, Jan Donais was delegated as our contact and attended the meetings giving valuable input and support.



In 2007, after participating on the planning committee for a National Faith Community Pandemic Preparedness and Response Summit in Winnipeg, members of our FEPI Advisory Council collaborated on a Regional Faith Community Pandemic Preparedness and Response Summit in Calgary (2008). In addition, numerous work-shops were undertaken by Bridges of Love and our FEPI Advisory Council, each contributing expertise in their area of training.

Bringing the various sectors together for our initial meeting, an interesting observation was made. Many of our Advisory Council members had not previously met one another. At that first meeting, those in government sat at one table and the private and faith members sat at another table. After months of meeting together however, we were one, working on a common goal and vision for safer communities. Please see Bridges of Love’s FEPI website for more information on our Advisory Council that met from 2008 - 2011.

- **FEPI CHURCH CONTACT AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT FORM**

Each participating church complete our FEPI Church Contact and Resource Assessment Form. This document was developed by members of our FEPI Advisory Council. Two pages of information including 24 hr. contact information, facility, resource, and volunteer information is catalogued in an Access Data Base for quick recovery when disaster strikes.

Finding accommodation for 24 flood volunteers during the 2013 Flood was an easy process due to information stored in our Church Resource and Contact database. Churches were quickly identified and provided facilities with showers, cots, hot meals and man-power. Worked like a charm!!

- **FEPI MUSTER SIGN**

A Muster Station Sign is shared with each FEPI Member to place in the church window indicating to the community that it is a safe place to gather for information and instructions. Collaboration took place with many of our FEPI churches across by the Calgary Emergency Management Agency as potential Reception Site locations.



- **FEPI MAGNET**



Building relationships of trust in a community you wish to serve, is critical. Magnets with contact emergency numbers for city as well as Bridges of Love Coordination Centre are distributed to neighbours, to let them know the local church is involved in emergency preparedness, ready to care for their community during disaster.

2. DONATION WEBSITE, <https://www.alberta.recovers.org>

After a disaster, people want to donate. Donation management has been an on-going challenge with stock-piling of donated items amounting to unreasonable amounts often with unwanted and unneeded items. To address this problem, after the 2013 Alberta Flood, Alberta Recovers website was developed to match donations on-line, with people in need. Hundreds of donated items were matched on-line with flood victims without stockpiling a single item. FEPI churches made deliveries of cars, furnishings, appliances, clothing, and food. Needs of flood victims were met from Calgary to High River.

A Bridgeland resident who lost her vehicle during the flood was over-joyed when a donated car from a Red Deer family arrived unexpectedly at her door!



3. COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM CANADA (CERT) <http://www.bridgesoflove.ca>



After a disaster, people want to **help**. Bridges of Love's Community Emergency Response Team training, or CERT, assures a SAFE **"Neighbours helping Neighbours"** response. CERT is a grass roots strategy that is both practical and realistic strengthening community safety and preparedness through increased civic participation. CERTs save lives and protect property by doing the greatest good for the greatest number. Our message is one of self-reliance taking responsibility for yourself, your family,

your neighbours, and your community. CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where residents may initially be on their own so their actions can make a difference. While people will respond to others in need without training, CERT gives confidence to respond effectively and efficiently without placing themselves or those they are assisting, in unnecessary danger.

If available, emergency service personnel are the best trained and equipped to handle emergencies. Following a catastrophic disaster, however, the community may be on their own for a period of time because of the size of the area affected, lost communications, and unpassable roads. With training and practice, and by working as a TEAM, CERTs bridge the gap until the first responders can arrive on the scene.

CERT is an all-risk, all-hazard training delivered as a classroom-based lecture, discussion, demonstration, and hands-on experience to ensure participants acquire knowledge as well as practical skills. The eight modules are taught over two Saturdays by professionals who offer their expertise, experiences, training and stories. The Friday evening Key-note session varies from Summit to Summit with a topic chosen that is relevant for the time.

- **How CERTs Operate**

As each CERT is organized and trained in accordance with standard operating procedures developed by Bridges of Love, its members select an Incident Commander/Team Leader (IC/TL0 and alternate and identify a meeting location, or staging area, to be used in the event of a disaster.

The staging area is where the fire department and other services will interact with CERTs. Having a centralized contact point makes it possible to communicate damage assessments and allocate volunteer resources more effectively. This is true for all CERTs, whether active in a neighbourhood, workplace, school, college/university campus, or other venue.

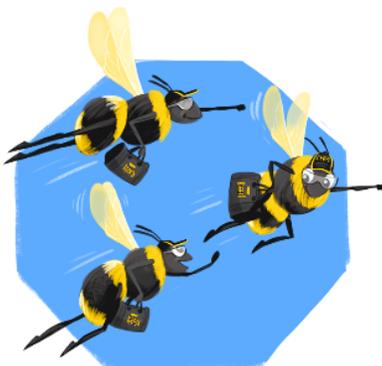
Damage from disasters may vary considerably from one location to another. In an actual disaster, CERTs are deployed progressively as needs dictate. Members are taught to access their own needs and the needs of those in the immediate environment first. CERT members who encounter no need in their immediate area then report to their staging area, where they take on assigned roles based on overall area needs. Members who find themselves in a heavily affected location send runners to staging areas to get help from available resources. Ham and other radio links also may be used to increase communication capabilities and coordination.

The CERT Program can provide an effective first-response capability. Acting as individuals first, then later as members of teams, trained CERT volunteers can fan out within their assigned areas, extinguishing small fires, turning off natural gas at damaged homes, performing light search and rescue, and rendering basic medical treatment and triage. CERTs also act as effective “eyes and ears” for uniformed emergency responders. Trained volunteers also offer an important potential workforce to service organizations in non-hazardous functions such as shelter support, crowd control, and evacuation.

We live with risks every day and that’s just life. We do not want to live in fear, however, so offering education and a little basic training, confidence is gained to over-come the fear that may accompany any large scale event. In our training, participants are taught valuable skills. Each module stresses the importance of the scope for what CERT graduates can and cannot do. Liability issues are always a concern so it is critical to stay within CERT training parameters.

One element that we have identified through our CERT training that is critical for success and participation, is solid affirmation from leaders in the community. This includes councillors, and emergency/health leaders who engage with the community. Since this training is relatively new to Canada, anyone who might be asked about CERT, must have a knowledge base in order to answer queries and also be able to cheer-lead and encourage community members to engage. If that is lacking, participation and the success for well attended CERT events will be mediocre at best! Leadership by example, with those who represent the people, taking the training themselves will exhibit their strong support which would encourage others to attend.

- **CERT Teams**



BEE...ING PREPARED SAVES LIVES!

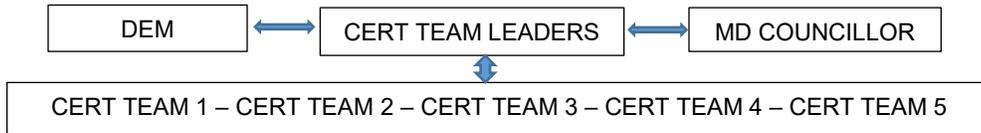
CERT TEAMS - EQUIPPED, TRAINED, COORDINATED

CERTs strength comes from responding to an incident, as a TEAM. CERT personnel assigned to Operations should always be assigned to teams consisting of at least three to four persons. To build a strong volunteer base it would be ideal to have 7 – 10 CERT volunteers in each community. Relationships would be strongest in these teams as they already live and interact in their own locality.

Keeping volunteers engaged and interested is a wide-spread challenge for most charities. CERT teams in each community would make this process effective with each team having a CERT Leader. The CERT Leader coordinates the team and is the liaison with the DEM and designated Emergency Council Member who might meet 3-4 times a year. The CERT Team Leaders would coordinate meetings and events to keep their group engaged and then coordinate larger events with the other teams when an exercise or additional training is offered. Little funding would be needed for the team management as they could meet in homes and function as a small group. Keeping the CERT Leaders involved at the DEM and Council Members meetings will give them a position of authority by being part of the District Emergency Management Committee.

- **Managing CERT Volunteers**

A concern for how to manage CERT volunteers has been addressed for consideration by the professionals in each municipality. Small CERT Teams (7-10) in each community would have an identified leader. The leader would organize their meetings to keep interest and momentum going. Perhaps once every six months, all CERT Teams could meet for a larger meeting. The leaders of the small groups would be invited to Emergency Planning meetings with the Municipality to be informed and feel part of the structure. CERT Teams, included in planning & exercises, would know where they fit.



Working together as a TEAM and looking out for one another are important aspects for successful CERT training.

- **CERT Safety/Branding**



Safety for CERT volunteers is a priority. When volunteers complete the training they each receive a CERT Kit which has basic resources to assist during a disaster. It is each member's responsibility to keep their kits ready, to respond to a crisis, at a moment's notice. Recognizing CERTs as part of a team is important so each member is outfitted with a branded CERT cap, shirt, kit, vest, and hard hat. This comes with graduation along with a certificate and I.D. Card.



After a disaster, individuals turn up at the scene, hoping to assist. They are normally unknown to the emergency professionals, may not be dressed appropriately, and may not have credentials giving them authority to assist. Each CERT volunteer is issued a photo I.D. upon graduation.



On the back of the I.D. Card is a list of the modules they have completed. The First Responders do not have to guess how CERTs will respond.

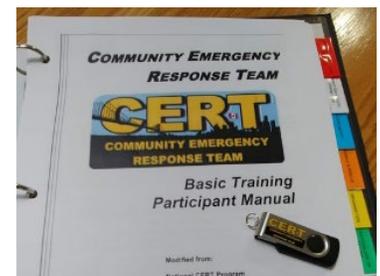


Well-meaning people, especially the church community, offer their help through meals. Unfortunately, due to strict food regulations, food that is not prepared according to health standards cannot be accepted. Not only does the food have to be prepared by individuals who have taken 'food safety' training but it has to be prepared in a Commercial kitchen. CERTs are given specialized Food Safety training for disaster situations by Alberta Health Services.

- **CERT Literature**



Each student receives a binder with the CERT PowerPoints for each module to follow along with the presenter to take additional notes. As well, a CERT Memory Stick with the student handbook is included, covering all the material for each module. The PowerPoint from the Key-note Speaker is added to the memory stick if available. We also include any additional material that might be relevant at the time of the Summit.



- **CERT Organization**

Included in the CERT Organization module is an introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS). This allows for effective communication among team members and with professional responders, all sharing a common terminology and understanding. We require all students to complete ICS 100 on-line before graduation.

The specific CERT organizational structure and protocols provide:

- ✓ A well-defined management structure (e.g., leadership, functional area, reporting chain, working in teams).
- ✓ A manageable span of control that provides for a desirable rescuer-to-supervisor ratio of between three and seven rescuers per supervisor.
- ✓ Common terminology that contributes to effective communication and shared understanding.
- ✓ Effective communication among team members with professional responders, including the use of radios.
- ✓ Consolidated action plans that coordinate strategic goals, tactical objectives, and support activities.
- ✓ Comprehensive resource management that facilitates application of available resources to the incident in a timely manner.

- **CERT Training Modules**

The eight CERT modules offered over two Saturdays include:

- ✓ Fire Safety and Utility Control
- ✓ Search and Rescue
- ✓ Food Safety
- ✓ Medical Disaster Operations
- ✓ Psychology of Trauma
- ✓ CERT Operations (ICS Introduction)
- ✓ Terrorism
- ✓ Personal Emergency Preparedness

In a disaster situation CERTs:

- ✓ Do a size-up which identifies the scope of the incident (What is the problem?)
- ✓ Determines an overall strategy (What can we do, and how will we do it?)
- ✓ Deploys teams and resources (Who is going to do what?)
- ✓ Documents actions and results (Handed over to professionals when they arrive on the scene).

Each of the eight modules are 1.5 hrs. in length and are taught by a professional in the field. Offering variety with our trainers increases interest, expertise, and stories. It also paints a positive picture of professionals working together, for the good of the community. Trainers will come from the Municipality where the Summit is held.



SGT. E. Smith,
INSET, R.C.M.P.
Terrorism



Brent Davis,
Response Manager
Samaritan's Purse



Jason Feltham,
Food Inspector, AHS
Food Safety



Randy Smith, Rockyview
County Fire Chief, Fire
Safety/Search & Rescue



Dr. May Mones,
CERT Disaster Medical Operations



Major Roy Langer,
Psychology of Trauma
Salvation Army



Marg Pollon,
CERT Organization,
Bridges of Love Ministry

- **Friday Evening Key-note Speaker**

Key-note Speaker topics covered in past CERT Summit events include:

- ✓ Alberta Hazards, Bill McMurtry, Environment Canada
- ✓ Pandemic Preparedness, Samaritan's Purse & Bridges of Love
- ✓ Tornadoes, Ian Fox, AEMA
- ✓ Hail Storms, Meteorologist Terry Kraus
- ✓ Volunteerism & Liabilities, Heather Mac, IBC
- ✓ Financial Preparedness, Royal Bank and
- ✓ Electromagnetic Pulse, Anthony Fury



Anthony Fury
Journalist & Author, Toronto
Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP)



Bill McMurtry
Alberta Hazards,
Environment Canada



Terry Kraus, Meteorologist
Hail Storms
Heather Mack, IBC
Volunteerism & Liability



Ian Fox,
AEMA Field Officer,
Tornadoes

- **Government Guest Speakers, Special Memories**

Federal, Provincial, and Municipal representatives are invited to our events to give a welcome and opening remarks. This gives a show of support from the government and collaboration between the sectors. All our invited guests and trainers return home with an honorarium and a homemade apple pie as a thank you for their participation! 😊



MP Devinder Shory
Honorary CERT Member



MLA Wayne Cao
Honorary CERT Member



Coby Duerr, CEMA
Speaker, "Bridge Over
Troubled Water" event



Tom Sampson, CEMA
Jamie Coutts, Slave Lake
Fire Chief "Beauty for Ashes"

BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS:

Trained as a Medical Laboratory Technologist I worked in that field off and on while raising a family. Married to my husband Tom, we have three grown children and 4 grand-children. For eight years we had the pleasure of running a Bed and Breakfast in the beautiful Okanagan Valley. Returning to Calgary in 2001, I worked for NeighbourLink Calgary, a Charity that looked after the vulnerable in our city through local churches. For several years before starting Bridges of Love, I worked as a church secretary for two different denominations. One in Calgary and the other located in the Okanagan. These varied experiences all came together for building Bridges of Love.

Since Bridges of Love's inception in 2004, it has been necessary to wear many hats. From attaining Non-profit and Charity Status, from event planner to CERT course trainer, from Board Chair to FEPI Advisory Council facilitator, from course developer to marketing, from brochure and poster designer to fund raising...the list goes on and on. It has not been an easy task but much learning has taken place which I am thankful. The relationships that have been formed have been invaluable and the special people that we have collaborated with have afforded wonderful memories. We could not do this alone, many volunteers, donors, and collaborators have contributed so much over the years and taught me what works.

Working full-time as Executive Director of a Charity afforded the opportunity to acquire many skills with both on-the-job training and also taking supporting courses.

- **Leadership Skills:** National Compassionate Coordinator (EFC) - National Evangelism Partnerships; National Chair, Micah Challenge, Canada (Global Initiative to mobilize Christians against Poverty); Founder, Bridges of Love Ministry, Coordinator, Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative Advisory Council. (Public/Private/Faith Sectors), Facilitator, matching donations with flood victims through <https://alberta.recovers.org>.
- **Organizational Skills:** Organized many successful events over the years with varying themes and agendas. Chairing and planning meetings with representatives from Alberta for the FEPI Advisory Council.
- **Team Work Skills:** Facilitated the formation of the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative Advisory Council bringing together the Public/Private and Church Communities to add strength to the Emergency Management Field throughout Alberta. Provide the framework for establishing CERT Teams.
- **Communication Skills:** Over the past 15 years, Bridges of Love has built relationships across many sectors – both in the Government, Private, and Church Community.
- **Computer Skills:** Comfortable using Windows 10, PC programs such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and PowerPoint. Proficient in Publisher used for design work of brochures, and marketing material. Extensive data base of churches and resources. Maintain three websites and publish a monthly Newsletter.
- **Program Development Skills:** After taking CERT training from CEMA, with permission, the US, material was transferred into Canadian content and branding.

• **Course Completion**

- Basic Emergency Management Course, Nov. 2008
- Disaster Social Services Course, Nov. 2008
- Incident Command System (ICS 100), Dec. 2009
- Group Crisis Intervention, March 2010
- IMB Social Media Session – 2011
- Centre Point Leadership Plus – March to September, 2011
- ICS 200 – December 2014
- ICS 300 – December 2015
- Counter Terrorism Information Officer Workshop – March 16, 17, 18, 2016 with up-grade in 2019

• **Recognition**

- 2008 – Total Woman in Church Ministry
- 2012 – Queen Elizabeth 11 Diamond Jubilee Medal
- 2012 – Calgary Non-Profit Social Innovation Award (Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations)
- 2013 – Prime Minister’s Volunteer Award for Social Innovator (Prairies)
- 2014 – 3 Hero of the Flood Awards (Alberta Provincial Government)
- 2017 – Public Safety’s Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award
- 2017 – Darrel Janz, Inspired Calgary Guest



Queen Elizabeth 11 Diamond Jubilee Medal



CCVO Innovation Award



Prime Minister’s Volunteer Award Innovation (Prairies)



Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award

SUMMARY:

As noted in our introduction, Alberta has been ground zero for unprecedented losses, in Canada.

Glenn McGillivray, managing director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, reported in the [Globe and Mail](#), May 2018, six out of 10 natural disasters (events that caused a minimum \$25-million of insured damage) have taken place in Alberta, with the biggest currently sitting at \$3.6-billion insured. Seven of the top 10 costliest natural catastrophes in Canadian history have occurred in Alberta, generating \$8.2-billion in insured damage and considerably larger economic losses. All have occurred since 2009.

He goes on to say, while we cannot stop the wind from blowing, the rain from falling or lightning from igniting the boreal, we most certainly can take action to prevent a natural event from intersecting with the built environment and becoming a disaster.

The answer lies in the implementation of a holistic program for natural-disaster mitigation that involves many stakeholders, including all levels of government, academia, private industry, and property owners. This must be addressed to have any hope of taming the trend to more and larger losses related to severe weather in Alberta. We cannot have business as usual!

We have been told by several levels of government, what we are building, is exactly what is needed for these challenging and changing times. The realization of a successful outcome, however, requires the strong commitment, involvement, and support from leaders in every district in a municipality. Collaboration and a show of support will model to the community that emergency preparedness and CERT training is indeed valuable for themselves, family, and community. **CERTs can save lives and protect property doing the greatest good for the greatest number.**



“There has to be a broader and a more people-centered preventive approach to disaster risk. Disaster risk reduction practices need to be multi-hazard and multi-sectoral, inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient and effective.”

Quote: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 (Preamble - Pg. 10)

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