



## **CaliforniaVolunteers Shares Online Disaster Preparedness Program: WE Prepare With Mommy Bloggers Across the State**

### *Engaging In-Home Meetings Empower Moms with Disaster Planning Resources and Top Essentials Checklist*

Sacramento, Calif. ([PRWEB](#)) April 22, 2009 -- CaliforniaVolunteers, the lead state office responsible for coordinating volunteer activities, recently organized in-home disaster-preparedness events in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area targeting influential mommy bloggers to share California's first-of-its-kind online disaster-preparedness effort called [WE Prepare](#). With moms as the primary target, the WE Prepare program is designed to motivate families to take action and get prepared for both natural and man-made disasters.

Since 1950, 255 states of emergency have been proclaimed in California with 27 major declared disasters since 1989. "Despite this threat of unexpected disasters, our research indicates less than half of Californians have a disaster plan," said Karen Baker, Governor Schwarzenegger's appointed secretary of service and volunteering. "The recent earthquake tragedy in Italy and swarms of tremors we have felt in California are reminders for families to take the necessary steps to become disaster-ready."

Bloggers in attendance consisted of QueenofSpainBlog.com, [socialmom.net](#), LosAngelista.com, AdriennesHouse.blogspot.com, RookieMoms.com, SafetyatHome.com, wendolonia.com/blog, thequintessentials.blogspot.com and eastbay.savvysource.com.

The intimate events were designed to inform and engage moms about the importance of disaster-preparedness via compelling key speakers discussing the importance of disaster-preparedness in the home while sharing their own experiences. The events also featured an interactive "walkthrough" where a disaster-preparedness specialist from the local fire department took the moms around the house while demonstrating "tips and tricks" to prepare their homes.

CaliforniaVolunteers suggests identifying the dangers around your workplace and home so you can tailor your plan to suit the disasters that pose the most threat to you and your family. Building multiple disaster kits for your home and car are also highly suggested - a good rule of thumb is to be prepared to survive for 72 hours on your own. [Additional tips](#) and a disaster supply checklist can be found on [CaliforniaVolunteers.org](#).

"Earthquakes happen when we least expect, we can't predict but we can prepare," said Capt. Stacy Gerlich, CERT Commander, Los Angeles Fire Department, Disaster Preparedness Unit, who also presented at the Los Angeles event. "There is so much people can do ahead of time." Capt. Gerlich was a presenter at the Los Angeles event.

"We had to evacuate from the fires a couple of years ago so I realize we can't wait for the next disaster to hit before we take steps to be more prepared," said Erin Kotecki Vest, writer of [The Queen of Spain blog](#) who hosted the event at her Los Angeles area home.

The WE Prepare initiative has made disaster planning easy by featuring [various disaster-preparedness tools](#) on CaliforniaVolunteers.org, such as:

- a risk assessment survey to help determine a family's current level of preparedness;
- a fill-in-the-blank family plan that tells families where to meet if they have to evacuate; who they've identified as an out-of-state "family contact;" how to get emergency information in their community; and how to take care of their family's unique needs such as infants, seniors and pets;
- customizable children's book designed to teach children how to be disaster-prepared in a fun, non-threatening way.

"The little things are most important to remember to include in your disaster kits, like making sure you have enough medication and the extra food your kids will actually eat," said Heather Flett, Berkeley, Calif. host and writer for RookieMoms.com and [SafetyatHome.com](#) blogs.

"The good news is that most families are more prepared than they think, but that doesn't mean they shouldn't have a written disaster plan in place to prevent confusion in the event of an emergency," said Lt. Erica Arteseros, NERT Program Coordinator, San Francisco Fire Department, who presented in the Berkeley, Calif. event.

It is no secret that California is a disaster-prone state where earthquakes, wildfires, flooding and winter storms can happen without warning. When families are well-prepared, they can become part of the solution so disaster workers can focus on those most in need.

CaliforniaVolunteers also created an online "I'm prepared. Are you?" themed badge for bloggers to display on their Web site upon completion of a family disaster kit. For more information about WE Prepare, visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](#).

#### About CaliforniaVolunteers

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering, including the state AmeriCorps program, California Citizen Corps and the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning. Through the innovative Web site, CaliforniaVolunteers.org, individuals and families can find more than 40,000 volunteer opportunities throughout the state involving the arts, education, animals, disaster-preparedness, the environment and other areas of interest. Karen Baker, the nation's first state cabinet secretary of service and volunteering, leads the organization and First Lady Maria Shriver serves as the honorary chairperson. For more information, please visit [www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org](#).

#### Maria Shriver

First Lady Maria Shriver believes "It's All About WE" and in the transformative power of working together to achieve a positive legacy for California. Through her innovative WE programs and initiatives, Shriver has issued calls to action that have resounded across the state, enlisting Californians to solve critical issues together. "It's All About WE" represents Shriver's boldly creative, nurturing and entrepreneurial vision for California. For more information about "It's All About WE," go to [www.FirstLady.ca.gov](#).

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