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**KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT**  
**Lawrence A. Stelma – Sheriff**

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701 Ball Avenue, N.E. • Grand Rapids • Michigan • 49503



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 31, 2014**

**Contact: Jack Stewart – 616.632.6255**

**CERT Training available for  
Community Volunteers**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Following a major disaster, first responders provide fire and medical services. But in some cases, they are so busy that it becomes difficult to meet the demands for these services. From road blockages to communication failures, there are so many variables that could impact the ability for first responders to get to an emergency site. In these situations, having someone who can meet immediate needs can make the difference between life and death.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trains civilians to work with emergency responders, in order to meet their immediate needs. The training program teaches people about preparing for disaster, and increases their ability to safely help themselves, their family and their neighbors during a catastrophe. “Sometimes we watch disaster and devastation on the news and think, *‘I wish I could help,’*” says Jack Stewart, Kent County Emergency Management Coordinator. “After taking several CERT Training sessions, and you will be able to help.”

Here in Kent County, the CERT team may be activated for any type or number of incidents. In January, Kent County Emergency Management activated CERT to work with the United Way 211. In a matter of days, CERT volunteers helped a total of 37 residents (mostly the elderly or people with medical conditions) who were unable to remove snow from sidewalks and driveways. They worked during the Spring 2013 flooding here in Kent County, providing 419 hours of service over twelve days. Some members went to Illinois after deadly tornadoes in November.

**Next Training — February 2014**

**Wednesday Evening Classes**

February 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th 6:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Final Exercise on March 1st Saturday class 9:00 am— 1:00 pm

For more information or to register, go to <http://www.kentcountycert.org/>.

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