

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Christy Adair  
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**Comments for Public Posting:** Please see true success stories from civilians who took a CERT classes and were able to use their CERT skills in a real and profound way. /Christy

## **LAFD CERT Success Stories, as requested through Social Media, December 2024**

### **Matt R.**

Not long after completing my CERT training, I was driving to work and witnessed a traffic accident between a car and a motorcycle. I had the knowledge and confidence to safely stop my vehicle, redirect traffic, and render aid to the motorcyclist prior to LAFD arrival. Upon LAFD arrival and transition of patient care, I continued to assist with traffic control, freeing up an additional LAFD member to render aid to the patient.

### **Katy H.**

Not really a heroic story, but I've finally put together a robust emergency kit, encouraged my neighbors to do the same/gave them tips, and I've shared some of the first aid skills I've learned with family and friends. I've shown some people how to locate and operate their utility shutoffs. Not everyone will make it out to a CERT class but we can share the skills we learn with members of our community to make everyone a little bit more prepared for an emergency.

Having a useful first aid kit and actually having it with me consistently did help me once with my dog. We were camping and she sliced her leg. Not bad enough to need stitches, but it was in an awkward spot where she kept opening it back up again. I was able to dress the wound because I had the supplies I needed and learned a better way to bandage awkward areas.

### **Bev E.**

My husband, as a CERT member, was a first responder to the Chatsworth train crash, helping with triage and anything else that needed to be done.

### **Josselle C.G.**

Thankfully, I have not had to use my CERT training in a disaster. But my neighbors know I'm trained and it gives us all some peace of mind.

Too many times to enumerate, I do something preventive and my husband says, "That must be your CERT training." Please keep up the good work. I plan to attend the January session as a refresher.

### **Dave B.**

While not taught directly in the initial CERT 1 class series, I found myself needing to assist the driver of stranded car in the birth of a baby. Having taken the free CERT classes several times at that point provided the confidence to help without panic. That CERT classes are free, convenient and fun leaves no excuse not to learn the basics that everybody should but don't know. Thank you to all the folks that go into making the program available.

**Eve A.**

Doing CERT training helped my anxiety about disasters so much. I want to do it again for a refresher

**Dan T.**

I can honestly say CERT changed my life. After retiring from law enforcement due to an injury, I still had the itch for public service. I happened to be a few blocks away when the Chatsworth train crash happened. I knew I could be useful, but having no affiliations with the City of L.A., I chose not to get involved. I remembered hearing a news story about CERT and was fortunate to find a nearby CERT class starting a few weeks later. After completing the basic training I joined the Call Out Team (I'm not sure it was called that yet). My first call out was to the Station Fire basecamp, where I served for six days. CERT lead me to taking the first of several EMR classes. It also lead me to amateur radio. As I've gotten older, I've retired from the Call Out Team except I still am active with the Alert California Camera monitoring team. I've very active with L.A. City Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) and the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). This all happened because I took the basic CERT training.

CERT becomes a launching pad to discover other interests and means to support our communities. I myself eventually became a Ham and an EMT because of CERT.

**Carolyn O. B.**

My whole life was transformed from my involvement with CERT. The training I took online and in person taught me how to prepare for disaster and relieved my fear of earthquakes because I now know what to do. I was recruited to be a coordinator shortly after completing basic training which launched me into a life of designing exercises and training others. I became a certified CERT Instructor to lead Battalion 11, Southern Division, and Central Bureau. Because of CERT I also became a licensed Amateur Radio operator, progressing to Amateur Extra, as well as car Red Cross Emergency Medical Response Instructor. I've made wonderful friends among the caring people of CERT as well as the Los Angeles Fire Department. Volunteering with the call-out team offered many opportunities to serve and grow.

Though I've grown too old for the physical aspects, I can still teach and help my family and neighbors to prepare themselves for emergencies. The spirit of volunteerism thrives among CERT members who are always so willing to pitch in and help whenever and wherever needed. We train. We learn. We grow. We live to serve.

**Jennifer H. J.**

I did the CERT training. I used the skills I learned along with my training as a Scientology Volunteer Minister to help after a pretty major earthquake. I keep hearing about what happened. I couldn't shut my eyes to the misery and pain of loss. I traveled to the epicenter and worked with my team to prepare for a feed and house 125 people that lost everything. It was good to do this and I know I made a difference. Because of my training I feel confidence. I'm not scared. I can help myself, family and neighbors to survive when there's a disaster. It is my honor to support the first responders whom are spread very thin in an emergency.

**Susan J.**

There are so many instances where my training helped me but I was able to help out at The Station Fire and it really opened eyes to see how CERT was able to assist during that event.

I've gotten my ham license, became a host for a PBS preparedness show (Totally Unprepared), helped Girl Scouts earn a badge, helped my local schools talk about their emergency backpacks in their classrooms... I mean the list is endless.

Also back when there were major protests in the first months of Trump's first Presidency I helped keep a lid on rising tensions at a gathering. Protestors were angry and pushing the barrier line and the cops were itching to teach a lesson. I was able to talk sense into both parties and nothing violent broke out, but you could feel it in the air - it was about to happen.

The friends along the way I cherish, I met a lot of leadership personalities in the LAFD and can't say enough how much I loved taking the classes and using what I've learned to better my environment.

**Clyde W.**

I take the CERT class annually

**Camille J.V.**

2 older gentlemen were riding e-bikes on a hilly road, and as we turned the curve we saw one man and his bike down- something happened & he had fallen hard off his bike moments before we were there. The other man stopped his bike and was running over to him trying to figure out what to do, but there was blood everywhere & the man down couldn't move his arm. We pulled over right away and I grabbed my emergency medical bag & did a quick assessment. He had a shoulder knocked out of place & multiple wounds. Got his body stabilized, cleaned & dressed the wounds, stopped the bleeding, called his family, assisted getting him and the e-bike into his family members car upon their arrival & they headed off to the hospital. CERT training made me all the more confident in being able to quickly handle an emergency & know exactly what to do.

I'd love to take refresher courses also. I'd also like to take the advanced training classes. I'm currently in school to become an RN, but CERT is just special in how and what they teach the general public to do.

I've learned more in CERT about what to do in \*ultimate\* emergencies (earthquakes, fires, rescuing & searching buildings, terrorist attacks, etc) so far then I have in school. I'd also love to have classes that kids at least 10+ can attend.

**Sakae K.**

Currently taking the CERT1 class 7 week series. I've been wanting to take it for years and it finally lined up for dates, time and location. Looking forward to taking more courses in the future

**Faith G.**

I have used my CERT skills several times. The first was for an accident on the freeway and the second was to use my CPR skills in my husband. I was able to remain calm, call 911 and begin compressions. Thankfully he survived.

I have also set up an emergency survival kit for my home and have taught emergency survival skills to several groups.

**Kristina L.**

I have taken 2 CERT classes- one as a refresher class. I have become much more aware & much more prepared for earthquakes and/or man-made catastrophes! Thank you LAFD CERT for offering these FREE classes. 🙌❤️

**Barbara O.**

I took the CERT course with the LA County Fire Department at Calabasas City Hall. My course ended just before our final class was postponed due to the COVID shutdown (finally graduated about a 1-1/2 years later). However, I immediately joined the City of Hidden Hills CERT Team. Our first assignment was a 4-City vaccine clinic, which was followed up two weeks later for the second dose. We served 1,200 people at both sessions

Joining CERT has empowered my confidence to learn more to prepare myself for emergencies and continue to work with my Team helping the community and training each month. Getting involved with CERT has been an honor and I share its values with everyone. I am constantly encouraging others to train and get involved.

Thank you and LAFD + LA County FD + FEMA for generous training and inspiration.

**Marg T.**

I have been able to identify and/or treat over two dozen people with urgent life-threatening medical conditions since I graduated from my initial and ongoing CERT trainings. This included identification and treatment of acute heat-related illness. I have recognized signs of stroke, head trauma, and fractures, and administered narcan after an overdose, calling professional emergency medical personnel for patient treatment, always remaining on-scene with the patients to capably report on their status when EMT's have arrived. I have blocked off streets where power lines or trees have fallen, or where a traffic accident has occurred, safely directing traffic around them using the PPE, caution tape and glowsticks I was taught to carry in my vehicle since my CERT graduation. Beyond that, I have encouraged thousands to take CERT courses in how to preserve your own safety and become a responder, not a victim, in the event of an emergency or disaster, allowing professional responders to move on to the next citizen requiring rescue. I am now a member of the Marion County (Indianapolis IN) CERT Communications team, providing ham or GMRS radio support for a variety of annual public events and the county emergency management agency. How many lives have I saved!? For sure about a dozen; but possibly hundreds of thousands...all thanks to my initial training by LAFD firefighter Sue Jensen in a classroom at CBS Studio City in July 2008 🍀

**Janet G.**

It totally changed my life!

I started a Preparedness group out in Idaho and am working on getting the Fire District to support volunteers.

Civilian volunteers are the backbone of this country

**C. Scott M.**

I am an Uber driver with the Go Bag in my trunk and a 4-camera Dashcam system (Tesla). I feel prepared to help in any situation or area wide emergency. I am also equipped with a car sized fire extinguisher, a window punch and seat belt cutter. Imagine if a lot of rideshare drivers were so equipped!

**Mikkie L.**

The endless 30-2-Can Do exercises at battalion community meetings and the extensive radio communication skills practice offered by Dan Tomlinson and John Gilbert helped when I had to call 911 for an individual who could not start her car (car had no issues), didnt know where she was going and had been sitting in her car for over 4 hours in mid August.

**ALL.**

Great idea to have those with CERT Class training to post their Success Stories, to encourage others to join, sign up & take training via L.A. Fire Dept! Friends & I took ours after we became EMT Licensed via L.A. Valley College's 15 week evening classes preparation, then taught 1 or 2 evenings a week by an excellent teacher, Fred Miller. After required practicum & County licensing exam, many of us helped to form Hatzolah of Los Angeles (Emergency Medical Rescue), a free local group of EMTs in Valley Village, North Hollywood, part of Sherman Oaks/& adjacent Van Nuys, to provide aid when needed, at times before Paramedics arrive. Info line (non-emergency, from which callers can get the emergency #).

**Jacquelyn J.**

Received Certificate, able to share information with Tenants of Newly renovated building & Thankful didn't have to utilize training, Confident could have done so Professionally and Successfully, Thanks to Captain Kirk and LaFD & Staff

**Jen K.**

I loved taking my CERT class. Recommended for all - and it's FREE

**Melissa C.**

I took it a couple of years ago. I really learned a lot but unfortunately I haven't followed through on additional training that is offered. I'm a procrastinator. Would definitely recommend it.

**Frances B.**

I enrolled in the free program and was very pleased with what I learned not only for family at home, but invaluable training to use in the event of an emergency

**James S.**

As I was seeking a means to socialize, I came across a pamphlet for CERT at the Senior Center where I work out. However, due to my lack of transportation, it was challenging to find a suitable spot for a 3-hour session once a week over a period of 7 weeks. While browsing through Eventbrite, I discovered that Burbank offered CERT training on Saturdays for the entire day over 4 weeks. Eager to participate, I registered and attended the program. And so begins my journey.

I had to gain knowledge on how to survive during an earthquake as I had no prior understanding. However, after receiving training at the Burbank Fire Department training center, I am now self-assured that I can be of assistance to the first responders or emergency response team in the North Hollywood community in case of a disaster.

In October 2024, I proudly participated in a neighborhood earthquake drill in Sherman Oaks/Van Nuys. The excitement of radio duty was invigorating, and even though recording incoming transmissions during an actual disaster seems daunting, the challenge only adds to the thrill. I marvel at the precision required to notate activity logs accurately—it's a skill to be mastered. Every meet-up is a valuable learning experience, enhancing my readiness and confidence.

I eagerly attend monthly refresher classes with the fantastic Battalion 10 instructors at the Sherman Oaks/Van Nuys Recreation Center. Every session enriches my CERT training and prepares me even more.

Having experienced about five earthquakes with a 4.8 magnitude since moving to California two and a half years ago, I realized it was time to take action. After a few good shakes, I decided to learn how to take care of myself and my family, and volunteer to help in my North Hollywood neighborhood.

Burbank CERT I am here to help, if you can walk come to the sound of my voice. Or use 30/2 can do CERT Is life-saving.

**Judith G.**

Just finished a CERT class a month ago. I now feel confident when or if I am called to help. Everyone needs this training.

**RD S.**

Two weeks after graduating from my CERT class I attended my best friend's wedding. Towards the end of the event, she hadn't eaten anything so she sat down with me with a plate of food. Suddenly, she was choking. She had something caught in her throat. I looked around for help, then I realized that I was help. So I had her stand up and I tried the Heimlich maneuver. It didn't work. So I tried it again. It still didn't work. I must have tried it 4 or 5 times without success. Everyone was standing around us, her children, her friends and I could see panic in their faces and in the face of my friend. (Her new husband was upstairs, unaware of what was happening.) I didn't know what to do. As she was falling down to the floor, I put my arms under her and pulled her up with all my strength. A piece of meat came flying out. My friend believes I saved her life on her wedding day. I am so thankful to God that I took that class. I never needed that training before the class, and I haven't needed it since. But, it was TOTALLY WORTH IT!!

**Christin M.**

I forgot everything that I learned. I am a learn by doing person. Fortunately no scary event needed my help and I forgot it all. I should sign up for a refresher :))

**Lucy G.**

CERT classes are great! My son and I took them. We learned how to triage, how to move people, how to make a sling (there's a right way) and a tourniquet, how to work with first responders, steps to prepare your home and family. Thank God I have never had to use any skill yet, other than preparedness. CERT classes are also a first step to reducing climate crises because climate hazards + vulnerable people = climate disaster. Neighborhood organizations are a great defense in heat waves, and if we know what to do, that's even better.

**Vincent A.**

LAFDCERT is the Force extension of LAFD... "The Help before Help Arrives " of the Community...

**Cris Q.**

Just got out of our gate & was just about to walk my dogs when i saw a former neighbor running inside telling me his dad was stabbed by a homeless guy while also walking their dog. I immediately went back in to bring in my dogs and get my backpack to help the guy who got stabbed before the paramedics and police came. We put pressure into the area where he got stabbed (stop the bleeding) and waited for the ambulance and police - thank you CERT!

In addition, because of CERT its made me more alert, more observant of surroundings & people. It definitely makes a difference attending the training and monthly trainings/meetings!!!

**Thomas W.**

I'm a federal employee. Several of us were tasked to come up with suggestions for cached PPE, shelter in place supplies, first aid kits and response support items. Due to what I learned in CERT, my suggestions impressed management. Later, I was made an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at LAX.

**Ann D.**

I consider myself fortunate to be a CERT graduate and am grateful to have learned how to be prepared for and respond to disasters. This invaluable training helps not only me, but my neighbors and community as well. I and other CERT graduates are an integral part of recovery after a disaster and help bolster the resilience of Los Angeles.

**Dennis M.**

Thanks to CERT I've been more informed about how to treat victims of everyday injuries such as car accidents. For example, about a year ago I was on the 118 Eastbound interchange at 405 and a BMW SUV had flipped over with a husband wife and kid in the vehicle. Thanks to CERT training I was able to first help the ambulant victims evacuate the over turned vehicle, and give gauze to a man who was heavily bleeding from the right arm. The reflective vests that CERT urged us to buy helped keep me visible while I was helping a fellow motorist.

CERT is absolutely essential to keeping the local population informed of proper disaster procedures. Without CERT giving us a well rounded understanding of disaster response, most people would have to rely on information from other sources that may not be as reliable as the Los Angeles Fire Department.

In conclusion, by funding the LAFD CERT team, we are shortening the wait for critical emergency response from minutes to mere seconds due to how many volunteers can be anywhere anytime.

**Dr. Kath**

I have taken the Cert Training twice. I have used the training many times in many different ways; earthquakes, fires in the SFV, car fires etc. I would like to take the Disaster Mental Health Volunteer Training. I have a Doctorate in Psychology and I am a Nurse Practitioner in Mental Health Advanced Practice. Please instruct me how to find the training. Who to contact.

**Joan C.**

I took the Cert training and learned so much. I am a CA State Park aide. Cert training helped build my confidence in handling state park emergencies, using fire extinguishers, evaluating injuries and situations.

Cert training is invaluable in our communities.

**Hans R.**

I was apprehensive about taking CERT in the first place, but it gave me a passion for disaster preparedness. It gave me a new look and insight into the safety world around me. I've met tons of great people who care about the wellbeing of others. I've been able to help encourage friends and family to get prepared. I've been able to be a person that people turn to with questions when something happens.

While I already knew the woman that became my wife, it was in a CERT class that it clicked that I wanted to be in a relationship with her.

If it were not for the Los Angeles CERT program, CERT would not exist. It would not be something that has, not only spanned the US, but is in multiple countries in the world.

**Alt G.**

I've taken the course twice thru the years. Not needed to use anything personally, but great course for emergency preparedness. I also learned about how to triage and why it's done the way it is, general emergency preparedness, put a fire out from the bottom up using a fire extinguisher & much more.

**Orlando B.**

Joining LAFD-CERT in 2017 is a long and exciting story... Divina my wife, who was an RN Supervisor, at Kaiser in W Hills invited me to join the class. We both graduated and were sworn in November 2017.

I was very lucky to have the opportunity to be involved in so many experiences, I did outreach, attended to all the destructive fires of the past, became an EMR for the last four years and provided help at few minor Emergencies. My pride and joy in the last few years has been being a part of the Call Out Team to provide firefighters needed Hydration and Recovery at the fire scenes where the conditions were precarious!

I can attest that the City of Los Angeles is not doing a good job to provide enough supply of water and enough supply of products with electrolytes to satisfy the needs during extreme heat conditions, to a point that we., the CERT call out team have to sell plastic bottles to raise funds in order to buy just a little of Gatorade for the Firefighters because they truly need to hydrate...

It's very sad and frustrating to hear that next year they are planning to cancel the CERT program, it will make some of the firefighters sick for the lack of our presence there when they need us...

What makes it sad and unacceptable is that it will be at the expense of the most vulnerable., our firefighters and the neighborhoods...

Because we don't charge for our services, they probably think we're worthless. That's a wrong thing to do because they spent lots of money to train us to be ready for a major disaster.

## **Kerri F.**

CERT has made the journey of life a better one. It has allowed me to give back to the communities I live(d) in.

Wow, where to begin? The day after LAFD swore me in for Call Out I was deployed with my original CERT (LBFD) for a storm event. Stood there proud to come back to Capt. Heflin with all the knowledge learned from his team and my new found team. It was an awesome moment to give back to my hometown.

I've also stood in front of a room filled with 40-130 Realtors and Affiliates who are often community outreach people and taught them how to be prepared and not rely on first responders when resources are not available. I've done numerous presentations on disaster preparedness.

Do I talk about the unconscious man laying on the ground with 10 people standing around and looking at him in shock (no one called 911) and me stepping in and helping to get first responders (FD/PD) on scene within 3.5 minutes because I not only knew how to call 911 and quickly give info to dispatch CERT provided info on how to treat the patient and roll him into recovery so he didn't choke on blood (BTW: the medics had to perform CPR in transport), he lived.

Let's talk about the many times I had to step in while caring for my elderly grandmother while I stayed with her helping her stay in her home. The health care workers paid \$9,000+ per month never knew how to handle challenges when she fell, busted open her head, had vomiting, TIA strokes. I knew to daily monitor her liquid intake blood pressure each day, BMs (icky yet important), etc... When medics came for calls they had all normal info to compare and see when her distress was a concern and not due to age. Caregivers and medics were grateful I had info of what was wasn't normal.

Recently my elderly neighbor who has spinal issues where I live took a tumble. He ended up bloodied and confused. We've shared pleasantries when crossing paths and I recently helped him through a construction zone in our complex. LAFD let me hold his hand until medics arrived (Cap seemed good with me giving medical previous knowledge about patient history of issues). Patient was scared, and and comforted by a person who knew him. My go bag came in handy because it has gloves in it. He was bloody and myself having a cancer battle left me with compromised immunity so gloves were important.

John Gilbert and myself stayed on scene when deployed on a wires down call to help an anxious sister welcome home her dialysis brother navigate their way home in the dark over downed wires and tree branches. She was wondering if she should saddle up a horse and throw him over to get home. Seriously, people are better from our halo. How would he not have fallen off the horse and LAFD not gone out and to have DWP move their vehicle to help him if medics arrive on scene. John and myself have kept it a secret what we did that night. It's our true story and needs to told for what we are doing . We stayed on scene 5 extra minutes to help citizens stay safe during challenges they will continue to face. Our 5 minutes reminded citizens LAFD cares.

As a recent survivor of breast cancer (still fighting battles), I stepped in happily to help station 83 raise funds 2 years ago for a firefighter who had recently lost his wife to the beast. I didn't say anything while I gave 10 hours of my day while nervously waiting for my own diagnosis. It gave a distraction when needed. LAFD is family, grew up as child going to visit dad and grandad in their "other home." The various stations they worked in. Pushed my own journey aside and wanted to be there! We helped rock that event!

I've gone on long enough, there are more stories.

I'm honored to say I'm 3rd generation sworn in LAFD. I'm not a firefighter like my dad and granddad, simply a civilian always happy to have training to step in when needed.

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**Mark S.** (Former LAFD CERT Firefighter Instructor)

I know I saved more lives as a CERT Instructor than I did working as a Paramedic.

**\*Stories submitted on 1/27/25 by Christy Adair**

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