Geography 1700-007 Natural disaster

Instructor: Schmit, Clint

Student: Nicholson, Erick

Assignment: Pick a disaster; describe what someone in your major could contribute to dealing with the disaster in terms of:

1) Preparing for the disaster

2) The immediate aftermath of the disaster

3) Adapting to the effects of the disaster - both long term and short term, as well as mitigation

My current major is nursing, so I will be taking the approach from the medical community’s point of view. I think that its important for all to be prepared for what disaster that may affect the area that one lives in, but its double important for those in the fields for medical, public safety or any other community leadership role. The reason I view it this way is, that as a medical professional I may be required to leave my family and home to go into work to care for others that are caught in the disaster, but before I can I good faith care for complete strangers, I must first know that the ones I love and the ones I live next to each day are taken care of, and the only way to do that effectively is to be prepared (with both food and first aid supplies) and ready to take care of your and those around you, only then would I be willing to leave them to the aftermath and go help complete strangers.

I will be answering this assignment on earthquakes, this is something that we have a potential for here in the salt lake valley and also an every day thing where I grow up.

1.Preparing for the disaster

One should all ways have some amount of preparedness for what ever disasters happen in there areas, food water, any medication needs and first aid items for any injury’s. I think that any one in the aforementioned category’s should also have these items not only for them self but also have extra medical/ first aid kits to be able to help there friends and neighbors, depending on how bad the quake is they may not be able to reach a hospital for quite some time and as a nurse or first responder I have a duty to help take care of these people. Part of preparing for the disaster is also keeping these items fresh, you cant just get it all together and forget about it for 10 years, you have to make sure that the supplies are good every year and replace what has expired, you should also practice every month, ways to get out of the house and through your neighborhood, if the need arises. Where to meet every on in your house should your get separated. You must also think of your pets, if you have any. I have a dog and cat, and their food, water and medical needs are represented in my emergency supplies, right along with the human stuff. There’s one other area of preparedness I think a lot of people over look, and that’s sanitation. Even if things are only disrupted for a day and that’s unlikely with a major earthquake, you have to think of how, where you will take care of bodily needs i.e.: use the bathroom and how to prevent that form becoming its own vector for disease or other problems. I have addressed this problem by keeping a shovel and 25lb of lie with my emergency supplies.

2.The immediate aftermath of the disaster

Right after the main quake I can take care of my family, including making sure where they are, if not at home with me, and making sure the animals are fine and out of immediate harm if an after quake should hit. If no life threatening injury’s have occurred and the quake was a large one, you need to check for gas leaks, you might even think about walking your neighborhood and checking in with the other people to make sure there is no potential for a fire from that vector, this would also give me a chance to check on my neighbors to make sure there where no life threating injury’s to them or any injury’s that they don’t know how to care for are where not prepared for. If need be turn off the gas to prevent hazardous build up of a toxic substance, at this point I would probably be required to head into the hospital if I was able to make it there, or any other community directed emergency medical care center to help with the aftermath of a large earthquake in the salt lake valley.

3.Adapting to the effects of the disaster - both long term and short term, as well as mitigation.

As far as mitigation is concerned, there’s not much humans can do to prevent earthquakes form happening, but we can try to have better building construction (buildings that will sway before braking) and think where we build and not just about an immediate financial return (like building in a river/flood plane) these areas are very prone to liquefaction and can cause just as much damage as the above ground shaking from the quake. We also need to keep in mind that with earthquakes there is also a large possibility of mass wasting and fires, with that in mind we will want to think about where we chose to live, and to keep dense brush and other fire hazards cleared from our homes, as well as have some fire suppressant things around incase it ‘s needed. As far as short term adapting is concerned, we have our emergency kits and you know that ruffing it due to this disaster will only be for a short amount of time and that things will get back to normal at some time in the near future.

The long term is a harder one to think about. The web page shakout.org has some projected numbers for the Wasatch fault, and they are 35.4 billion in damage, 3,500 – 4,400 casualties and 97,700 displaced households. When we think about this much damage, you start to realize that long term really means long term, think of hurricane Katrina and how long it took some places to recover. With that many dead and displaced, you can expect recovery to be a ten-year or longer project. If your one of the ones effected by lose of housing, where do we go and what do we do after our emergency kits run out or if its in the middle of winter, we will have to adapt as a society for a time to live together or relocate to other areas.