

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Being Prepared!

Centreville, MI. *Be prepared.* It is perhaps one of the country's best-known mottoes. Now, this famous Boy Scouts motto rings true for the nearly 150 boy scouts who participated in the Emergency Preparedness Merit Badge Day held at the St. Joseph Fairgrounds in Centreville, Michigan this weekend (April 21st). Working with staff from the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, St. Joseph Emergency Management, Centreville and Sturgis Fire Departments and Life Care Ambulance Unit, scouts learned the following:

- How to inspect their home for potential hazards;
- How to develop a plan for their family in case of a house fire;
- How to safely save a person from different emergency situations; as well as how to prepare, respond, recover and mitigate 10 emergency situations.

In addition, scouts participated in a medication dispensing exercise with the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency. The purpose of this exercise was to test the local health department capabilities to quickly organize and train volunteers and dispense medications to the mass population. According to Steve Todd, Health Officer for the tri-county health department "It's important that the staff and the community alike have hands on practice experience when learning how to plan for these types of events. It helps us better understand the logistics and transportation problems we could encounter, as well as improve our overall communication processes and educational materials."

James Cook, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the health department, Assistant Scout Master for Troop 433 and organizer of the event concurred. "This event

was an outstanding partnership. By earning this merit badge, these scouts have learned what actions can be helpful and needed before, during, and after an emergency. We not only have tested our own response systems, but trained a cadre of future volunteers. And in the end, it's about being prepared, which is the scout motto. After all, helping the community is at the heart of scouting.”

To learn more about how you can be prepared in the case of an emergency event, please visit the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency’s website at www.bhsj.org and click on the Emergency Preparedness button. There you will find helpful links to assist you for a disaster at home, at work on in your community. Remember, being prepared is more than a motto – it’s a way of life.

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