Adventist Heritage

From: Adventist Risk Management, Inc <armcorpcomm=adventistrisk.org@mail172.us1.rsgsv.net> on behalf of Adventist Risk Management, Inc <armcorpcomm@adventistrisk.org>

Sent: Thursday, January 31, 2013 5:00 PM
To: Adventist Heritage
Subject: Be Prepared - It Can Happen Here!

Adventist Risk Management, Inc | Weekly Newsletter

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Providing Risk Management Solutions for the Seventh-day Adventist® Church

DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?

(Camel-tensively infusing leaves, a vast insufficiency)

team·mate (tēm/'māt), n. 1. a companion (as in a job or occupation) 2. a person.

team·ster (tēm/'ster), n. 1. a person who drives or operates a team of horses or other draught animals, esp. when they are hauling goods or pulling a plow or other implement. 2. a person.
team·work (tēm/'wûr'), n. 1. cooperation of persons acting as a group to achieve a common cause. 2. a work team.

tea·par·ty (tē'ə-par/'ti), n. a social gathering at which refreshments are served.

By Dave Rawson, Account Executive at Adventist Risk Management®, Inc.
A recent visit to Newtown, Connecticut reminded ARM staff, “If a disaster of that magnitude can occur in a sleepy New England community, it can happen anywhere.” We arrived in Newtown the day after Christmas. The evidence of the aftermath and loss of the December 14, 2012 unthinkable tragedy, which left twenty children and seven adults dead, was everywhere. The roadsides were covered with remembrances of the children and teachers. We will never know for sure what motivated the act, but we can surely learn a lesson from the pain of each individual life lost.

We all hear the usual responses. “Well, that was Newtown. It can’t happen here in my church or school.” “That just wouldn’t happen in this community.”

While sitting in a small Newtown café, I overheard a mother reflecting about the event that had impacted her community. Her words should provide a chilling reality to each of us. “Who would have ever thought that a tragedy like this could happen in a town like ours?” she asked her companions.

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If this had been an isolated event of a deranged young man, an event that occurs once every ten years we could possibly take comfort from a casual denial. But this type of event is being repeated over and over again. As a result, it is important that we, as concerned members of our churches and schools, expect the unthinkable and encourage our friends and fellow church members to prepare for a crisis.
Adventist Risk Management is encouraging an initiative to create an action plan within each community of believers to moderate the result of a crisis of this type in our facilities. This type of tragedy has already occurred once in Memphis, Tennessee. It is not being fatalistic to recognize that it can and will happen again. As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we believe we are in the middle of a war of unseen forces. In war, there are casualties.

Being prepared is essential and developing a plan for your group is the first step in reducing a potentially serious outcome. A properly prepared action plan should address the following concerns:

- The plan should be developed by people who are concerned
- Members with special skills should be identified and made a part of the crisis team
- The plan should be tailored to the geographical realities in your community
- It should be implemented and tested before a crisis occurs
- It should contain training for individuals directly responsible during the emergency
- It should contain a communication structure to include the local members, the community, and certainly the emergency response organizations, such as, (police, fire, rescue, and medical staff)
- The plan should be practiced, reviewed and updated regularly

A website page has been developed by ARM to provide more detailed information to our churches, schools, and institutions. It can be accessed at www.adventistrisk.org. A “Crisis Action Plan” is also being formulated. This can be utilized for developing a local church and school plan. In the meantime, many resources are available on the Internet, which address this very issue. A sample of these include:

- www.mylifeinabox.com
- www.redcross.org
- www.citizencorps.gov/cert
- www.ready.gov

Search “Crisis Planning” on the Web and you will find additional excellent resources for getting the process started.
When developing your plan remember to include the expertise of your local police and fire departments, and rescue squad. They will be able to provide you with perspectives unique to your community. In Newtown it took local authorities twenty minutes to be notified and respond. That is a lifetime given the nature of the crisis. The only job left when they arrived was to recover, rather than rescue. A plan developed with communication, co-ordination with local authorities, and an appropriate response from your community of believers is essential to saving lives, regardless of the nature of the disaster.

Remember, if it can happen in Newtown, it can happen anywhere. Be prepared.

By Dave Rawson, Account Executive at Adventist Risk Management®, Inc.

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