



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emergency Preparedness Community Education Program for Residents and Emergency Volunteers Launches in Sonoma Valley

SONOMA, CA --- The [Sonoma Community Center](#) in collaboration with the [City of Sonoma](#), [Sonoma Valley Fire District](#) and a coalition of Sonoma Valley organizations including the [Center for Volunteer & Nonprofit Leadership](#), [HALTER Project](#), [Sonoma Valley Collaborative](#), and [Sonoma Valley Volunteers](#) are proud to offer a new program to help Sonoma Valley residents prepare for an emergency. The Emergency Preparedness Community Education Program (Program) is a series of free courses that teach residents how to become more prepared in the event of a disaster. Classes will cover multiple topics such as earthquake safety, animal disaster preparation, volunteer response, gas and electric utility safety, first aid, AED, CPR, and SCOPE (Sonoma Communities Organized to Prepare for Emergencies) training.

Emergencies and natural disasters can strike at any time and reshape our lives during and after the event. Sonoma Valley is exposed to a wide variety of hazards, including earthquakes, fires, and severe storms. Sonoma Valley Fire District Chief Steve Akre advises that, “While you can’t predict when and where an emergency happens, you can take measures to better prepare yourself, your home, business, and neighborhood from the effects of future natural and man-made emergencies. Taking advantage of these free, hands-on trainings is a great first step to ensuring the safety, security and resiliency of your loved ones and community.”

The Program currently has nine classes scheduled for the spring/summer seasons between April 19th through July 18, 2023, with additional opportunities to be added throughout the year. “Curriculum will grow and reflect community needs and interest,” says Julie Atwood, founder of the HALTER Project, who has taken the lead as the curator of classes, trainings, and resources for the first year of programming. “I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for each of us to be prepared to care for ourselves, our animals, neighbors, and property. This program provides quality training and education opportunities for community members of all ages, skills, and ability.”

Classes are open to all and are free to attend. Stipends are available to eligible attendees to offset unpaid time off work or childcare expenses. Select classes and trainings will also be offered in Spanish. Registration is now open for spring and summer classes through the Sonoma Community Center website at: sonomacommunitycenter.org/emergency-preparedness/ for the following:

- April 19th, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, [Safety at Home and in Your Neighborhood](#), SCOPE training at Sonoma Valley Fire District Headquarters

- April 27th, 6:30 – 9:00 PM, [All Hazards Safety Awareness and Wildfire Safety](#) at the Best Western Sonoma Valley Inn
- May 15th and July 10th, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, [Responding to Gas and Electric Emergencies](#) at the Sonoma Community Center
- May 24th, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, [Personal Preparedness, Emergency Alerts, Know Your Zone](#) at the Sonoma Community Center
- June 6th and July 19th, 6:30 – 8:30 PM, [American Heart Association Family and Friends First-Aid, CPR, and AED Course](#) at the Sonoma Community Center
- June 19th and July 17th, 6:30 – 8:30 PM, [Introduction to Animal Disaster Preparedness and Response](#) at the Sonoma Community Center

The Program is part of an ongoing effort to build a cadre of community volunteers to fill vital roles during an emergency. Volunteers are a critical part of Sonoma’s disaster and emergency response. The City of Sonoma has partnered with the Sonoma Community Center – the City’s designated Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) as part of the City of Sonoma’s Emergency Plan – to register and screen potential volunteers for activation during a community emergency.

Those interested in enrolling to be an emergency volunteer are invited to fill out the registration form online at: sonomacommunitycenter.org/emergency-preparedness/. Once enrolled as an Emergency Volunteer in the database, volunteers will receive periodic communications to validate the volunteer’s status, continued interest in being an emergency volunteer and update the inventory of skills or equipment available. Volunteers will receive invitations to attend specialized emergency training, including future Emergency Preparedness Community Education Program classes.

For more information about the program including detailed descriptions of each class, please visit sonomacommunitycenter.org/emergency-preparedness/, or call the Sonoma Community Center office Monday – Friday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM at (707) 938-4626.

Visit the City of Sonoma Emergency Preparedness (www.sonomacity.org/departments/emergency-prep/) and Disaster Ready (www.sonomacity.org/disaster-ready/) webpages to sign up to receive emergency alerts, tips, and resources to help you create a plan that will assist you during an emergency.

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