



Summer 2009

VASHON ISLAND FIRE & RESCUE
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The Story of Collaboration

Vashon Island Fire & Rescue is a collaboration of efforts, people and entities. We have Explorers, volunteers and employees. Some volunteers are emergency responders and others non-responding associates. Our calls may be fire-related, medical or service in nature. We participate with the schools for fire safety events such as the mock Driving While Intoxicated accident scenario for high schoolers and Fire Prevention Week for elementary students. We join with service organizations such as the Rotarians, who provide Public Access Defibrillators (PAD) for our volunteers to teach their use to local business employees. We provide public information for First Aid and CPR. We mentor youth through our Explorer Program.

VashonBePrepared^{ORG} *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*

One of the most important efforts your fire district devotes itself to is Disaster Preparedness. By teaming with

VashonBePrepared, we are better able to provide information, medical, fire, road, water and communications assistance in case of a disaster which could affect a large portion of our island community and quickly overwhelm our small staff. We facilitate training by providing meeting rooms, some equipment, instructors and grant administration. They provide volunteers, training, communications and outreach. We join together for All-Island Disaster Drills to practice and fine-tune our ability to work together.

See how you, too, can collaborate in a role that's just right for you – either as a fire district volunteer, or as a VashonBePrepared disaster preparedness volunteer.

Our Volunteers Work For You!

Vashon Island Fire & Rescue and VashonBePrepared recently extended their already successful joint working relationship with disaster preparedness to dealing with the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak. For a number of years now, a large number of citizens have joined both our organizations in various roles - according to the abilities and preferences of each volunteer. We are working together to ensure that our Island community will be ready to respond in the event of any type of disaster or emergency.

Everybody wins when everybody works together.

Whether you're a truck driver, radio enthusiast, building contractor, nurse or a veteran, we have an opportunity for you to serve your community. In this newsletter you will find information about various ways you can volunteer in your neighborhood with either of our agencies. We need your help! So read up, log on, email, call or mail in the postcard found inside to get further details and then sign up!



Vashon Island Fire and Rescue is dedicated to the protection of life, property and our environment

What's YOUR story?

Every day on Vashon, someone needs help. Last year your neighbors, who have joined with Vashon Island Fire & Rescue, voluntarily responded to over 1400 calls for fires, medical emergencies, downed power lines, hazardous materials and patient assists. Every year we ask local citizens to consider volunteering with us. Becoming involved in your own community provides each of us a better chance of protecting lives and property.

We are proud of our diverse membership. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and these differing collections of knowledge, skills, and abilities are the foundation of our strength. Recruits devote themselves to rigorous training and as full-fledged members become diligent in shouldering their fair share of the workload. Our community members are many times deeply grateful for the service we render for their loved ones. Here are a few island stories.

Story 1: Why We Do What We Do

As a 17-year-old, Kathy was at home alone with her father when he suddenly collapsed. CPR was unknown back then, but she tried to perform rescue breathing. There was no 9-1-1 system in place and when she called the fire department they couldn't determine which station was closest. In the process, they lost her call. Finally her brother came home from school and she immediately sent him running down to the fire station. Help arrived, as did her mother, in time to hear him pronounced dead.

That was the impetus Kathy Bonner needed to become a paramedic. Medics undergo 3,000 hours of initial training. Fifty hours of continuing education are required each year with most medics undergoing 150-200. There are Harborview lectures and national conferences; Airlift NW, pediatric and cardiac advanced life support seminars. She and Stan Horan (now retired) started the medic program on Vashon, which now boasts eight trained and experienced Firefighter-Paramedics with a Medical Supervising Officer and eight Firefighter/EMTs.

"I absolutely love what I do," says Paramedic Bonner. "I know what it's like to be on the other side." Whether assisting very sick babies or making a terminal patient more comfortable or being with the family at a difficult time brings meaning to her work. "It is wonderful and completely satisfying to me!"



"When the medics including Kathy arrived and began giving care, they kept Chelsea alive until she could be airlifted to Harborview. She's a 7th grader now and doing well. She enjoys soccer, ballet and plays the violin. We're very grateful."

— Bill and Glenna Griffith



"VIFR relies on the Community Emergency Response Team's ability to respond to a major island disaster. CERT plays a major role in our efforts to meet the demands island-wide. We simply cannot handle a major incident without them. Their training and commitment to preparedness is vital to our success as emergency responders."

— Chief Hank Lipe

Photos contributed by David Weller, Hawk Jones and other volunteers

Story 2: Prepared for Disaster – At Home or Island-Wide

When Sharon Danielson took the CERT training course, sponsored by Vashon Island Fire and Rescue, she just wanted to help the community in case of a disaster. She never thought she'd need it right on her own property until Sharon's older, usually well-mannered horse stumbled and her friend tumbled off.

"It was one of those slow motion things that happen so often with horses," she said regretfully. The friend began to get up, but Sharon's CERT training kicked in. She noted signs the woman appeared to be going into shock and told her to lie down while she called 9-1-1. The woman was reluctant to be checked out, but Sharon insisted. The woman was subsequently transported to Harborview where she learned she had suffered a crushed vertebra. "I was so grateful for that training and feel it helped me be calm, communicate clearly and not go beyond my training," Sharon says.

Sharon, who along with her husband were once River Guides, first became involved in NERO (Neighborhood Emergency Response Organization) about five or six years ago. Sharon went on to get her Ham Radio license and then took the Community Emergency Response Team's (CERT) 40-hour course in light Search & Rescue, First Aid and Triage as the next logical step. She took it a second time when her husband joined CERT. Now they actively participate in Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES.) "We really love to be involved with communications for community emergencies and love the hands-on activities."

Roles for VashonBePrepared

If you have an interest or skills in planning, administration or various aspects of emergency response, consider exploring how you can serve Vashon Island in a disaster or community emergency. We need a large, trained volunteer team prepared to handle all hazards. This is a great way for you to both serve the island and have the skills necessary to meet the emergencies we all face, from severe weather to earthquakes to flu outbreaks. Apply today and receive the training to prepare you for one of VashonBePrepared's teams of volunteers who support and work with the fire department, health department and other agencies.

Volunteer roles include:

- Planning, logistics and administration (Emergency Operation Center)
- Food and shelter
- Medical services and First Aid
- Public health: prevention, education, resources, response
- Public information and education; news releases; outreach
- Two-way radio communications (licensed Ham operators)
- CERT – Community Emergency Response Teams
- Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams (NEROs): align with your immediate neighbors to support each other



Roles for Vashon Island Fire & Rescue

There are some basic requirements you must meet in order to be a responding volunteer: be 18 years of age; have graduated high school; be physically fit; and able to follow directions, train satisfactorily and commit to compliance requirements.

Firefighters. During Fire Academy recruits attend approximately 300 hours of training, which concludes with nationally-recognized Firefighter I certification. Volunteer Firefighters provide the fire district with duty shifts each month for a minimum of two years in exchange for the training. Firefighters may go on to EMT. [Applications for '09 Academy due July 17.](#)

Emergency Medical Responders. VIFR sponsors Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) volunteers for 12 weeks of classes through King County's EMS program. After certification, VIFR provides continuing education. EMT volunteers also agree to serve the Vashon Community for at least two years. EMT volunteers in good standing may apply for Fire Academy.

Support. This category of volunteer may be right up your alley if the previous two sound too demanding. A Support volunteer attends one month of training on fire ground activities that take place outside the "hot" zone, as well as tender operations.

Associate. An Associate Volunteer may respond to a scene to assist in non-combat roles such as Photographer, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Chaplain or any administrative tasks assigned by the Incident Commander. Non-response roles such as public education, webpage development, and clerical support are also needed.

The Blizzard of 2009: Coming to You on October 24th

Snow and gale force winds arrive early this year, as The Blizzard of 2009 slams into Vashon on the 24th of October, the date of the next all-Island disaster exercise. Participants in the exercise will face adrenalin-pounding learning moments and you'll see them in action at spots all over the Island. Toppled trees, downed power lines and drifts of blown snow will block roads.

Emergency responders will face reports of dozens of weather-related injuries and property damage. Wind, snow and bitter sub-freezing cold will endanger hundreds of people left without electricity, phone service and Internet.

"The exercise will help improve our severe weather response but another major goal is helping Islanders get more prepared for severe weather," said Vashon Fire Chief Hank Lipe. "We all know winter comes every year, but every year people get blindsided." VashonBePrepared will publish lots of severe weather tips in the months to come, leveraging The Blizzard of 2009 event to help people be more winter ready.

Puget Sound has been hit by more than two dozen major blizzard and wind storms since the Thirties. Even if you doubt the big earthquake will ever hit Vashon, there's no doubt about winter storms. Fortunately, a lot of things you do to get ready for a blizzard will help your family be better prepared for an earthquake.

If you want to participate in The Blizzard of 2009, call or email our volunteer coordinator, Jan Milligan at 206.463.2718. We need actors and support personnel to help make it all happen.





Commercial fire, downtown Vashon, August 16, 2008



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To Our Island Neighbors

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