Welcome from the Co-Presidents

Ernie MacGillivray - CRHNet Co-president - and I extend to each of you our Board’s greetings and well wishes. We at CRHNet are proud to present to you our latest “newsletter”, which thanks to its editorial staff and contributors has again established new records.

Last fall, CRHNet held its 10th annual symposia in Regina, SK. Like its predecessors, this symposium provided many opportunities to explore new facets and firm-up important linkages among the many stakeholders of disaster risk reduction; the new theme this time was the introduction of an Aboriginal theme to the discussion. This theme facilitated closer connection between CRHNet and the Aboriginal community and is allowing for more meaningful dialogue on related disaster risk reduction (DRR) issues. Additionally, the symposium’s continued linkage to the national Roundtable on (DRR) again provided an opportunity for cross-issues dialogue, and continued discussion on critical current topics.

The symposium provided another success story – implementation of the CRHNet new governance model. Ratified by the membership at the AGM, the model involves a smaller and more agile Board, an Executive Director in-charge of a management group to manage the day-to-day affairs of the association, and various standing committees that participate more-directly in the affairs of the Association. The changes aim to enhance membership engagement in the Association and allow for greater contribution to the growth of disaster resilience in Canada.

The new governance model is designed to advance CRHNet’s mission: to promote dialogue, increase awareness, and advance collaboration towards DRR in Canada. This mission is supported by our enhanced ability to disseminate information.

CRHNet new website (www.CRHNet.ca) now has many more opportunities to communicate and share information. It is designed to serves as a platform for discussion, engagement and collaboration; you are invited to contribute to its content. We are now engaged in an on-going project to develop and populate a searchable electronic library, focused on the many facets of emergency management and disaster risk reduction. This library is intended to complement our evolving E-book – the Canadian Disaster Management text, which is on our website. We invite any of you to share your publications by sending them to Ron (rkuban@shaw.ca) for posting to the library.

Additionally, as part of our outreach and networking initiative, we have recently reactivated our LinkedIn site (www.linkedin.com). This site together with the CRHNet Young Professionals Facebook page provides diverse channels for dialogue, collaboration, and growth. CRHNet will continue to promote the site and publish both its own content and that which is offered by others.

On behalf of the Board, we again wish to thank all of you who belong and contribute to the Association, and welcome all others who are interested in enhancing emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Success in this field of practice is based on “Team effort” and we are proud on the inclusiveness of our growing team.

Ron Kuban and Ernie MacGillivray, CRHNet Co-Presidents
Note from Executive Director

Greetings and a warm welcome to current and new members of the Canadian Risk and Hazards Network to the 10th edition of HazNet. It has been a busy time since the last edition of HazNet and a lot has taken place. The 10th CRHNet symposium in Regina, in November 2013 was very successful. I’m sure those of you who were lucky enough to attend will agree. It was hosted by EMO Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, and I wish to thank both organizations for their efforts. In particular, many thanks to the Organizing Committee comprised of: Mieka Torgrimson, Murray Sanders, Patty Doroshenko, Sylvia Waterer et al. for taking on the challenge of hosting the 10th CRHNet Symposium.

CRHNet was involved in partnering with the Aboriginal community and leading to strong participation of the Aboriginal community at the Symposium. A report was created by CRHNet in cooperation with the Justice Institute of British Columbia, and coordinated by CRHNet’s Brenda Murphy and her co-Chair David Diabo, Assembly of First Nations as an initiative of the Aboriginal
Resilience Sub-Working Group (AR). In 2013, the AR was struck within the Resilient Communities Working Group (RCWG). This report, thanks to Brenda, Eric Bussey and Laurie Paerce was prepared on behalf of CRHNet for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

In January we were able to introduce our audience to a Special Edition of HazNet, “Blasts from the Past” which took considerable time to pull together; however, by all accounts is was very well received.

My time has been spent on a number of items – mostly assisting the Board with moving ahead with its strategic planning initiatives and working with other institutions to enhance the profile of CRHNet. In particular the Communities of Practice and specifically, the Canadian Tri-Service Emergency Management Committee (CTSEMC) made up of the three Canadian Chiefs’ Associations: Chiefs of Police, Fire Chiefs and Canadian Paramedic Chiefs who have formed a committee to represent them jointly and individually on Emergency Management matters. As of November, CRHNet has joined CTSEMC, and Jack McGee, Honorary member of CRHNet is the liaison.

The CRHNet Board under the leadership of Ernie MacGillivray has put in place a new task oriented management structure, and work plan which is being pursued for 2014. The work plan will be populated with hard working Board members as the chairs of the various sub committees. This should energize, and in many ways, revitalize the Board. In fact, we are most fortunate to have two new associate members as part of, and in support of, our Board: Lance Valcour and Steve Palmer, and a new Director John Mikler, DRDC Suffield, AB. As well, there has been a major review of the By-Laws to cater to the new management structure. The By-Laws were presented to the membership and voted upon at the AGM in November 2013 and will be posted to the CRHNet web site.

Indeed, the topic of Symposia is a segue into the upcoming 11th CRHNet Symposium to be held in Toronto October 22 to 24, 2014. Please see the first circular in this edition and the CRHNet web site http://www.crhnet.ca/crhnet-11th-annual-symposium for details and the call for abstracts. We anticipate a number of high quality presentations by a great mix of researchers and practitioners and, as well, many social and networking opportunities will be realized. The Symposium is being hosted by York University and EMO Ontario under the leadership of David Etkin and his organizing committee, contact Dave at etkin@yorku.ca

Did I mention our new web site? Thanks to the efforts of Bert Struik, who coordinated its development and our host Royal Roads University in Victoria, we have a new improved site. I would be remiss if I didn’t thank Royal Roads University – both Meghan Knauf and Robin Cox for their continued support of, and for, CRHNet and for providing hard copies of our newsletter, HazNet.

By the by, I enjoy getting new articles for HazNet – as it gives me an opportunity to link up with those I get to meet at various conferences and events and touch base to find out how people are doing. This year in particular, I am so pleased we have received such a large collection of articles by researchers, practitioners and students – a proverbial feast! Keep up the good work and keep the articles coming😊

Finally I wish to thank the CRHNet Board of Directors for their hard work and to our fearless leaders Ernie MacGillivray and Ron Kuban for their leadership. As a famous man said, “if your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are indeed a leader.” Don’t miss out on this year’s great symposium!

Larry Pearce,
Executive Director
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Lessons from Katrina: Recommendations for Fostering More Effective Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery Efforts for Children and Youth

By: Alice Fothergill
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and

Lori Peek
Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Disaster and Risk Analysis at Colorado State University

Following Hurricane Katrina, we spent seven years studying a group of children and youth, as well as their families, friends, neighbors, and teachers, among others. We observed and interviewed young people from 3- to 18-years of age at the time of the storm. In addition to the larger sample of over 650 children and 100 adults whom we studied, we also followed a select group of children to explore more intensely how this catastrophic event unfolded in their lives. It was our goal to understand their experiences, to identify how others assisted in their recovery, and to document how they helped themselves and other children recover after Katrina.

In this brief article, we discuss some ways that children may be assisted after disaster based on what we learned from children in Katrina (the full analysis can be found in our forthcoming book, Children of Katrina, which will be published by the University of Texas Press in 2015). We organize our recommendations here by the spheres of children’s lives that we focused on in our research: family, housing, school, peers/friendship, extracurricular activities, and health and wellbeing. Over the years of our study, we identified a number of actions across each sphere of children’s lives that would help inform better preparedness, response, or recovery for children and youth in disasters.

FAMILY SPHERE

Children and youth are embedded in families. Their families of origin are critical to their experiences before, during, and after a disaster. Families with resource depth are in a better position to protect their children from disaster effects and to help them in recovery. Conversely, when families have few resources and are not thriving, children tend to suffer various negative consequences. After a disaster, all families, and especially those at the margins, need to attain and/or regain several basic, but crucial, forms of information, support, and opportunities, including:

- Knowledge of whereabouts and safety of family

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• Connection and communication with family members
• When separated, reassurance that they will see family members again
• Recognition of all family members, including the significance of fathers (who may live separately from their children) and of siblings
• Routine and predictability in post-disaster family life
• Understanding as they may be dealing with other crises (such as divorce, death of a grandparent, or parental drug use).

Parents, frequently mothers, take on enormous caregiving responsibilities in a disaster. They need:

• Support from other family, friends, and advocates
• Childcare services that they can trust and that are reliable and affordable
• Resources and services that they can help mobilize and then pass on to their children
• Assistance if they are too stressed, exhausted, or overwhelmed to cope on their own.

SHELTER AND HOUSING SPHERE

Often, shelter and housing needs after disaster are conceptualized as a linear progression from emergency to temporary to permanent housing, with each new move along the way assumed to become more secure. Our research shows that in some cases, especially for the people in the most vulnerable pre-disaster circumstances, that housing may be much more uncertain and unstable for long periods of time, and this can have serious ramifications for children’s health and well-being.

In regards to post-disaster housing, we argue for:

• Offering free childcare and creating child-friendly spaces for children to play and study at all shelters after disaster
• Making sure that those spaces also include key people who will protect, comfort, and otherwise support children recently affected by disaster
• Ensuring that shelters have private spaces for girls and boys, men and women, so that disaster survivors can have privacy and maintain a sense of dignity
• Making temporary and transition-to-permanent-housing assistance a top policy priority and funding local, state, and federal government housing programs for families
• Offering larger, more environmentally-friendly and safe temporary housing options
• Setting up temporary housing sites that include parks, playgrounds, and other safe spaces
• Assisting families to move back into pre-storm homes if desired and/or into new, more permanent housing in areas as chosen
• Giving displaced residents as well as returnees (including children and youth) a voice in communicating and shaping post-disaster housing options
• Being cognizant of potential class and race biases in housing aid and working to overcome resultant structural disadvantages
• Investing in rapidly repairing, rebuilding, and/or creating affordable housing options for families

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SCHOOL SPHERE

The school sphere is fundamental to children’s recovery. It is a special sphere in that it is unique to children and youth and it has specific time parameters: when the window for schooling is gone, children cannot get it back. Children who do not return to school after disaster and/or who miss critical stages in their cognitive and social development due to the disruption caused by disaster may suffer irreparable harm in terms of their intellectual growth, development, and future educational goals.

The school sphere, as with the other spheres, is marked by inequality, with some students having more advantages than others. Some school districts, often segregated by race and class, have more resources and support than others; some families have the ability to enroll children in private schools that require tuition or arrange to be in a high-quality school district, while other families do not have those options. Keeping this in mind, and recognizing the importance of education during displacement and recovery, there are many things that can and should be done, to support disaster affected children and youth and their educational process. These include:

- Reopening schools (including childcare centers and pre-schools) as quickly as possible after a disaster; this means allocating proper resources to repair, rebuild, and/or revive schools in disaster zones
- In receiving communities that receive large numbers of displaced children and youth, providing pathways for their rapid enrollment
- Offering emotional support through optional peer-oriented and/or peer-led support groups
- Providing access to licensed professional counselors, social workers, and school therapists
- Training all school staff—from upper-level administrators, to teachers, to custodians—how to be supportive of children and youth who have been affected by disaster as well as those who are in receiving communities who are now welcoming disaster-affected youth into their classrooms
- Designing and implementing disaster preparedness, response, and recovery curriculum within classrooms
- Providing opportunities for children to help their schools’ and classmates’ recovery; this could, for example, come in the form of service learning, fundraising, mentoring programs, or community action activities
- Offering immediate and long-term support for teachers, who are often recovering from disaster themselves; this may include financial, professional, and emotional support
- Training school staff regarding bullying and stigma that may be attached to “disaster survivor” status for youth; reminding these professionals that bullying may be exacerbated based on region of origin, gender, age, race, or other characteristics
- Integrating displaced children in classrooms with familiar faces if possible
- Making school days as predictable as possible and re-establishing routines within classrooms and schools
- Allowing children and youth the opportunity to work on projects that help them process their disaster experience
- Funding school programs in arts, music, drama, and creative writing to encourage expression and foster healing.
Isaac

PEERS/FRIENDSHIPS SPHERE

All of the children in our study, regardless of their recovery path, spoke of the importance of their friends and peers during the interviews. When they were separated from friends, they talked about the lengths they went to in order to find or reunite with them. Often locating, communicating with, and being able to see friends was dependent on a family’s resources, such as access to computers and transportation. When children were fortunate enough to return to the same classroom or neighborhood with their pre-storm friends, they would articulate how much that meant to them.

Friends matter a lot. Limited research, however, has focused on the role of friends in children’s lives in the disaster aftermath. Yet, there are many things that could be done to help children and youth in the friendship/peer sphere during disaster recovery, such as:

• Recognizing the importance of friendships and peer support and the way these dynamics affect a child’s recovery
• In displacement, having adults and other youth help children to identify the whereabouts of their friends and to reconnect displaced children with their peers
• Facilitating children’s communication with old friends—through calling, texting, emailing, social media, and other mediums—so that disaster-affected children can know they are safe
• Helping children make new friends in new situations through “buddy programs” or other means
• Supporting children as they cope with separation or loss of old friends, classmates, and/or boyfriends and girlfriends who are now far away.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The extracurricular/recreation sphere permeates many different contexts, such as religious institutions, athletic teams, or scouting or 4-H organizations. It is place where children and youth may find friends, connect to supportive adults outside their household, discover new strengths in themselves, acquire new life skills, gain access to resources, and create new social networks outside of family and school. Once again, inequality marks this sphere, and attention must be paid to how to give children from low income families the same access to these important activities. The following would help all children post-disaster:

• Create age-appropriate extra-curricular activities for children and youth of all ages
• Integrate children into community-based or faith-based groups

• Encourage children to find an in-school and/or after-school activity that interests them
• Help children to take on leadership roles in extracurricular activities
• Provide practical and financial assistance, such as transportation, fees, uniforms, paperwork, and various accommodations

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SPHERE

The physical and emotional health and well-being of children and youth is a fundamental part of their recovery, which is intimately interconnected to the other spheres of their lives. When children lack stable housing, when their schools and parks remain closed, when their parents are struggling, and when they are separated from their friends, children are likely to suffer physically and emotionally. Health and well-being is not distributed equally. Lower-income children and children of color face more health challenges, such as asthma and food insecurity, and less access to high-quality, affordable health care. Focusing on the health and well-being of children—across all stages of disaster—is essential. Our recommendations for promoting health and wellbeing include:

• Recognizing the importance and interconnectedness of physical and emotional health
• Increasing preparedness efforts in order to diminish children’s exposure to disaster
• Assisting in evacuation so that children are not exposed to life-threatening, traumatizing experiences
• Supporting children in the disaster aftermath through providing immediate as well as longer-term access to quality mental and physical health care
• Teaching children about fundamental health issues and how to make healthy choices for their bodies (including around food, smoking, drugs, alcohol, romantic/sexual relationships)
• Providing safe places for children to get fresh air and exercise
• Recognizing that environmental destruction can affect children more than adults, as their bodies are growing and toxins can do more damage
• Restricting children’s access to areas where there are environmental risks such as spilled oil, sewage, asbestos, contaminated soils, etc.
• Lowering the risks to children from the effects of the damage to buildings and other structures (black mold, mildew, hazards in disaster demolition and abandoned structures, etc.)
• Decreasing the risks from the rebuilding (carpet glues, paint, cleaning solvents, etc.) which can be in a child’s life 24 hours a day if they are rebuilding their home, school, religious institution, library, community center, etc.
• Planning for and providing long term emotional assistance, such as counseling and a variety of therapies (play, art, massage, etc.), as disaster effects are enduring.  

The aforementioned recommendations for encouraging better preparedness and more rapid recovery among children and youth are not mutually exclusive, nor are they exhaustive. They are meant to promote thinking about how individuals and institutions may come together to support children and youth in the disaster aftermath. This is not meant to be a “final statement” on what children

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and youth need. Instead, we hope to take what we learned from children in Katrina and use that to focus attention and to promote discussion of how the youngest survivors of disaster may be properly supported during times of distress and how to reduce suffering in future disasters.

Use of Social Media in Response to Hurricane Sandy in Maryland’s Emergency Management Organizations

By: Irmak Renda-Tanali, D.Sc.
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THE EVENT

Today, emergency managers are beginning to understand the importance of social media (SM) in communicating with citizens to be able to better prevent casualties and property loss during large scale emergencies. I conducted a research to investigate the patterns of SM usage during the Category 1 hurricane, Hurricane Sandy that impacted the East Coast of the United States fairly recently.

For two days from October 29 through October 30 2012, the U.S. East Coast was severely hampered by a Category 1 hurricane, Hurricane Sandy, which killed more than 200 in 7 countries, including 132 on the U.S. mainland, caused over 8.51 million power outages in 16 states and Washington, D.C. including New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Virginia, and Maryland, and flooded entire coastlines in the New Jersey area and parts of New York City (Seccombe, 2012). The actual losses are estimated to be $71 billion for the State of New York and New Jersey, including $9 billion in New York for preventive work, $360 million in Connecticut, and the insured losses are estimated to be $16 billion to $22 billion. (Newman, 2012).

Hurricane Sandy incident is remarkable in that it was a powerful hurricane that occurred very close to the U.S. Presidential elections, so it was hyped with huge media coverage before, during, and in its aftermath. Once it started pounding the East Coast, many people who still had power followed the events as they unfolded through major SM outlets such as Facebook and Twitter through the information posted by local, state, and federal agencies, and communicated with each other and shared status updates. Even if the power went out, many people were still able to tweet, and/or send messages via Facebook to loved ones to say they were OK. According to Ngak (2012) there were nearly 3.5 million tweets with the hashtag #sandy in the last 24 hours during the hurricane.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Let’s do a quick review of SM and latest usage statistics:

Yagmurlu (2013) describes Social Media or Web 2.0 as the means of interaction among organizations and people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. SM includes Micro Blogging Services, the most commonly used application being Twitter; Social Networking Sites, most common ones in the order of popularity being Facebook and then Google+; Professional Networking sites like LinkedIn; Video, Photo, Music, Location Sharing sites such as Youtube, Instagram, Pinterest, Foursquare and Yelp. Others are Blogs and Wikis, websites that individuals or groups create and exchange information.