

Minutes
Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Meeting
September 29, 1995

Evalyn Fisher opened the meeting welcoming all present. Thanks were extended to Mike Ritter of the American Red Cross for the use of the facility at Mount Hope Drive. Ms. Fisher expressed the importance of volunteer organizations and reported a past positive experience with such organizations in Pennsylvania. She then introduced the staff in attendance from the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

The Proclamation from the Governor of the State of Maryland was presented with congratulations to NVOAD in celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary year and declaring September 29, 1995 as National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Day in Maryland. The group was commended for being an active force for disaster relief in the nation and for its assistance in initiating a VOAD in Maryland.

Rich McKoy, Director of the Baltimore Office of Disaster Control and Civil Defense was introduced. Mr. McKoy welcomed everyone to Baltimore and spoke of how fortunate we are to have these valuable groups working for all of us.

Introductions were made around the table and each representative discussed the activities and resources offered by his/her particular organization. These valuable services range from emergency communications, technical assistance, rebuilding and construction of homes, child care, medical services, emergency food banks, clothing, shelter, crisis counseling, hospice care and services rendered to critically ill children and their families, and numerous others.

Patrice Morey of MEMA stated that several other organizations had expressed interest in a Maryland VOAD but were unable to attend the meeting due to schedule conflicts or involvement with activities related to Hurricane Marilyn. The Humane Society of the United States, the Phoenix Society, and Catholic Charities sent Ms. Morey information about their organizations to have available at the meeting.

Donna Derr, the NVOAD Vice-President, spoke of attending the Leadership Conference and of the learning experience it afforded. She mentioned there are 45 active associate NVOAD members (states and territories) and that its growth has been exceptional. She spoke of the key components of NVOAD including communication, convening mechanisms, cooperation, coordination, education, leadership development, mitigation and outreach which are further outlined in the NVOAD brochure. NVOAD is developing donations management plans for unmet needs to be used during times of disaster. It was stated that though Maryland is fortunate in not having had catastrophic disasters such as those experienced by some other areas, it is recognized that it is necessary to be prepared and to pinpoint the potentially necessary resources, forming a "who will do what" partnership.

Rino Aldrighetti, the NVOAD Executive Secretary, spoke on building a State VOAD. He discussed the "VOAD Organizational Manual--Guidelines for State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster" which was supplied. This manual offers valuable information concerning questions on the development and maintenance of effective VOADS. Mr. Aldrighetti also explained the steps to go through to become a member of the national organization and the relationship between NVOAD and State VOADS. Members of the State VOADS are encouraged to attend the national meetings. Next year's State Leadership Conference will be held in Washington State. There are also several newsletters available through NVOAD offering up-to-date information on the members of the organization.

Mr. Aldrighetti mentioned the VOADnet which is a growing resource offering FEMA situation reports, and a series of six or seven meetings called "VOADchat" where briefings are posted on activities taking place. He offered to supply Ms. Morey with further information regarding the VOADnet to include in the meeting minutes (see Tab B).

Mr. Aldrighetti further discussed VOAD structural issues such as the cooperative agreement between the state VOAD and NVOAD which appears on pages 14 and 15 of the VOAD Organizational Manual. The value of adopting a corresponding set of principles was stressed. Another subject was introduced by Bud Howard of MEMA, who initiated a discussion on whether any cooperative agreements were taking place between states; in the ensuing discussion between the representatives, it was stated that there was growing activity in that area.

Participants recessed for a short break.

Patrice Morey continued with the agenda, focusing on issues. Ms. Morey discussed the relevance of completing the information sheets in participants' packets to highlight issues the group is concerned with so that future meetings can be planned with these issues in mind. The completed information sheets will also be used to develop a future Maryland VOAD directory and to obtain suggestions for future participants. Ms. Morey stated she would compile a list of the participants' concerns before the next meeting.

Various issues were discussed. Al Nollmeyer of the American Radio Relay League stated that the first week during and after a disaster was very important and emphasized the importance of human issues. He stressed the necessity of being able to identify quickly the proper "who" and "where" contacts when victim needs are identified during this critical period. Further issues mentioned involved media coordination, the role of fire personnel, liability and Good Samaritan laws, unaffiliated groups, and the need for a rumor control center.

The formation of a steering committee was next on the agenda. The volunteers for this committee are:

Eileen Cackowski, Governor's Office on Volunteerism, Points of Light

Mike Ritter, American Red Cross

Bill Ewing, MD Food Bank, Inc., Second Harvest

Captain Richard Hathorn, Salvation Army

Wilkie Nunn, Church of the Brethren

Cheryl Tyiska, National Organization for Victim Assistance

Patrice Morey, Maryland Emergency Management Agency

The meaning of the national logo was discussed and two logos were presented as a starting point for the development of a logo for the Maryland VOAD group. Ideas were encouraged in this area.

The date for the next meeting was discussed and it was mentioned that if the participants could meet before January and complete the necessary steps to become an associate VOAD, the group could possibly be recognized at the national meeting in Washington D.C. in early January. A vote was taken and it was decided the next meeting would be on December 1, at 1:30 P.M. Three possible facilities were volunteered and the definite meeting place will be announced. Bill Howard of the American Radio Relay League offered his facilities in Columbia, Maryland, which provides a central meeting location.

There was obvious enthusiasm shown and the meeting ended on a positive note.

Those representatives and organizations attending the meeting included:

Adwoa Beidleman Aggrey
Church World Service

Rino Aldrighetti
NVOAD

Mary Berg
MEMA

Robert Booker
Adventist Community Services

Claude Brame
Capital Area Community Food Bank
Second Harvest

Eileen Cackowski
Governor's Office on Volunteerism
Points of Light

Sandy Cochran
First Call for Help, United Way
Points of Light

Bob Curtemanche
Volunteers of America

Donna Derr
Church of the Brethren
NVOAD

Bill Ewing
Maryland Food Bank, Inc.
Second Harvest

Evalyn Fisher
MEMA

John Gavin
Adventist Community Services

Captain Richard Hathorn
Salvation Army

Bill Howard
American Radio Relay League

Bud Howard
MEMA

Scott Knox
American Red Cross

Ruth Mascari
MEMA

Rich McKoy
Baltimore City Office of
Disaster Control and Civil Defense

Bill McVey
Adventist Community Services

George Miller
United Methodist Church
Baltimore/Washington Conference

Patrice Morey
MEMA

Charles Murray
St. Vincent de Paul

Al Nollmeyer
American Radio Relay League

Wilkie Nunn
Church of the Brethren

Mike Ritter
American Red Cross

Cheryl Tyiska
National Organization for Victim Assistance

Rev. Elwood Ulmer

Baptist Convention of MD/DE

TAB B

The connection to VOADnet is through ECUnet. Disks may be obtained from Convene Software (415-380-0500). Besides the software costs, ECUnet charges a monthly connection fee. NVOAD volunteer, Bob Blum (605-256-0132) can answer questions about how to use VOADnet. ECUnet offers technical help on using the software through OnLine Services (800-733-2863). Billing and price questions can go to (800) 682-4808.