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# The Portland Observer 46

'City of Roses'



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Established in 1970  
Committed to Cultural Diversity *46 years of community service*



Argay/Parkrose NET Team Leader Michael Schilmoeller emphasizes the day's game plan with other NET volunteers and leaders during a team exercise. NETs routinely hold mock disaster exercises to ensure team members are fully prepared when an actual disaster strikes.

# Empowered for Disasters

## Residential response teams form to protect us from the big one

BY CERVANTE POPE

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland's Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) program could save your life in the event of a natural disaster. Modeled after community emergency response teams in Los Angeles and San Francisco, the teams are made up of community residents who are trained to help their neighbors when a major earthquake or other

national disaster occurs.

"We know that pretty consistently around the world, in any natural disaster be it an earthquake, tsunami or whatever, 92 to 95 percent of all the people saved are rescued by their neighbors, not by professional emergency responders," says Portland's NET Program Coordinator Jeremy Van Keuren.

The NET curriculum allows

for people to volunteer as emergency responders so they can carry out search and rescue operations effectively, but also just as importantly, safely, Van Keuren says.

"I think where you find community resilience is a good community to be in during a disaster," says Van Keuren. "One thing that data does show is that communities that have a stronger fiber tend

to bounce back from a disaster better and quicker than communities that don't."

NET volunteers go through 30 hours of training in areas like disaster preparedness, search and rescue, patient triage and disaster psychology among other areas. Basic NET training is usually but not always instructed by members of Portland Fire and Rescue.

The disaster preparation

comes from the prediction that Portland will face a devastating Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake sometime in the future.

"It makes it really easy to throw your hands up and say 'it's such a big thing that I can't do anything about it' and I detect that a lot of people fall into despair or indifference about it. People don't

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