

#### RELATED TERMS

- American Red Cross
- Hurricane Katrina
- Lake Tahoe Angora Fire



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#### PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Emergency Management
- Disabilities and Special Needs
- Public Affairs and Information

## PRACTICE NOTE

### Community Preparedness: Citizen Voice's "SAFELY OUT™" Kits

#### PRACTICE

Citizen Voice's SAFELY OUT™ Kits prepare all citizens, particularly those with disabilities and special needs, to help themselves and others evacuate safely in the event of an emergency.

#### DESCRIPTION

A Sacramento, California, broadcaster and the president of Citizen Voice, Gary Dietrich, developed the idea for Citizen Voice's SAFELY OUT™ Project after broadcasting from and volunteering during the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort and the Hurricane Rita evacuation effort in 2005. He noticed how dangerous the evacuation was, especially for vulnerable populations who faced compounded challenges. When he returned to Sacramento, Dietrich consulted with the Sacramento Sierra Chapter of the American Red Cross to design a project that would allow residents to help other residents, particularly the vulnerable members of the community, reach safety in an emergency.

[Citizen Voice](#) is a non-profit organization in Sacramento, California, that involves citizens in protecting the vulnerable.

Citizen Voice made the kits available for the first time on September 11, 2006. Residents can order the kits online through Citizen Voice's Web site, [www.citizenvoice.org](http://www.citizenvoice.org), or obtain kits sponsored through local government agencies, churches, and businesses. A \$10 donation per kit is suggested, plus \$2.50 for shipping.

Each kit includes the following supplies:

- SAFELY OUT™ Door Hanger that can be used to signal for assistance using the red "NEED HELP" side or to let others know when the vulnerable are "SAFELY OUT™" using the green side;
- SAFELY OUT™ Refrigerator Magnet Booklet with essential contact and evacuation information tailored to the needs of each individual or family;
- SAFELY OUT™ Helper Information Sheets giving individuals who volunteer to assist a vulnerable person the information they need to help;
- SAFELY OUT™ Storage Bag for keeping spare medicines, medical insurance information, etc. safe inside the refrigerator—a place that is air tight, water tight, and fire resistant;
- SAFELY OUT™ Wallet Information Card carried by the vulnerable in the event of disaster while away from home;
- SAFELY OUT™ Kit How-To Brochure;



- A permanent marker and erasable ink pen to complete the Kit contents; and
- An adhesive strip to hang the “NEED HELP” sign in a window should the front door not be easily visible.

During the response effort for the Lake Tahoe Angora Ridge Fire in June 2007, a Citizen Voice volunteer team distributed over 1,200 SAFELY OUT™ evacuation kits to residents in need at a community meeting and door-to-door in neighborhoods near the fire line. A Sacramento-area church donated \$10,000 for the kits distributed in Tahoe, which will help residents evacuate safely in the event of another wildland fire or emergency.



The Lake Tahoe Angora Fire lasted from June 24 to July 2, 2007. The fire burned 3,100 acres of land, destroying 242 residences and 67 commercial structures.

### **CITATIONS**

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<http://www.sacbee.com/creamer/story/270178.html>.

Hanson, Wayne. “Program Employs Neighbors as First Responders to Assist Vulnerable Populations in Disasters.” *Government Technology*. 30 Aug 2007.

<http://www.govtech.com/gt/articles/139202>.

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