

Dear Editor,

On January 16, 2012, American Red Cross volunteers teamed up with the Nevada Outdoor School AmeriCorps program and others in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Local AmeriCorps members planned and hosted a Non Profit Community Services fair. This fair highlighted and showcased the services offered by local nonprofit organizations. Hosting a nonprofit fair helped to connect community members with local non profits who provide essential services in our community. Eighteen organizations were in attendance, available to answer questions, and provide information to the Winnemucca community members who attended. Volunteers were recruited for after the fair to help canvass neighborhoods and inform residents about fire safety and preparedness. Volunteers talked with community members in Winnemucca as well as in Elko, about fire safety and prevention, and reminded residents that home fires are one disaster that can be prevented. The Red Cross offered free training and the necessary materials for all volunteers who participated. There were approximately 8 canvassing volunteers that were not AmeriCorps members in any capacity who served 36 volunteer hours between both events. In Elko 300 homes were canvassed. 106 people came to their doors and spoke to either an AmeriCorps member or a Red Cross volunteer. Here in Winnemucca, 200 homes were canvassed and either an AmeriCorps or a volunteer was able to speak with 52 people. AmeriCorps members and volunteers, in both Elko and Winnemucca, were fortunate to have local fire chiefs give a brief presentation about fire safety and its importance as well as answer any questions.

A fire, regardless of background or geographic location, can affect anyone. Home fires are the most common disaster that the Red Cross responds to—the Northern Nevada Chapter in Winnemucca responded to 9 home fires last year; Seven in Humboldt County and two in Lander County. In addition, according to the National Fire Protection Association, fires claim nine lives every day in the U.S. We want to make sure you and your loved ones are not part of these statistics.

We want to thank the community, Winnemucca Volunteer Fire Department, NOS AmeriCorps program, and the Red Cross volunteers that helped us promote fire preparedness to the community of Winnemucca. We would also like to encourage everyone to learn more about how they can be prepared for fires and other disasters by visiting the Preparedness pages of the American Red Cross public Web site, www.redcross.org, or by contacting your local Red Cross office at 775-625-1155.

Sincerely,

Miranda Kuskie
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AmeriCorps Member
American Red Cross
Northern Nevada Chapter- Winnemucca Service Center