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Summer Campers Participate in the STEP Program to Learn How to Prepare Emergency Communication Plans

(BRISTOL, CT: July 24, 2020) – Emergency Management Department of the City of Bristol, led by Director, Harley Graime in partnership with volunteers from the City of Bristol Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Bristol Police Department, and the Bristol Fire Department recently conducted a **STEP (Student Tools for Emergency Planning)** Program to students enrolled in summer camp. Now in its fifth year, the program is presented to all fifth graders in the City of Bristol to educate them on being prepared for emergencies with the intent that they take the information home to share with their families. The materials for the program are provided by FEMA and include a manual with instructions on how to help the students and their families complete an emergency communication plan and how to put together a disaster supply kit. At the end of the presentation, each student is given a backpack to take home that includes a flashlight, whistle, and Mylar blanket.

The intent of the program is to present the information to students in a fun, interactive environment with the opportunity to ask questions and discuss how to be prepared for emergencies including a house fire, natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods or blizzards, and teaching them the differences between disasters and emergencies.

“Our visits to the fifth grade classes in each of the eight schools in Bristol normally reaches almost 600 students and gives us the opportunity to provide this valuable life-saving information to all Bristol families. This year with schools closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic we were unable to visit all eight schools so we were grateful to be able to work with the Parks, Recreation, Youth & Community Services Department to bring this important program to the campers this year. It takes everyone, youth, family members, and the community to help all of us be prepared in the event of a disaster or emergency,” stated Harley Graime, Emergency Management Director for the City of Bristol who coordinates the program through the State of CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and the Bristol Board of Education every year.

The program is a service provided at no cost by the Emergency Management Department of the City of Bristol and presented by members from CERT using a series of lessons for each subject along with short videos to reinforce the material. The students are quizzed at the end of each segment with an opportunity for students to share their knowledge about each subject. At the end

of the program Bristol police officers and firefighters are on hand to talk to the students about the importance of bringing home the information they've just learned to their families and sharing it with them so that they can develop their own family emergency communication plan and disaster supply kit customized to their family's needs.

"The Parks, Recreation, Youth & Community Services summer camp staff was pleased to work with Harley and Bristol's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) along with the City of Bristol First Responders to teach our campers how to be prepared for emergencies. The campers and the staff really enjoyed the experience." – Joshua Medeiros, Ed.D., CPRP, Superintendent of Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth & Community Services

The Emergency Management Department of the City of Bristol wants the community to know that this program is available for anyone who lives or owns a business in Bristol. The content can be adapted and customized for any civic group, nonprofit organization, or business in Bristol. **To schedule this program for your group, organization, or business, contact Harley Graime at 860-866-7262.**

Additional Resources to Help the Community Stay Informed

To learn about what kinds of disasters or emergencies can affect our area and to help your family be prepared, you can visit www.ready.gov or www.getreadycapitolregion.org.

Other resources of information can also be found at www.disasterassistance.gov and www.connectwithweather.com/create-your-plan

About the Emergency Management Services and City of Bristol Community Response Team (CERT).

The Emergency Management Department provides coordination of all emergency departments in times of disaster. This includes paid and volunteer agencies associated with the City of Bristol. The director is responsible for the writing and implementation of the emergency plans for the city. This keeps the city in compliance with state and federal guidelines and programs. The City of Bristol Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is comprised of volunteer citizens, who are trained in basic life safety and emergency preparedness skills. The program is community based in order to provide rapid and safe care for our residents and to provide support to the City's emergency personnel in the event of a major incident or large scale disaster. For more information, visit www.bristolct.gov

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Photos Attached – see next page



Photo 1: *Harley Graime, Emergency Management Director for the City of Bristol begins the STEP Program presentation to campers at Rockwell Park.*



Photo 2: *Members of the Bristol Fire Department answer campers' questions at the end of the STEP Program presentation.*