

The Buddy System

Overview: The City of Yachats, Oregon is located on the central Oregon coast and is home to just over 600 full-time residents. Following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the City conducted several tsunami evacuation drills. In June 2006, an actual tsunami warning was issued following an earthquake off the California Coast. A local resident, who participated in both the drill and the warning, realized that many residents in the City were elderly or disabled and were not able to evacuate on their own. Determined to do something to help these special needs populations, the resident created a "Neighbor Helping Neighbor" Program.



How the program works:

The program's creator used word of mouth to get the program's message out to residents.

The program includes a volunteer registry of those who require additional assistance and give those individuals a placard to place in a front window of their home. Residents are educated to look for these placards in the event of an evacuation order so that they can provide assistance to those who need it. Once a resident who needs assistance has been helped, the placard is removed from the window.

Transferability to other communities:

The simple use of logos and placards allows The Buddy System to be easily adapted to any community and any language.

This simple idea about neighbors helping one another, which was generated in a small coastal community in Oregon, is now having direct impacts in Southeast Asia. The Neighbor Helping Neighbor Evacuate concept is now being implemented in the Ranong Province in Thailand.



The Buddy System – Ranong Province, Thailand.
Courtesy of Dr. Walter Dudley