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News Release

IAEM-Oceania Announces the Winners of the IAEM-Oceania and the IAEM-Global Partners in Preparedness Award

Oct. 11, 2019 (Falls Church, Va.) - The IAEM-Oceania Awards Committee of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is pleased to announce the winner of the IAEM-Oceania 2019 Partners in Preparedness Award. In addition, this winning project was recognized by the IAEM-Global Awards & Recognition Work Group as the recipient of the IAEM-Global 2019 Partners in Preparedness Award. This is the second year in a row that the IAEM-Oceania winner has been named as the IAEM-Global winner in the Partners in Preparedness Award category. The award winners will be recognized at the IAEM 67th Annual Conference & EMEX, Nov. 15-20, 2019, in Savannah, Georgia.

The winner of the **2019 IAEM-Oceania Partners in Preparedness Award** and the **IAEM-Global Partners in Preparedness Award** is the **Civil Defence Youth Ambassador Programme, a product of a collaborative partnership between the Emergency Management Bay of Plenty (EMBOP), the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) and Bay of Plenty schools**. The program was piloted through the annual BOPRC Youth Jam. It aims to improve preparedness among youth by training students to become civil defense leaders at home, school, and in their community. An initial three-day knowledge building workshop developed students' skills. Students (supported by EMBOP) returned to their schools and communities to promote and drive resilience activities including, school emergency planning, education and connection with the community.

Young people have, historically, been a difficult demographic for emergency management to reach. Although this group are technologically well-connected, they speak in a language uncommon to their older counterparts. BOPRC offered an established, successful youth engagement platform (Youth Jam) as a foundation to develop the Civil Defense Youth Ambassador Programme. The program is the first of its kind in New Zealand and has enabled Civil Defense to connect with engaged, active and influential young people in the region. Ambassadors return to their schools and communities armed with a greater understanding of civil defense, hazards and personal preparedness. Continued engagement after a camp provides students with support to drive resilience activities in their community and at school. The partnership has had mutual benefit for both organizations. BOPRC has helped develop EMBOP capability to work with students in an engaging and innovative manner. Likewise BOPRC staff have identified tools and techniques from EMBOP that have enhanced the delivery of the Youth Jam Programme. Both programs continue to be mutually supported by BOPRC and EMBOP. The success of the Youth Ambassadors Programme has been recognized by the Minister of Civil Defence and Emergency Management. The most effective Youth Ambassadors will be invited to return as mentors in next year's program.

Civil defense leaders in schools are driving engagement in a traditionally difficult to reach demographic, which will increase understanding in future generations. The program has provided students with an opportunity to develop their leadership skills, when they may not have otherwise had the opportunity. These are the two main goals of the program, but a number of unexpected benefits have started to become apparent.

Youth Ambassadors have started policing our social media pages, and educating the general population about emergency management, a message that is far more effective coming from them. The students are not only educating our youth, but also are educating the general public.

A number of youth ambassadors have also joined their Community Response Teams, which provides the response teams with a vehicle to engage with young people within their area. Some of the students are completing projects at school, which includes surveys of their local communities. The surveys are providing direction to their Community Response Teams, along with identification of the best avenues of communication with their communities.

The IAEM Partners in Preparedness Award recognizes programs or processes that demonstrate innovative, multi-participant involvement between local governments and governmental entities and private sector businesses, non-governmental organizations and non-profits, or individuals which have resulted in effective and efficient incident management, emergency management or homeland security processes. Learn about the IAEM Awards Competition at www.iaem.org/awards.

IAEM is a nonprofit professional organization representing more than 4,600 emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters, including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance; the Certified Emergency Manager/Associate Emergency Manager program; annual scholarships; a comprehensive monthly newsletter; and more.

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