

Miraloma Park Neighbor Fest focuses on safety, building neighborhood resilience

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In late October, the Miraloma Park Improvement Club threw a Neighbor Fest. Some 450 neighbors came.



Miraloma Park Community Connector Darlene Ramlose describes emergency supplies. (Photo by Gene Cohn)

Like other Neighborfests around the city, the purpose was to gather people together and turn â??strangers into neighbors and neighbors into friends.â?• This Fest, however, also included extensive disaster preparedness information along with the hotdogs, coloring books, and camaraderie.

The Neighborhood Empowerment Network, one of the co-sponsors, promotes the idea that neighborhoods can become more resilient in the face of disaster if the residents are prepared to handle

emergency situations, especially if theyâ??re already looking out for each other on an everyday basis.

To that end, Miraloma Park Improvement Club members and the Neighborhood Emergency Response Team manned booths, along with city agencies and the firefighters from Station 39 on Portola, to help people learn specific ways to maintain safety during and after a disaster.

NERT members demonstrated how to pack a â??go bagâ?• for adults and kids to keep under family membersâ?? beds â?? at the ready if you have to leave in a hurry in the middle of the night, as Santa Rosans did recently in the North Bay wildfires.

Darlene Ramlose, NERT team leader, showed how the tightly packed plastic bags fit into the capacious red go bag. You must have clothes, shoes, flashlight, prescriptions, photo ID, copies of insurance policies, leases. Pack cash in small bills (ATMs wonâ??t work in a disaster and no one will have change, so make it $5s and $1s).

They also handed out lists of emergency supplies and how to prepare your home for a disaster. Other necessities include battery or hand-crank radio and a first aid kit.

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In the next booth, Firefighter Hashim Anderson demonstrated how to turn off your homeâ??s gas at the meter, or at the valve under the small manhole cover on the sidewalk in front of your house: Pry the cover off with a longâ??very longâ??screwdriver and turn the valve from 12 noon to 9 p.m. with a wrench. He also went over how to change old-fashioned fusesâ??make sure you replace each one with the same color new one.



Miraloma Park neighbors learn how to use a fire extinguisher. (Photo by Gene Cohn)

One of the most popular stops was Fire Investigator Barbara Brooksâ?? booth in which she showed everyone, including kids, how to operate a fire extinguisher. â??PASâ?• is the key wordâ??Pull the pin at the top of the extinguisher, Aim the nozzle at the bottom of the fire close to the ground, and Squeeze the trigger, directing the stream of retardant higher as the flames nearing the ground are put out.

â??The scoop on poopâ?• booth presented a no-nonsense solution to disposal of human waste if the water is turned off during an emergency. Line the inside of the toilet with two heavy duty layers of tall kitchen trash bags. When ready, seal top bag tightly, remove it and put it inside another heavy duty trash bag. Seal the second bag tightly and place in a garbage binâ??et voila! Oh, and add another trash bag to replace the old one.

The event also showcased emergency equipment secured by the MPIC in the participatory budgeting process last year. The neighborhood now has a solar generator to provide power, pop-up tents to provide shelter, radios for the disaster team to remain in contact, and emergency sanitation equipment.

City agencies also contributed their expertise. The Department of Emergency Management mapped the neighborhoodâ??s emergency resources. PGE demonstrated the cityâ??s power grid, the Community Living Campaign signed up older adults for an exercise classâ??the first step for some 40 seniors to leave their homes and begin engaging in exercise and companionship.

All in all, it was a beautiful day in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Emergency Response Team training is offered by professional San Francisco firefighters. Contact 415-970-2022 or visit www.sfgov.org/sfnert for a schedule of free training in your neighborhood. A training session is scheduled to start in January at Station 39 on Portola.

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