

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS STATEWIDE: COLORADO

James DeMoss, BS, BA
DVM Class of 2024

Ragan Adams, MA, DVM, Veterinary Specialist, CSU Extension, CVMBS
Tiana Kennedy, Associate Vice Chancellor, External Relations CSU System
Edith Silvas, DEI Coordinator, One Health Institute

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Emergency Preparedness is becoming a critical part of everyday life for many in Colorado. Counties throughout the state, regardless of size or location, are vulnerable to disruptions from multiple types of hazards. Community Resiliency grows when both preparedness plans are developed by the individuals and organizations as well as partnership are made between all sectors of the community (individuals, families, non-profits, religious, educational, business, government).

The goal of this project is to provide emergency preparedness materials to two communities surrounding the CSU Spur Campus: Elyria-Swansea and Globeville. These two neighborhoods are among the oldest and most diverse in Denver County. They are also isolated from the heart of the city by the South Platte River and major transportation corridors. Once agricultural land and then industrial sites, they will be soon be neighbors with the newly renovated National Western Complex. We hope to enhance the relationship between the CSU Spur campus and the neighborhoods by sharing efforts to make the neighborhood and CSU Spur resilient neighbors in a challenging location.

The materials that will be distributed are designed to create a One Health perspective of Emergency Preparedness. This means that the tools, necessary supplies, and knowledge to cope with unexpected disruptions for both humans and animals will be addressed. These materials are in both English and Spanish, as a large population of both communities are Spanish speakers.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

To build better understanding of community readiness in disaster situations.

To disseminate materials on emergency preparedness.

To continue building trust with communities surrounding the CSU Spur Campus.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

As a veterinary student, One Health is a unique way of approaching projects and problems. Being able to apply this concept to Emergency Preparedness means advocating on the animals' behalf and illustrating to community members the need for animal preparedness in all situations.

WHAT YOU DID

1) The internship began with necessary FEMA training on Emergency Management and the role it plays in disaster situations.

2) The Spur project began with community engagement and social research on these communities, which is a community driven model of research. I would travel to the communities of Elyria-Swansea and Globeville on a regular basis to do observations of community interactions, and engagement of emergency services. From this I was able to make connections with local community organizations and other groups that are eager to disseminate the emergency preparedness materials.

I then began examining materials I would like to use, deciding on Listos California open resource materials as my basis. Next, I began to alter the materials to make them Colorado friendly, by using the human materials as a template for animal readiness materials. During this process, I used my Spanish translation skills, and communicated with different organizations to confirm that my choice of language was appropriate for the given audiences and messages.

3) Participation in a week-long animal shelter exercise, Operation Border Health, run by TAMU and their Veterinary Emergency Team in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas: It functioned as a One Health mission providing veterinary services alongside the Department of Human and Health Services. The exercise provided insight into what disaster deployments, animal temporary sheltering, and the necessary skills look like for veterinarians working in Emergency Management.



Figure 1. (Elyria-Swansea, Left; CSU Spur, Middle; Globeville, Right)

WHAT YOU LEARNED

Community Research

This is my second research project that has used this method of understanding the needs of a particular community. I feel it has been very appropriate and has allowed me to form relationships where trust can be established.

Community Emergency Readiness

This was my first true experience with seeing how different communities may or may not be aware of emergencies that can affect them. In an urban environment, they are very different than the emergencies and disasters seen in other geographic regions.

Importance of Human to Human Interaction and Communication

Through this project, I learned that in person, human to human interaction cannot be beaten in terms of creating relationships and forming projects that are sustainable. I was able to see impacts of word of mouth, and how this form of communication and trust, has great power in allowing a project to succeed.

Figure 2. (TAMU Veterinary Emergency Team)



NEXT STEPS

I am lucky to have the opportunity to continue working on this project with Dr. Ragan Adams, and to be able to distribute these materials at different events in Elyria-Swansea and Globeville, in conjunction with the CSU Spur Campus Dumb Friends' League Veterinary Hospital.