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## KENT COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2015

Contact: Lisa LaPlante – 616.632.7182

## Kent County Emergency Management Exercises Planned

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Some emergencies are tough to see coming. Prolonged rain events in April 2013 caused widespread flooding. Wyoming, Kentwood and Grand Rapids were hit by a tornado in July 2014. Kent County public safety agencies and human service organizations responded immediately. Police and fire crews jumped into action as multiple agencies, churches and others provided food, shelter and clean-up items for families in need.

Kent County Emergency Management, The Salvation Army, Heart of West Michigan United Way, Kent County Medical Reserve Corps and The Rapid plan to address the needs of donations and volunteer management during a state of emergency within our community. This month, we will be exercising the operational components of both centers, to assess our plan and improve our readiness.

“When we see large-scale incidents due to emergencies, we see a willingness of the public to assist, and that can become chaotic if not controlled,” said Jack Stewart, Kent County Emergency Management Coordinator. “We want to be sure we are prepared if ever a large-scale incident occurs here. Exercising a Volunteer Reception Center and Donations Management Center will confirm that Kent County is prepared.”

The exercises include the Volunteer Reception Center (VRC), incorporating well-trained volunteers into the emergency management system. The VRC works under the supervision and expertise of Kent County Medical Reserve Corps and the Heart of West Michigan United Way to ensure smooth assignment and flow of volunteer help to areas where help is most needed. “The center provides a specific, centralized location, staffed by skilled volunteer managers capable of screening, interviewing and referring spontaneous volunteers to strengthen local capabilities for a declared emergency response,” said Jane Royer of the Heart of West Michigan United Way.

The other part of the exercise is the Donations Management Center (DMC). Kent County and the City of Grand Rapids Emergency Management would turn to The Salvation Army, which has graciously accepted the responsibility of coordinating the set-up and operational components of a DMC, should one be needed. “The DMC plan recognizes that solicited and unsolicited donations of materials, goods, labor, and services can pose a burden on already strained community disaster response resources,” said James Warfield of The Salvation Army. “The DMC will provide a centralized location for the coordination of solicited and unsolicited disaster donations and offer an opportunity for people to help the affected community in providing them a place to donate products.”

*(more)*

You can support our efforts by donating these items for flood, snow, and community incidents:

Snow / Ice Removal Kits	Ice melting salt	Snow shovels
Flood Cleanup Kits	Five gallon buckets	Mops
Brooms	Brushes	Sponges
Bleach	Work gloves	Community Project Kits
Shovels	Rakes	Wheelbarrows
Step ladders	Tarps	Paint roller pans
Adjustable wrenches	Socket sets	

**April 21 through May 1, 2015, items can be dropped off by appointment at:**

**The Salvation Army  
1632 Linden Street SE  
Grand Rapids, MI  
616.459.3433 ext. 1514**

**The Salvation Army will accept items without an appointment April 28<sup>th</sup> 2015  
from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.**

MEDIA NOTE: You are invited to join us Tuesday, April 28, as we run a real-time exercise of the Donations Management Center (DMC) and Volunteer Reception Center (VRC).

- When: April 28, 2015 from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Where: Heart of West Michigan United Way - 118 Commerce SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
- Who: Kent County Emergency Management, The Salvation Army, Heart of West Michigan United Way, Kent County Medical Reserve Corps, and The Rapid

Lunch will be served. Please RSVP by emailing Kent County Emergency Management at [Tiffany.Kim@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:Tiffany.Kim@kentcountymi.gov). Parking vouchers available for Cherry/Commerce lot only. For those interested, transportation between VRC to DMC will be provided by The Rapid.