

Pre-made packs filled with equipment available



GEORGE VETTER/FOR EO MEDIA GROUP

Seaside High School senior Caitlynn Howe plays a victim during a countywide training exercise for the Community Emergency Response Team program.

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will “give the students more of an air of seriousness,” Howe said. “As time goes on, the danger of the tsunami is more and more impending and more and more scary. We want students in the community to know the people who are trained to help them and what to do in that case.”

The school does a tsunami drill a couple times per year, but it is more akin to “a leisurely stroll up the hill” to the safe zone, according to Howe. Avila suggested the school could incorporate simulation of an earthquake, which will happen before the tsunami, and factor in that many people will be injured during that occurrence. CERT students could help

lead the drills and make them more authentic by setting up imitation medical and triage centers. The school club also could host more practices and simulations to keep students fresh on the right procedures, Avila said.

“You have to keep practicing, because when the tsunami happens, it’s going to be chaotic, so you might not remember the steps,” she said.

Another focus will be equipment. Each classroom is said to have a backpack, but in talking with some teachers, Howe and Avila discovered some classrooms are missing backpacks or they sit empty. Some packs contain expired rations and supplies.

Pre-made packs filled with equipment are available for about \$75 to \$300, depending

on what items they contain. Response teams or individuals can make the packs themselves, which usually saves money but is more time-consuming, Fayyaz said.

Additionally, the club participants could maintain a website or Facebook page to keep the student body and community aware of the program, local training or simulations opportunities, scholarship or college programs related to emergency preparedness and other information.

Students would not have to be part of the club to take a weekend or after-school CERT training at the school. Avila and Howe hope even other community members would be able to take the biannual training alongside

students to get more people certified. The two enterprises would run alongside one another.

“The trainings only occur once or twice a year, so what happens in the middle time will be on club’s shoulders,” Fayyaz said.

The county’s Emergency Management Division is helping during the start-up phase of the county teen CERT movement, but the goal is for each school’s club to become self-sustainable and be sponsored by a local entity, such as police, fire and rescue departments.

“CERT is really supposed to be run by the community, but we’re here to help with it,” he said. “For the time being, we’re really going to be the facilitators.”



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