

Fire Department NERT training gets residents ready in case of an earthquake



We all know the â??big oneâ?• is coming â?? an earthquake, a fire â?? some disaster that will wipe out a section of the city. We also know that when it does, emergency services will be overwhelmed. It may be three to five days before help arrives. The key to survival is being prepared.

The SF Fire Departmentâ??s Neighborhood Emergency Response Team encourages everyone to take their free, 20-hour training program. â??You need to know what to do,â?• said Grace Chidmart, who signed up after the 2004 Indonesian tsunami. She and Susan Lai, a 10-year volunteer, are co-coordinators for the Ingleside.

â??Much of NERT training is hands-on. Where to turn off your water and gas; how to use a fire extinguisher; what to pack in your to-go bag, where the safe staging area is in your neighborhood,â?• Lai said.

â??After the â??89 quake, a lot of people wanted to volunteer, but they werenâ??t trained,â?• said Chidmart, â??NERT prepares you. But we need more people volunteers from our community.â?• By the end of last year, almost 25,000 San Franciscans had enrolled in NERT training, only 86 lived in the Ingleside.

As a senior, I donâ??t see myself physically carrying someone out of a burning building, but as Grace reminded me, â??being a NERT volunteer involves more than just emergency skills. Itâ??s knowing how to take care of yourself, knowing which neighbors may need extra care, recruiting new volunteers, note keeping. NERT is a good way to get to know your neighbors and to be part of the community.â?•

Teri Dowling with S.F. Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response Team, offered four reasons seniors should sign up: â??We are part of the community. Itâ??s a way to stay connected to our neighbors. This is information you can use â?? and itâ??s a way to stay involved.â?•

NERT training is held throughout the year. For further information, go to http://sf-fire.org/neighborhood-emergency-response-team-nert, or call 415-970-2022. Susan and Grace can be reached at Ingleside.nert@gmail.com.

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June Chung, Needleworker



June Chung focuses on her family and her beloved needlework not the childhood accident that damaged her mobility. (Photo by Genny Pinzon)

June Chung was five when she was run over by a car and has needed help to get around ever since. But that, she quickly assured me, is â??one of the least significant facts of my life. I think of the positive. I was married, I had three children. I have a good imagination. Life is good.â?•

The fruits of Chungâ??s imagination led the Mission YMCAs Genny Pinzon to call me. â??Juneâ??s artwork is fantastic. Iâ??ve been watching her for eight months, and bought three pieces,â?• Pinzon said.

Chung is a needle worker. She uses yarn to make purses, wall hangings, card holders, and other handy items. â??Needlework keeps my hands busy. Itâ??s interesting and itâ??s something to do when I watch television or talk. I learned how to do it from an instructor at The Arc.â?•

Some of her works are exuberant with bright, intense colors. The hanging message holder now hanging above my desk combines intense reds, blues, greens and yellows; others, like her dainty purses use quieter pastels and flower motifs.

While Chung can rely on yarn from The Arc, she prefers to choose her own materials. So once a month she boards The Arc bus for a trip to Beverlyâ??s Arts and Crafts in Daly City.

â??Iâ??m proud of my work, it makes me happy and people seem to like it.â?•

Special Activities in March

Mission YMCA, 4080 Mission Street
The Mission YMCA offers a trip to the DeYoung Museum to view the Bouquets to Art exhibit. There is a $30 fee for transportation and entrance to the exhibit.

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SF City College will be starting a free painting class at the Mission YMCA. Experienced and beginning artists are invited to attend. Call Genny Pinzon for information on the trip and the painting class, 415-452-7581 or 415-586-6900.

Cayuga Community Connectors
This March, Cayuga Connectors will be welcoming boomers with a free, four-part Thursday evening lecture series.
March 15: Richie Untermeyer on Jerry Garcia.
March 22: Two SFSU professors and a Vietnam vet on the Vietnam War.
March 29: A psychologist on re-framing aging: viewing your past with compassion and moving into the present with greater awareness.
April 5: Rev. Glenda Hope on moving forward in life, volunteer service and giving back.

Home Care Subsidy for Middle Income Families

The Institute on Aging is offering subsidies for middle income seniors and adults (18â??59) with disabilities who need home care but who earn too much to be eligible for free services. The program is available for individuals who earn no more than $80,700 a year and have less than $40,000 in assets, excluding a house or car. You must also be willing to partially cover the cost of your care. Call IOA at 415-750-4111 for more information.

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