

An Alternative Approach to Emergency Preparedness:
A Descriptive Case Study Evaluation

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Abstract

The Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepares (SNAP) program offers an alternative approach to emergency preparedness from more conventional programs. Program participants, staff and other associated individuals in this descriptive case study evaluation, identify the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of SNAP. In addition to providing information and skills to prepare individual households for an emergency event, SNAP also emphasizes connections between neighbors as an important component of the program. Such connections are associated with the concept of social capital as articulated by sociologist Robert Putnam (2000). In turn, social capital is a resource supporting a community's resilience (Norris et al., 2008), the process enabling a community to effectively adapt to an emergency event. The SNAP program utilizes existing, and creates new social capital connections in communities as it assists citizens to prepare for an emergency. Social capital is also identified for its function as a weak tie (Granovetter, 1973) connecting individuals particularly in the context of social media. After identifying associations between SNAP and the theoretical concepts of social capital, community resilience and weak ties, this study concludes with a measure of the value the program provides for the community beyond the emergency preparedness practices and knowledge it teaches.

Keywords: social capital, community resilience, weak ties, emergency preparedness

An Alternative Approach to Emergency Preparedness:
A Descriptive Case Study Evaluation

This descriptive case study evaluation of the Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepare (SNAP) program sought to identify the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the program from the perspective of program participants, staff and others familiar with it through past and current interactions or collaborations. It was based on personal interviews conducted over the course of a ten-week internship with the Seattle Office of Emergency Management (OEM) over the winter of 2011.¹ The rationale for choosing an interview-based format for this evaluation was a desire to appraise SNAP from the perspective of those most familiar with it from personal experience. This perspective was based on the assumption that the experts are those individuals who either use or operate a program. They are the better positioned to recognize the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the program than any outside observer, researcher or survey tool.

SNAP Program Description

The SNAP program offers an alternative approach to emergency preparedness from other more conventional approaches that require a greater personal investment of time and commitment. Its focus is on teaching basic emergency preparedness knowledge and practices such as the practice of “Drop, Cover and Hold” for an earthquake, storing at least three days worth of supplies (i.e. one gallon of water per person, per day) or establishing an out of state emergency

¹ See Appendix B for details about my internship.

contact for all household members to check in with in an emergency. Beyond preparing individual households, the program goes on to emphasize utilizing connections between individuals to organize neighbors. Sociologist Robert Putnam (2000) refers to the benefits derived from such connecting relationships as “social capital.”²

OEM Training Specialist Debbie Goetz³ acknowledged the importance of connections between people and suggests what the OEM teaches serves as a vehicle to further those connections:

I think the connections are more important. And I think the skills and the topic and the subject kind of become what people organize around. If that’s a way that connects people, then that is one avenue that will bring people together.

Origins of SNAP

The SNAP program was introduced five years ago to replace the previous emergency preparedness program of the Seattle OEM, SDART. Seattle OEM Director Barb Graff had concluded the limitations of SDART suggested the need for a different approach. Graff enlisted JoAnn Jordan as Public Education Coordinator to develop a new program to address her concerns. Graff recounted:

... in the nine or ten years that the SDART program had been offered throughout Seattle, the statistics showed us that we were being far more successful at organizing people in neighborhoods in the better resourced neighborhoods... So one of the things I asked JoAnn [Jordan] to do was regardless of what she taught and how she taught it, make sure that we were being geographically dispersed and equitable.

² See Appendix A for a more thorough discussion of social capital.

³ Staff and public and non-government personnel are identified by name as per their official capacity except where anonymity was requested. See Appendix B.

Jordan utilized her past experience as an educator in developing SNAP when she came to work for the Seattle OEM five years ago. Graff did not dictate what the new program would look like, leaving the details to Jordan. The old program wasn't reaching beyond a very narrow swath of more economically endowed neighborhoods with their less diverse residents. Jordan responded with a program that is presented at least once a year in each of the thirteen neighborhood council districts throughout Seattle. Additionally, the program has made a conscious effort to outreach groups underrepresented in past emergency preparedness efforts both in Seattle and beyond—the poor, ethnic minorities, the elderly or infirm. These groups are often characterized as vulnerable populations. Literature on disasters describes how such populations suffer disproportionately in a disaster scenario than better-resourced communities (Godschalk, 2003; Mileti, D.S. & Gailus, J.L., 2005). Consequently, almost a third of participants in preparedness programs taught by the OEM are classified as “vulnerable populations” (OEM data).

Characteristics of SNAP

Training Specialist T has been particularly involved in reaching out to individuals who have historically not been engaged by the emergency management community. She has conducted programs with such populations as homeless youth and immigrant groups, members of the Somali and Southeast Asian refugee populations.

For me, my focus is with vulnerable populations. So for me it's more important to make even general information accessible. I think that SNAP and a lot of preparedness information, not just in this office but nationally, isn't accessible to a majority of the community... So my real focus is to try and make safety information available to folks who may not have the opportunity to learn it otherwise.

In addition to efforts to increase accessibility of the program to underrepresented groups, Jordan also decided to increase access to information for the general public by offering the SNAP emergency preparedness materials online. According to Jordan, the prior program materials weren't so readily available. She recounted:

One of the philosophies that I changed was the materials on the SDART program was only available if you were a SDART neighborhood... I took the materials and I blew them apart and I put them on our website and said I don't even care if you register as a SNAP program. Everybody should have access to the materials.

One participant⁴ familiar with both programs weighed in about the effects of opening access to information to anyone. He offered his perspective on the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the availability and usefulness of materials and information from each program. "The good thing about SNAP is the availability of good materials on the internet," he said... "The downside of that is, on the old program there was a booklet... (now) when I get a new person on the block, I have to print off all that stuff and give it to them."

Another characteristic of the previous program Jordan considered problematic was its demanding complexity. It was a rigidly prescribed program requiring the coordination and cooperation of a number of individuals organized in six teams assigned specific tasks. It was also resource intensive, requiring a member of the OEM staff to meet with each designated neighborhood group for training and

⁴ Program participants are referred to as "participant" for privacy. See Appendix B.

follow-up. As a result, there was a two-year long wait list to participate in that program.

Jordan developed SNAP to make it easier for citizens to first begin preparing their homes, and then taking that preparedness knowledge out to involve their neighbors. Jordan believes the SNAP way of emergency preparedness focuses on the micro versus macro level emphasizing emergency preparedness practices that begin on the personal level and then expands outward through gradually larger associations. She explained, “this program does a pretty good time of saying, you don’t have to put it off until you’ve got fifteen homes. If you’ve got two people you’re it. You’re a SNAP program.”

This contrasts SNAP with other more prescriptive approaches to emergency preparedness like the CERT program of King County and Map Your Neighborhood of the Washington State Emergency Management. CERT requires a participant commit to taking a 2 1/2 hour class each week over a seven-week period to participate. Map Your Neighborhood advises organizing 15-20 households. SNAP offers an alternative to those time and resource intensive programs by lowering the commitments to levels more easily accessible to new participants.

Jordan believes this focus on beginning small and keeping things less prescriptive helps avoid some basic obstacles hindering people from even starting the process of preparation:

When we originally developed the program, the comments that we had ... was that the old program was really difficult to follow. It took a lot of people to do it and it took a lot of energy to do it and you had to go through six programs and it was difficult. And it didn’t fit all neighborhoods. SNAP was created to be a lot more flexible. My assumption is it’s a lot easier to use

therefor it's effective in its use. Not having as much prescriptive measures in the program is an advantage, and that's an assumption that we have with it.

One participant familiar with the predecessor program SDART and the current program SNAP compared the two approaches:

The first class (SDART), ... it was very structured, it felt very intimidating to your average citizen. They're like, "go take all these sheets of paper and do all this stuff." ... So my first impression was wow, this is going to be hard to get people to volunteer, because it's a lot of administratia(sic) and feels very rigid; formal, rigid. The latest ones (SNAP) have almost gone too far because now it's, "here we'll give you what you need and you know you're kind of on your own and it's more flexible for you ..."

She remembers how the overwhelming rules and structure of the prior program stood in sharp contrast to the current, perhaps too flexible approach in SNAP. Other participants echoed the concern that the shift to a more flexible program may have gone too far and resulted in a level of ambiguity in what the program intends to accomplish. The flexibility of the program put the burden on participants to determine what they should do with the preparedness information SNAP provided.

This point was illustrated by an account by a program participant:

I just felt it was kind of weak on exactly giving us a game plan for what we should be doing—step by step. I remember sitting in on the training for neighborhood coordinators and about three-quarters of the way through it a lady put up her hand and basically said, "so what exactly do you want us to do?"

Apparently providing too much flexibility without specific directions on what to do with the information proved overwhelming to some participants. In the effort to create a program available to a wider population, one that would not intimidate prospective participants with a rigid structure and demanding requirements, SNAP

risks becoming flexible to the degree that it leaves too much of the burden of defining preparedness on the participants.

This could be because SNAP is still in the process of development, still trying to find the right balance between rigidity and flexibility even after five years as JoAnn Jordan explained:

So the first design phase of SNAP and we're still in the first design phase pretty much, we've been morphing it as we've been going along and I think making it better. But it was really to take it from being so prescribed down to something that was a little more self-driven. And that wasn't so well received from those who liked having somebody come out every year with them but it was really well received and understood by those who wanted to be involved and never had an opportunity to do it before. So I think we're starting to get in the rhythm of finding the balance for it.

It is apparent from the contrasting opinions that SNAP still struggles to find that place between being a more prescriptive, rigidly defined program and one that allows participants to utilize the information provided to create their own program to fit their own personal needs. The differences over the strengths and weaknesses of the two programs persist even after five years. However, according to OEM Director Graff, despite the old SDART program's popularity in the limited neighborhoods fortunate enough to receive training, there were other shortcomings that precluded her decision to continue offering emergency preparedness in that manner. She elaborated:

It worked great in some places. In fact there were many people who lobbied me very hard not to stop doing exactly what we were doing. It was just very resource intensive. The only way to maintain that model was to continue getting more and more staff to do the same type of work instead of doing many more different things such as training other trainers.

The resource demands of time and personnel required to maintain the prior program were not sustainable. Particularly in these times of budget constraints,

there are limits to staff size that would make a labor and time-intensive program like SDART difficult to maintain. Those limitations were another compelling impetus for Jordan to develop a different approach that became SNAP.

“There’s only three of us in Public Education for over 600,000 people. We know that we could work our entire lives and not be able to outreach to everybody,” Jordan observed.

The small staff was previously overwhelmed by the demands of implementing the staff-directed, highly structured emergency preparedness curriculum of the SDART program. However, under the more flexible, interactive approach of SNAP, staff-size was recognized as an asset particularly within the context of a more accessible program allowing for more personal contact to a broader range of the public. It enabled more direct contact between staff and program participants that some saw as a way to give government a more human face. One participant observed:

Having different trainers do the trainings was nice because it felt like I met everybody that was really involved at the city level because the department that runs the training is very small. And so it feels like, because I was able to meet all of them and work with all of them for a night, that if I have suggestions or if I want more information, that I have a real tie to them. That there’s not a wall of bureaucracy in the middle.

Despite the small size of the training staff, participants recognized the level of knowledge and expertise of personnel. The program staff was complimented for their knowledge in the material of SNAP as well as their skills as a presenter, particularly in their delicate handling of challenges presented by the diverse

interests and backgrounds of attendees. The observation of one participant reflected this consensus:

I thought the presenter was excellent. I thought she was very good. She was very personable. The technical discussion wasn't above the sort of interest level of the people who had participated. And I felt that she was responsive too. There was a sort of broad demographic in the group, which I would say included people who go to a lot of, sort of, public information things because, maybe not specifically they're interested, but it's sort of an activity. And they tended to want to talk about things that were anecdotally based and not relevant. But she was absolutely correct with them. She was nice in sort of validating their interest without allowing that to take over. The whole thing I thought was excellent.

The quality of the staff of trainers was the one characteristic of the SNAP program that enjoyed broad recognition as a strength of the program from participants, other OEM staff, other department personnel and collaborators from other organizations.

Compensating For Small Staff

Train the Trainer.

Conscious of limitations that are a consequence of a small staff, the OEM has worked to compensate for that shortcoming by leveraging its message through other programs. One example is through their Train the Trainer program. This program has proved particularly effective in communities often referred to as "vulnerable populations." Training Specialist T, whose expertise is working with immigrant and refugee populations, described what Train the Trainer does:

Often times I'm not the best person to go into a community and talk about how to stay safe and how to get prepared.... So the Train the Trainer programs are really to train community members so that they can host their own meetings for their community addressing their community's needs.

This program also functions as a multiplier effect by expanding outreach in a way that doesn't rely solely on the limited OEM education staff to present SNAP's emergency preparedness message. JoAnn Jordan explained how this works:

So really what it does is takes the three of us and expands it out and teaches others. It's like teaching people how to fish. It gives them that opportunity to reengage.

This reengagement can be characterized as impacting the connections within a community associated with social capital. When the citizen/trainer volunteers time and energy to learn a new skill and then participates in the civil engagement activity of teaching community members, these actions can be recognized as contributing to the social capital of a community. Train the Trainer provides multiple benefits by increasing the outreach of OEM into difficult to access communities and providing social capital benefits for both the trained citizen practitioner and the community that is enriched through the lessons learned. Jordan described a scenario of this process in action:

A couple of years ago Debbie did a Train the Trainer in partnership with the Parks Department Youth At Risk program. She had a group of teens who were actually paid a stipend for the summer to learn about preparedness, create a program, and deliver it to the kids who are from the free lunch program. The kids created the program. They had a staff assigned to them though actually, they were the ones who scheduled the programs and they went out and taught six or seven hundred kids in a summer. It was a great opportunity. The kids learned a lot because they were the ones who created a skit and a program. And then the youth at risk learned a lot from the program itself.

The program was not repeated because of a cut in funding. That highlights the lingering threat to every government program, SNAP included. In a world of shrinking budgets, no program is immune.

Collaborations.

Another practice used by the OEM to compensate for the small education staff size was through leveraging collaborations and partnerships with other City of Seattle departments and programs. Thomas Whittmore, District Coordinator for the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) described the approach of his department as “... all about asset-based community development—you look at your assets, you build on your assets.” That approach is consistent to what SNAP does in building on the social capital “assets” of a neighborhood to engage in emergency preparedness. Consequently, OEM and DON have enjoyed a mutually productive relationship through the years. The OEM has collaborated with the DON’s Small Sparks neighborhood matching funds program to support emergency preparedness projects in the past.

Unfortunately, this fruitful partnership has been disrupted by changes in the Department of Neighborhoods as a result of funding cuts. Neighborhoods Service Centers have been closed and coordinator positions have been reduced and reassigned to larger geographic regions throughout the city. The two departments face a period of readjustment to adapt to a very different environment than the past. Nonetheless, DON’s Ed Pottharst remained optimistic of potential opportunities for further collaborations:

I think there could be more interaction. I would like to see that especially now that I am down here as part of a team working a much bigger area. I think it would be great for the four of us to invite JoAnn and Debbie and other OEM staff to come out here for a meeting to talk about how we could partner up on SNAP related activities.

The Seattle OEM also collaborated with organizations outside of government. An example of this was a program to outreach the immigrant refugee community in collaboration with the Pacific Asian Empowerment Program. This group provided interpreters for a presentation on emergency preparedness by OEM Training Specialist T at the Filipino Community Center in Seattle. The attendees were senior citizens who spoke only Mien, Lao or Hmong. The interpreters translated the informational posters from the OEM as T circled the room acting out the safety tips for the audience.

Bob Frieland, Executive Director of the Pacific Asian Empowerment Program described his relationship with the OEM:

I met T about a year ago and I was very impressed by the way she handles it. Because even with a limited-- no knowledge of the language, she actually can communicate through her actions what she means. Plus, the presence of Nick and the other interpreters make it easier for them to understand what's going on.

The OEM's work with the immigrant refugee population highlights a limitation of SNAP's emphasis on the place-based concept of neighborhood. Frieland contrasted how refugee's sense of community differs from the concept of neighborhood:

My feeling there is that the buzzword right now in the city, is neighborhood. I have mentioned this in some of the conferences that I have attended. I said that when it comes to the ethnic groups, it's not neighborhood that's important, it's the community because you must remember that especially the refugees that you keep seeing, the older refugees, they came into here as people who were forced to come here because of circumstances beyond their control. In this particular case, they were involved in the Vietnam War that brought them here. They had to organize themselves to be able to tackle the problems that refugees and immigrants face.

To Frieland, this population's sense of community is not embodied in a physical locale such as a neighborhood. The people who occupy a place determine whether the place is a community or not. . Members in the immigrant refugee population may or may not feel the neighborhoods they live in are their community. When members of the immigrant refugee population gather from many different neighborhoods to meet at a center, that is their community.

Although, what I'm not too clear about are the objectives of this buzzword of neighborhood is actually, their emphasis would be this place. The neighborhoods here get together. That's not the case. What happens is these Laotians and Filipinos, they go the community centers where the activities are. Because if you noticed, it's like a social event. And they look forward to the events. This has been going on for the last almost twenty-two or twenty-three years.

Identifying Other Communities

Beyond the aforementioned examples of actual collaborations, program participants identified other potential collaborative opportunities where the Office of Emergency Management could utilize associations that on first glance might appear having no connection with emergency preparedness. For example, a participant spoke of P-patch neighborhood gardens administered by the DON as a community for her:

That's probably the most active community I'm a part of because we all work together there on an acre and you see a lot of the same people but you're always meeting new people too. And it's right on 15th so people come through to tour it, just walk through it. Or people from the animal hospital will walk dogs through it and it's a real crossroads kind of a place.

Other program participants related how they connected with their neighbors through the social contacts made while walking their dogs in their neighborhoods.

One participant shared how having a dog has impacted his wife's connectedness to her neighbors:

My wife has a story of her dog helping to introduce her to neighbors as she was out walking the dog. It's a case where you tend to go slower, the dog would stop and sniff and scratch and of course, if there's a neighbor across the fence and it's somewhat opportunistic to introduce oneself and say, "hi my name is."

The OEM has been successful in developing collaborations to compensate for the limited resource of a small educational staff. However, there have been less tangible results identifying and reaching out to communities based on a common interest whether it is urban agriculture or dog walking that are not situated in a physical locale. Recognizing communities of interest beyond those associated with a physical locale or neighborhood provides opportunities the OEM must leverage to increase their impact and outreach. SNAP advocates building upon the social connections in communities of place. Identifying places or circumstances where people gather beyond their place of residence and utilizing those connections to inculcate the information and practices of emergency preparedness offers potential benefits for SNAP that presently remain underutilized.

Weak Ties

Examples of informal relationships in communities of interest represent a category of connections social scientist Mark Granovetter (1973) refers to as "weak ties." The associations in these looser, less-structured relations offer a broad-reaching social network providing advantages for activities such as finding a job or disseminating other information that moves through word of mouth that could be useful for the OEM's preparedness purposes.

Social Media.

A contemporary phenomenon where weak ties flourish is in social media. Dynes (2006) reminds of the importance of social media for maintaining connections when he says, "Remember that people talk to one another, so these interpersonal channels should be used in addition to mass media" (Dynes, 2006, p.22). This medium offers an opportunity to access a broad range of populations throughout the community with a minimum demand on resources. Current events in the Arab world and Japan showcased the immense power of social media as a tool for change and emergency response. However, it is an area that OEM staff acknowledged as underutilized. Training Specialist Goetz admitted, "We actually haven't gone there with SNAP. It's more a face-to-face personal interaction that we've wanted to foster."

Nonetheless, the OEM's inclination towards more personal interactions need not exclude social media as a tool. One participant shared her experiences and noted how social media initiated contacts in her life that eventually led to the type of person-to-person relationships SNAP aspires for:

It may not be the majority of people but the percentage is increasing that for a lot of people, that is a large part of their social interaction. I met my husband on Twitter. Most of my close circle of friends that I didn't go to high school with are all people I've met on online gaming forums. While I've met all of them now in person because we've gone to visit, they're all people that originally I met playing whatever game online or talking to them online just because that's the nature of things now.

For some, connecting with others via social media is not just an end activity in itself. It is an extension of the activity of socializing that has become the norm just as telephones were the norm for a previous generation. The Seattle Office of

Emergency Management's tardiness to recognize this new reality impacts their ability to connect with a generation who communicate and connect in ways the OEM doesn't.

JoAnn Jordan believes this shortcoming exists beyond even the OEM and expressed confidence they will become more involved in this communications medium in the future.

I think the city as a whole is kind of baby stepping through social media. The government aspects and the legal side of it making sure that you set it up right in the first place causes the bigger governments to take it at a slower pace. We'll be there. We'll do more social media. We'll have our own Facebook and Linked In. We were talking today about podcasts and expanding into those venues. I see it happening in the next year.

This hesitancy to engage and enlist social media is not confined to the City of Seattle. In her master's thesis for the Naval Postgraduate School, Jody Woodcock, Program Manager for Pierce County Emergency Management contended it's a prevalent sentiment among practitioners in the field of emergency management. She attributed this in part to officials' unfamiliarity with the practices, speculating whether the older generational demographic is in part responsible for this. She also suggested the "command and control" structure of conventional emergency management organizations creates a resistance to relinquishing the power of information to the populations they serve in part due to lack of trust that the public is capable of dealing with or handling the information responsibly (Woodcock, 2009).

The lack of engagement in social media illustrates a weakness for the SNAP program not fully utilizing a potent tool to increase public visibility for the OEM and

the preparedness ethic it hopes to inculcate with the general populace. JoAnn Jordan often mentioned how many times it takes hearing a message before it “sticks” in the awareness of an individual. Malcolm Gladwell in *The Tipping Point* detailed how an advertisement has to be seen at least six times before it will register (Gladwell, 2000, p. 92). The broad reach of social media provides an electronic conduit to tap into these opportunities to embed emergency preparedness into the public’s consciousness.

Engaging Youth

The lack of a social media presence also has implications regarding another weakness of the SNAP program-- its inability to engage the youth. Training Specialist T observed this disconnect between the OEM and how young people communicate when she said, “I think that there are a number of youth... they Tweet, they’re on Facebook and we’re not on that so it’s harder to get messages out using the mode of communication that they use.”

A program participant suggested a unique approach for engaging young people in emergency preparedness through a genre of online gaming referred to as Alternate Reality Gaming or ARG. She explained ARGs this way:

They’re a structured event. They tend to be online now but basically, a role-playing thing like that, they tend to take place on the Internet and usually around a certain topic. They don’t have rules and things necessarily, it’s more like somebody posing a scenario and everybody agrees to suspend reality and then participate in that scenario. ...It’s really interesting because it seems to, especially for younger people, get them involved in something they would normally be, (using a mechanical, monotone voice) ‘ah, we’re doing fire drills, this is really boring.’ Because it really hooks into people’s imaginations.

A reflection of the program's weakness engaging youth is seen in its lack of a significant presence in Seattle Public Schools. JoAnn Jordan acknowledged the task ahead and recognized the characteristics that impede developing a program in Seattle Public Schools:

Honestly, it's an area we need to improve on...We have a good relationship with the school district, it's just hard to 'crack that nut' in a sense. Schools (Seattle Public Schools) has a great plan. They're very connected with us. But each school individually is site-based managed so each school will have a little variation on that plan so you have to have an individual connection with that principal in order to get into that school.

Bob Frieland described how improvements in collaboration with Seattle Public Schools could have a positive impact in the immigrant communities he serves.

So I don't know how to work with the schools but if the schools can do it, that would be fantastic. We tend to invite the younger people during summer time when they are free from schooling, to take a look and work together with the seniors, attend the programs and share a few things with them. If that could be included, if they were exposed to emergency planning in the schools that would be perfect.

Volunteers As a Resource

Although the OEM lacks a notable presence in Seattle Public Schools, Jordan suggested a possible strategy to tap into potential opportunities for involvement using both an existing program and the new resource of the Volunteer Coordinator position that was added to the OEM staff in January.

It may end up being more of a Train the Trainer. That's one of the areas I'd like to get volunteers to help us with is to train volunteers who are retired teachers and daycare providers and so on, to try to create a cadre of people who are well trained, who are comfortable in the schools, who the schools trust that we have done that.

Interest in volunteer opportunities emerged throughout the interviews I conducted. This is particularly timely with the recent addition of Volunteer Coordinator Cathy Wenderoth to the OEM staff. The participant who spoke of Alternate Reality Gaming and social media mentioned her interest in volunteering her time and expertise of social media skills rather than going out and organizing her neighborhood. She currently writes for the Ravenna Blog covering the Ravenna and Eckstein neighborhoods. She also suggested it would have been helpful hearing what others have organized their neighborhoods as part of the Leadership Academy component of SNAP:

If they sent a couple of people that were spearheading the neighborhood groups, it would be interesting. Not if they're coming to say, "see how good our neighborhood is," but if it was more of a "here's what we're doing."

This sentiment echoes another participant whose neighborhood is already organized. He expressed a wish to network and share his experiences with others:

During that training, somewhere in there it would be nice to at least say, here's a list of people who are working on different kinds of booklets and stuff to organize their neighborhood. You're on your own now. We've given you the training we think you need to get out to your neighborhoods and start getting them organized but if you want some suggestions on ways to do it, here's a sheet. Here's some email addresses for Rick and Carl and these guys have formed a group that are working towards coming up with more of a structured roadmap of how to deal with the task of dealing with the emergency.

There doesn't appear to be a mechanism in place for the SNAP program to respond to this interest for something more. This has registered with SNAP personnel as well. As Training Specialist T said:

Often times I felt a lot with SNAP, that Leadership is really sort of fast paced and a lot of information is given to folks. And we do have continuing education and there are skills training. But you need to have sort of like a follow up, like 'Leadership Academy II' where the

people who have attended the last two Leadership Academies are invited back either to share what they've done or what they tried but didn't work or why they couldn't get started or where they were failing.

These sentiments suggested a desire of participants and personnel to develop a greater sense of community within the SNAP program as opposed to just serving as a source of information. This desire for more personal connections between SNAP participants represents an opportunity to build a network of participants with the potential to become a volunteer resource.

A participant summed it up this way: "Even though they did the best they could with the space with having people interact, it didn't really feel like I went away with a whole lot of, 'yea, these are my people.'" It is ironic that although the Leadership Academy portion of SNAP emphasizes community building in place-based communities, it doesn't offer opportunities for community building within the interest-based community of emergency preparedness participants.

Summary

Characteristic strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the SNAP program were identified through interviews with program participants, staff and others associated through collaborations. I first began with background and comparison of with the previous program SDART to explain the rationale behind the development of the current SNAP program. SNAP was developed by JoAnn Jordan to fulfill frameworks identified by OEM Director Barb Graff to provide a program that was both available to a broader segment of the population and more socially equitable. To fulfill these mandates, Jordan created a program that is now offered to all

neighborhood council districts across Seattle and is accessible to populations previously not addressed by emergency management organizations both in the city and nationally. SNAP broadened its availability to residents across the city particularly to historically underrepresented groups like members of the immigrant refugee community. It has increased accessibility of preparedness information and materials to anyone interested and lowered barriers to participation by reducing time and resource requirements in contrast to other existing programs. In this sense, SNAP offers an alternative choice for individuals interested in preparing their households for an emergency from more demanding programs offered through other jurisdictions. The issue of making the program more accessible to a broader segment of the population resulted in a program that required less investment of time on the part of participants, and less directed instruction by program staff. This consequence of the new approach of SNAP from the previous staff intensive SDART remains divisive even after five years. However, the reality of finite staff resources rendered the previous program unsustainable and required a program allowing for staff to accomplish their education mission within the limitations of their size. My interviews identified the OEM training staff as one of the strengths of SNAP by a broad consensus even as their small size was viewed as a strength for the way personnel provided a human face to what could be perceived as a monolithic bureaucratic experience with a government organization. They communicated a solid knowledge of the emergency preparedness materials effectively to program participants and managed challenging social settings with awareness and competence, according to participants. The program effectively leveraged

collaborations with other organizations as an adaptive strategy in response to their size limitations. It stresses the importance of connections between neighbors as a part of developing a preparedness program and provides opportunities for citizens to participate in civic engagement through activities such as their Train the Trainer program.

However, SNAP has failed to utilize the potent resource of social media and that has had implications on its level of engagement with young people in particular. The most glaring shortcoming in that demographic has been a lack of presence in the Seattle Public Schools. Another potential resource it has failed to exploit is volunteer participants interested in sharing their expertise with others. It has no mechanisms in place to tap into an interest among participants to give back to the community through volunteering or other peer involvement. The program has also failed to recognize and enlist already existing communities of interest to expand the reach of its emergency preparedness ethic. Finally, in an effort to be less prescriptive and directive, it has exhibited a lack of a definable purpose that has left some participants confused, wanting something more concrete.

Nonetheless, the identified weaknesses of the program represent potential opportunities for improvement. To the credit of the Seattle OEM, they have expressed an awareness of their shortcomings and have taken steps to address them. One tangible example is the establishment of a volunteer coordinator position earlier this year. A review of the program in the future could confirm whether the OEM succeeded in transforming identified weaknesses of the SNAP program from opportunities to strengths or left them unrealized promises. This offers an

opportunity for future investigation to ascertain whether this program is responsive to feedback from current participants identifying the weaknesses of the program in this study.

In this vein, another opportunity for future research could focus on the whether the Seattle Office of Emergency Management succeeds in developing a program for students in Seattle Public Schools. That population offers tremendous potential for addressing a large segment of the city's population (children) that is identified in emergency preparedness as a vulnerable population. Another vulnerable group that offers potential for further research are senior citizens.

Finally, the recent flurry of disaster events across the nation and the world has provided a rich source of examples of how individuals have adapted in the face of overwhelming events. This presents an opportunity to identify and explore adaptive responses that if current trends continue, could become part of the "new normal" behavior for populations in a world grappling with the unprecedented effects of climate change-based scenarios.

Closing Thoughts

The recent events in Japan and in this country have elevated the issue of emergency preparedness into the public's awareness. The challenge is how to shift that awareness into action to take steps preparing for a disaster. However, the magnitude of the earthquake in Japan or tornadoes in the Midwest beg the question of what steps could be taken to prepare for an event like that.

OEM Director Barb Graff, despite her position heading an agency responsible for assisting the public in an emergency, reminded of the limitations of the

government's role in emergency preparedness and where responsibility and solutions ultimately lie:

In reality government can never, *ever* be the solution to all the needs in a disaster. We're not even comprehensive in our response to the needs of daily folks... So government can never be a top leader, dictator of self-sufficiency, self-reliance. What it can do is use the unique resources available to it to help create the environment that creates self-sufficiency, again making it a mindset, a way of life.

Her suggestion that self-sufficiency be internalized within individuals reiterates the hard fact that circumstances will require each individual be responsible for their own needs until that time when help can be mobilized. Circumstances will require citizens to help those around them in the absence of institutional first responders. That reality is the basis behind SNAP's emphasis on connecting with neighbors. Additionally, those relationships are useful in other scenarios as well. Graff elaborated:

The way I hope that it dovetails in is when we are out there and teaching people the benefit of being well prepared for a disaster, we're trying to teach the benefits also of, 'now this will come in handy also if there was a missing Alzheimer's patient in your neighborhood, if there was a crime problem, an arson problem, a land use thing that you wanted to rally around.' It's all about connectedness and counting on your neighbors.

This concept of connectedness that is such an integral aspect of SNAP has utility across the social spectrum beyond emergency preparedness. As Graff recognized above, it has impacts on public issues ranging from finding a missing person and crime problems to community development.

SNAP participants identified opportunities in communities of interest situated within place-based communities like urban agriculture and acquaintances

of pet owners that foster connections between individuals. These pre-existing networks of connections between citizens already provide benefits for the day-to-day living that is thankfully the norm. It would be to the OEM's advantage if they could further leverage these established networks to spread the information of SNAP throughout these everyday-connecting relationships.

Sociologists refer to the benefits realized from connections between individuals as social capital. One benefit of social capital is the resource it provides supporting a community to effectively adapt to an emergency event, a process identified as resilience. SNAP's programs increase social capital by providing opportunities for citizen to interact and participate with others. This in turn has a positive impact upon the resilience of the community. This suggests a level of value for this program even if the actual skills and knowledge are never put into practice in an emergency event.

It is problematic evaluating the effectiveness of an emergency preparedness program absent an actual emergency. In the mean time, public officials and agencies must decide on a program they believe to be the best option for their constituencies. No single program can be expected to cover every eventuality. Perhaps rather than attempt to answer the unanswerable question of what is the single best approach--the "silver bullet," a more effective approach would be to consider the concept of "silver buckshot." Providing citizens with a suite of emergency preparedness programs to choose from is perhaps the most prudent approach to take. In that sense, that is what SNAP accomplishes by offering an alternative to the more

prescriptive approaches offered by neighboring jurisdictions like King County's CERT and the State of Washington's Map Your Neighborhood program.

All the best practices and equipment proved useless in the face of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. All that was available in the moments before the water came was the neighbor who knew which door to pound on to warn to head for higher ground. In the end, ultimately all we have to depend on is each other. That is what the SNAP program stresses and that focus is perhaps what give this program its greatest value.

Appendix A: Theoretical Concepts

Social Capital

References by Seattle Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff recognized connections between individuals in a community as a characteristic component of the SNAP program. It echoes the mission of the SNAP program as Trainer Debbie Goetz explained, "...to encourage individuals to organize among their neighbors, with the people around them, to be ready for disasters and other emergencies." And Director Graff identified the value of community connections in a disaster event when she said, "counting on one another, our family, our friends, our neighborhoods, networks that we establish virtually or otherwise can get us through a bad disaster."

These references suggest social capital as a primary theoretical concept operating within the SNAP program. As sociologist Robert Putnam explains, social capital "refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000, p.19). Putnam contends a community derives benefits from the presence of such connections between individuals.

Bach et al. (2010) identify the components of social capital, as they exist in the community: "These capital assets involve concrete interactions and sharing of information, material support, and common norms and values" (Bach et al., 2010, p.20). The interactions refer to the relationships made up of connections between members of a community that generate benefits and resources associated with social capital.

Dynes (2006) affirms the significance of social capital specifically to the field of emergency management when he says, "Social capital is our most significant resource in responding to damage caused by natural and other hazards, such as terrorism" (Dynes, 2006, p.2). He provides a functional definition of where it can be found. "Social capital is not located in individual people, as is human capital, but rather is embedded in social relationships and networks between and among members of a community" (Dynes, 2006, p.2).

According to Putnam, civic engagement activities are one indication of the level of social capital in a community. His concept is akin to what Norris et al. (2008) refer to as "citizen participation", which they identify as one of "three key social psychological dimensions of social capital" (Norris et al., 2008, p.139). Perkins et al. (2002) and Wandersman (2000) (as cited Norris et al. 2008) specifically identify such activities in this realm:

"'Citizen participation' is the engagement of community members in formal organizations, including religious congregations, school and resident associations, neighborhood watches, and self-help groups" (Norris et al., 2008, p.139).

In this case, individuals involved in a SNAP event could be considered participating within the realm of civic engagement/citizen participation as they voluntarily devote hours of their time to attend what can be construed as a public meeting. Although the topic of the event might be information benefiting the individual participant, it is also in the interest of the community as a whole when citizens learn emergency preparedness skills.

Civic engagement/citizen participation is also evident in SNAP's Train the Trainer program where members of a particular community are trained to conduct SNAP classes for individuals in their own community. The trainers are voluntarily participating in their training classes. They practice civic engagement when they conduct the classes they were trained for. And the participants in their classes are also involved in the act of civic engagement through their attendance.

The content of the SNAP program also has implications for developing social capital in the community. When the focus of the program shifts from providing information for individual household preparedness and begins pressing participants to engage at least one other household to prepare and develop a plan, the intent of the program can be viewed as an attempt to develop connections within the community, a characteristic associated with social capital.

Additionally, the SNAP program enlists pre-existing social capital connections in the community. Past collaborations with programs of other government entities such as the Department Of Neighborhoods Small Sparks neighborhood grant program is an example of SNAP utilizing, and it could be argued, strengthening already existing venues of community social capital connections.

Collaborating with the Pacific Asian Empowerment Program for seniors T conducted at the Filipino Community Center was another example of SNAP operating within an existing, established network of social connections. In this case, it worked in cooperation with an organization already familiar and active in the immigrant refugee community.

An important utility function of social capital for emergency preparedness is its role in disseminating information, what Dynes (2006) refers to as, “the role of informational potential as social capital” (Dynes, 2006, p.8). He suggests how these “social networks as informational potential” (Dynes, 2006, p.9) might serve to compel an individual to prepare for an emergency event:

Prior to impact, individuals may need to gather information for preventative action. Again, social networks provide the channels whereby individuals develop a perception of risk and are motivated to take some type of preventative action (Dynes, 2006, p.8).

The connections between members of the community provide the pathways for the information to spread across the network of community members about the necessity of preparing for an emergency based on the sense of the degree of risk received across the social network. Dynes (2006) discusses other impacts the community as messengers might have on the emergency preparedness message, the role other members in the community play in an individual’s hearing and responding to the message to prepare for an emergency:

Other people help you “hear”; not everyone watches the media all the time. Others help you understand and believe; people still talk to one another. Others help personalize the message, pointing out that the general message actually applies to the current situation, and then assist in discussing appropriate action (Dynes, 2006, p.8).

These connections between individuals in a community offer a powerful communications mechanism uniquely effective in ways unmatched by even the power of mass media. It personalizes the message in a way that allows the individual to truly hear the message from a trusted, familiar source. This highlights the functional role social capital connections provide for disseminating the message

of SNAP beyond what the OEM can do with a staff of three trying to educate a population of 600,000.

Community Resilience

The relevance of social capital in the context of emergency preparedness is for its impact on community resilience. Public Education Coordinator JoAnn Jordan acknowledged the linkage of these concepts in SNAP when she said, "...the philosophy of preparedness like SNAP is to build relationships [i.e. connections] in order to be more resilient following a disaster..." Norris et al. (2008) define resilience as "a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance" (Norris et al., 2008, p.130). A disturbance in an emergency preparedness context would be an emergency event. The authors identify social capital as one of four sets of resources supporting community resilience, the process enabling a community to effectively adapt to an emergency event.

Magis (2010) refers to these resources available to a community as "Community Capitals" (Magis, 2010, p.406). She explains how utilizing resources such as social capital in community efforts to achieve community goals acts as a multiplier effect on existing resources and produces other new resources. One consequence of this process is its impact on community resilience. "This investment of resources in the community creates an upward spiral of increasing community ability to respond effectively to change, that is, it creates community resilience" (Magis, 2010, p. 406).

Murphy (2007) explains, for emergency management practices to support community resilience they must be integrated into daily activities that also have roles in the social capital connections within the community:

Community emergency management that contributes to resilience can occur within both place-based and interest/kinship-based communities. It addresses all aspects of the hazard cycle and it involves a system of community networks typically considered to be part of civil society as well as day-to-day activities that increase the networking and ties among members and between groups (Murphy, 2007, p. 305).

Emergency management practices that involve already existing relationships in the community serve to further strengthen those connections between individuals and groups. The positive impacts on those connections result in increased social capital with a concurrent contribution to a community's resilience.

Bach et al. (2010) articulate the rationale for involving the everyday social structures and relations within a community with the intent on having a positive impact for emergency preparedness, particularly with community resilience.

Community resilience, by focusing on what works under normal conditions, and striving to strengthen those capacities, provides a common framework for local institutions and groups to participate in preparing and responding to a wide variety of risks. The strategic foundation of all hazards resilience, therefore, involves engagement with neighborhood associations, businesses, schools, faith-based community groups, trade groups, fraternal organizations, ethnic centers, and other civic-minded organizations that have routine, direct ties to local communities (Bach et al., 2010, p.8).

The concept of community resilience provides a framework that can be the focus of groups and institutions as they participate in emergency preparation and response.

The basis for developing community resilience would involve engaging and strengthening the connections and relationships of those already existing

individuals, groups and organizations that make up the community under normal, non-emergency conditions.

Murphy (2007) and Bach et al. (2010) suggest the incorporation of an emergency management ethos into the social entities and relationships of normal, everyday life as necessary to develop the resilience of a community to respond to a non-normal emergency event. This coincides with the sentiments Seattle OEM Director Barb Graff expressed when she shared her hopes that preparedness be internalized into the lives of citizens and not just remain an additional activity:

It really comes down to making disaster preparedness a way of life as opposed to a special event. And I think that so many things compete for people's very limited attention and resources... We have to do something else that makes it more like adopting a green philosophy, getting people to compost more and that kind of thing, taking actions necessary to live your life into a better way of being. We need to get to that in disaster preparedness as well.

Weak Ties

According to Magis (2010), "Three types of social capital are important for community resilience: *bonding*, *bridging*, and *linking*" (Magis, 2010, p. 407). The "bridging" function of social capital is particularly relevant for this case. It operates along the connections of "weak ties" between individuals or groups (vis a vis the bonding capital of strong ties between family members) that Granovetter (1973) identified in his seminal work describing the power and utility of such networks.

Magis (2010) lists a broad range of bridging functions weak ties provide. "These loose ties connect people that may otherwise not interact, exposing them to diversity, enhancing their ability to work with each other, expanding the resources available to them and broadening their identities" (Magis, p. 407).

Identifying these characteristics as they apply in the case of SNAP:

- The program brings together people in the community who might not otherwise have any reason to mingle or interact.
- It “enhances their ability to work with each other” by stressing the importance of neighbors depending on neighbors during and emergency event and encouraging planning before.
- It supplies a range of information resources to participants online and in classes.
- Participation in the program through SNAP presentations, the Leadership Academy supplementary program, or other specific skills classes develops a sense of identity based on a common, shared interest among participants that was expressed in the desire by some for further networking with other participants.

A contemporary example of weak ties is evident in the phenomenon of social media. Woodcock (2009) identifies the powers operating within social media when she states, “Social media decentralized networks represent the strength of weak ties” (Woodcock, p.26). She describes the characteristic advantages these loose associations provide for not only the wide breadth of information sources they provide but also the speed such connections disseminate information.

Seattle OEM’s lack of utilizing social media was identified as a weakness for limiting access to a potent resource for both informing constituencies and reaching out to groups who communicate and interact in ways beyond the realm of the more conventional communication methods (i.e. emailed newsletter) the OEM now

employs. Dynes (2006) warns against a restricted approach, particularly limiting in a community as diverse as Seattle with its range of various ethnic, social and cultural populations:

Certainly one of the key tasks of emergency managers is to understand the plurality of networks and how they might require different channels to convey important messages rather than assuming that a single media source will reach a mass audience and that all groups within the community will be part of that mass (Dynes, 2006, p.9)

This is particularly apparent in the OEM's struggle engaging young people whose primary source of information and communication are social media technologies and practices and not the traditional communication channels. Not implementing other methods of communication such as those employed for social media places restrictions on the OEM's ability to maximize the impact of their SNAP program across the various demographics of the citizenry of Seattle.

Appendix B: Methodology

The research approach I utilized in my descriptive case study evaluation of the Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepare (SNAP) program of the Seattle Office of Emergency Management (OEM) was qualitative. Individuals directly familiar with SNAP identified the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the program. This group of informants included program participants, program staff, and others who have had direct knowledge of the program through collaborations and other interactions. Identification of threats to the program, the final component of a conventional SWOT analysis, was not part of this study although I did identify budget cuts impacting the Department of Neighborhoods. The same threat exists for the OEM and the SNAP program with the current fiscal crisis faced by all cities. However, based on the evaluative nature of this study, I chose to focus on aspects of the program that could be impacted by program staff and not external threats that exist beyond their influence.

I was provided access to OEM staff and program participants through an internship with the Seattle OEM over ten weeks in the winter term of 2011 in conjunction with the Masters of Policy Studies program at the University of Washington, Bothell. As part of my internship, I conducted interviews of participants, staff and others familiar with the program that provided information for an evaluative report to the OEM on the SNAP program and also served as the primary data source for this descriptive case study evaluation.

Trustworthiness and Qualitative Validity

Of primary concern in conducting any research are the notions of trustworthiness and validity. Marshall & Rossman (2011) refer to the characteristic of robustness or strength of a qualitative study as “trustworthiness” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.39). One criterion for judging the goodness of a qualitative study is “qualitative validity” (Creswell, 2009, p.232) where the findings of a study are assessed for accuracy. Creswell (2009) suggests using a number of “validity strategies” (Creswell, 2009, p. 191) to assure qualitative validity. I utilized four of the eight strategies he offers to address the issue of validity for my study.

Creswell (2009) advises the researcher, “spend *prolonged time* in the field” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192) to develop a deep, clear understanding of what is being studied. I accomplished this through my ten-week internship with the Seattle Office of Emergency Management (OEM) this past winter. During my time with the OEM I accompanied staff to presentations, participated in administrative meetings, and most importantly engaged in personal conversations and interactions the individuals who implement the SNAP program I was studying. This enabled me to acquire a clear sense of how the department functioned on an operational level and allowed me to develop a familiarity and perspective of the staff who developed and present the SNAP program in presentations. That perspective proved useful when employed to confirm the accuracy of the information I obtained through interviews.

I utilized the aforementioned information and perspectives obtained through my experiences in the field, information obtained through participant and observation experiences, information from a review of the literature, and

information from other interviews for the purpose of *triangulation* to confirm accuracy of information obtained in each interviews.

I *present disconfirming evidence* throughout my study by presenting both the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Throughout my project I engaged in *reflexivity* by clearly identifying my previously held assumptions based on my personal and intellectual interests and experiences. I shared information I had obtained through past readings, lectures, conversations, and other sources with study participants to provide forthright transparency of my assumptions.

Finally, I also used *comparison* (Maxwell, 1996 as cited by Marshall& Rossman, 2010, p. 40) with other programs to confirm the accuracy/validity of the information I obtained from my data collection. I compared SNAP with the CERT program of the King County Emergency Management and the Map Your Neighborhood program from the State of Washington to assess conclusions I have reached about the SNAP program. For example, I discussed aspects of CERT and Map Your Neighborhood to illustrate the differing levels of time and commitment demands of the different emergency preparedness programs.

Data Gathering Methods

Interviews.

The primary method for gathering data was interviewing. In all I conducted twenty-four interviews resulting in over 250 pages of transcription. Interviews lasted between thirty minutes to fifty minutes in length. I recorded the interviews on a portable digital recorder in the field and then transferred the recordings to my

personal computer for transcription. Interviewees were selected for their familiarity with the SNAP program through direct involvement as a program participant, staff personnel or having associated with the program through direct collaboration.

Interviews with participants from SNAP programs were individuals who responded to a request via group email from a list of past participants provided by the Seattle OEM and were strictly voluntary and anonymous. They are referred to as “participant” in this report for privacy concerns. I conducted 15 interviews with SNAP program participants. The interviews were conducted primarily at neighborhood Seattle Public Library branches throughout the city at locations convenient to participants. One interview was conducted in a conference room at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) housing the Seattle OEM in downtown Seattle.

Seattle OEM staff interviewed were those individuals directly involved in the conducting of SNAP programs along with the Seattle OEM Director Barb Graff. All of these individuals were identified by name except for trainer (“T”) who requested anonymity and approved her alias. Interviews with 4 OEM staff were conducted in my office at the OEM that was provided as part of my internship with the Seattle OEM over Winter Quarter, 2011. I interviewed OEM Director Barb Graff in her office at the OEM facility.

All other interview participants were identified by actual names and consented to that prior to the interview. Interviews with 3 Seattle Department of Neighborhood staff were conducted at neighborhood service centers in the Ballard and Delridge communities. One interview was conducted at the Filipino Community

Center in Seattle with a translator of a program held there and a final interview was conducted in the office of the Pacific Asian Empowerment Program in Seattle.

Sample interview questions are included in Appendix 3 however I did not adhere strictly to the list of questions. Towards the end of the more structured interview process, I attempted to engage interview participants in a more conversational manner in an effort to put them at ease and elicit more frank responses.

Observations.

The second data gathering method I utilized was Observation. Information obtained from observations was not a primary source of data but was used triangulation purposes to assure trustworthiness of data obtained from interviews. I attended and observed a SNAP program at the Broadview Public Library, Seattle presented by Emergency Preparedness Training Specialist Debbie Goetz. I observed an after-school program for Latina girls at Northgate Elementary School, Seattle also facilitated by Goetz. Finally, I observed an emergency preparedness program for Southeast Asian immigrant refugee seniors at the Filipino Community Center, Seattle facilitated by Emergency Preparedness Training Specialist T.

Participant/Observations.

The third data gathering method I utilized was Participant/Observation. Data obtained through this method were utilized to support the trustworthiness of my interview data and was not a primary data source for identifying the strengths, weakness and opportunities of the SNAP program. I attended a SNAP presentation as a member of the public at the Capital Hill Library, Seattle. I also attended and

participated in the Leadership Academy, the three-night supplement to the SNAP program.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis method I utilized involved selecting quotes from interview transcriptions and collecting them under the evaluative themes of strength, weakness or opportunity. Categorizing the quoted words was based on the presence of value-laden descriptive words in reference to the SNAP program or a direct reference to the program that could reasonably be interpreted as suggesting a strength, weakness or opportunity.

Examples of words identified and categorized under the theme of strength were: good, comprehensive, thorough, great, super, empowering, motivating, valuable, excellent, engaging, nice, unique, strength, strong, healthy, important, successful, impressed. Quotes of descriptive statements using such words or explicit positive descriptions or references to the SNAP program or personnel were collected under the category of strength.

Examples of words identified and categorized under the theme of weakness were: lack, barrier, downside, weakness, don't, under-, waste, burden, haven't, disadvantage, gap, struggling, difficult, hard, not, scary, improve. Quotes of descriptive statements using these words or explicit critical references or descriptions regarding SNAP or program personnel were collected under the category of weakness.

Categorizing quotes under the theme of opportunities involved further interpretation and context. Information categorized as opportunities were

synonymous with suggestions. Quotes in this category contained a temporal orientation for the future, not referencing current conditions, as they existed. The words and language implied a more normative context than those categorized in the other themes. Examples of words associated with the theme of opportunity were: might, yet, would, could, looking forward, should.

A final theme coding labeled "Social Capital" contained quotes or descriptions of practices or characteristics associated with that particular theoretical concept.

After categorizing quotes under the main themes, I further coded them according to the topic they referenced. Examples of topic codes were: staff, collaborations, program, volunteers, communities.

Appendix C: Sample Questions (Participants)

- 1) What was your experience with emergency preparedness before SNAP?
- 2) What brought you to SNAP, how did you hear about the program?
- 3) How was your experience?
- 4) Do you feel you benefited from SNAP? Explain? Give examples.
 - What didn't work for you?
- 5) What did you learn from SNAP? What specifically? Skills? Facts?
- 6) Have you shared what you learned in SNAP with anybody else? With whom? How have you shared?
- 7) How involved are you with your neighbors?
- 8) What clubs, social or service groups, volunteer organizations, informal social activities do you participate in?
- 9) What kinds of social network media do you read or participate in?
- 10) Do you do plan to do anything different because of SNAP?
- 11) Do you feel more confident about responding to an emergency situation?
 - How, explain?
 - Did you learn that from SNAP?
- 12) Do you plan on taking any more classes on preparedness?
- 13) What did you think of the program?
- 14) Do you have any suggestions to make to make the program more effective?

Appendix D: Sample Questions (Staff)

- 1) What is the mission of SNAP? What is the level of focus (i.e. household, neighborhood, community)?
- 2) Is the goal to organize neighborhoods or is the goal of SNAP to inform?
- 3) How many SNAP groups? How many people trained?
- 4) What are some of the goals you hope to accomplish through SNAP?
- 5) How do you measure success in the program; what metrics do you use?
- 6) Can you identify organizations or other departments you are collaborating with to promote the program?
- 7) What areas do you see where you could expand or increase collaboration?
- 8) Do you feel you are fully utilizing these opportunities to their fullest potential?
How might that be better realized?
- 9) Is there a mechanism allowing for participants in the program to volunteer to share their knowledge and expertise with other participants (i.e. train the trainer)?
Is there a mechanism that allows for further collaboration between participants outside of the program?
- 10) Explain how you identify groups or populations in the community for your program?
- 11) What role does social media play in getting your message out? (i.e. blogs, tweets, email, etc.)
- 12) What efforts are being made to reach out to vulnerable populations like kids, elderly, minorities etc.?

13) Can you identify SNAP's role in the schools, private or public?

15) What is your vision for SNAP? Where do you see SNAP in five years?

16) You spoke of your wish to learn whether the assumptions you have about SNAP are correct. Can you identify or give some examples of those assumptions?

17) Do you feel SNAP helps develop "community"? How?

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