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Media Contact: Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852, cell: 941-302-1058,
Dianne_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us

Workshop set in May to prepare residents for natural disasters

The April storm that produced tornadoes which damaged mobile homes on Longboat Key is a reminder that disasters can occur anytime. Residents are invited to the second annual Community Disaster Preparedness Workshop from 5:30-9 p.m. Friday, May 13, and 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, May 14, at Covenant Life Presbyterian Church, 8490 McIntosh Road (near Westfield Sarasota Square Shopping Mall) in Sarasota.

Seasoned disaster response experts will help equip residents with the skills and resources they need to be ready. The 1 ½-day workshop will address a variety of topics, including neighborhood readiness, actions to take before first responders arrive, how to get critical supplies such as food and water to people in need quickly, community resources and Sarasota County Emergency Management.

“The feedback we received from last year’s workshop revealed that participants were empowered, yet they wanted more time devoted to certain topics,” said Curtis Hencye of Relief Ministries Calvary Chapel. “We revised the agenda this year, allowing more time for problem solving and practical application of the information provided in the workshop.”

Sarasota County Emergency Management chief Ed McCrane added, “the time you invest now can save lives and minimize property loss in a real emergency.”

The workshop is being sponsored by Sarasota County Emergency Management, Sarasota County Health and Human Services, the Medical Reserve Corps of Sarasota County, Sarasota Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, All Faiths Food Bank, Adventist Community Services and Relief Ministries Calvary Chapel.

Relief Ministries Calvary Chapel is suggesting a \$25 per person donation to defer the cost of lunch, refreshments and training materials. Financial assistance is available upon request. Anyone who wants to attend can register by calling 941-861-2563.

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