TIPS FOR BEING A SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

1. Good relations among neighbors is another key to having a successful neighborhood group. Annual block parties, quarterly meetings with speakers from the fire dept, police dept, city council, etc will draw people, and participating in National Night Out will help this happen.

2. The physical layout of an ideal neighborhood is a geographical unit that is not bisected by a busy street. 20-40 households is the ideal size. If it's smaller, it's hard to get enough people to be on the disaster teams (communication, first aid, fire suppression, light search & rescue). If it's too big, it becomes hard to keep track of people, and in a large group it is hard to develop neighborhood cohesion.

3. Be sensitive about the financial limitations of some neighbors and encourage them to be involved without it being financially punitive.

4. An effective communication system is essential. Email is a good way to do this. For those who don't have email, print out hard copies of emails and deliver it to their homes.

5. Giving people information about what they need to prepare themselves and their neighborhood for disasters is crucial. CERT (Community Emergency Response Training) classes provide valuable information and build a sense of belonging to the community. Resources can be downloaded from the BDPNN website (groups.yahoo.com/groups/bdpnn).

6. Find people who have interest, time and enthusiasm for being involved in neighborhood preparedness. If you think someone would be good at something and they don't volunteer, ask them if they would do it.

7. Avoid one or two person leadership that goes on too long. A neighborhood can get used to having the leaders do everything. Have people rotate or change jobs every few years.

8. Ask neighbors to give money to buy shared equipment and supplies. This often will increase their willingness to be involved. Some neighborhoods have formal dues systems, and others simply ask for contributions.

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