



FEMA
Office of Disability
Integration
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Getting Real II
Promising Practices in Inclusive
Emergency Management for the Whole Community

TRANSCRIPT FROM EVENT: Getting Real II

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Section: Being Prepared: MN Emergency Preparedness Center:
The Lessons Learned Through North Minneapolis May 22nd
Tornado (Kenney)

>> Good morning. It's a pleasure to present this morning. My name is Julie Kenney. I'm the Executive Director of IPSII Inc. Next to me is Fatima Massequoi. Fatima is a member of the IPSII board of directors, a staff person of our projects, and helps me get around at the conference. Together we're going to talk about our being prepared Minnesota's Emergency Preparedness Center. It's funded by the U.S. Department of-- can you hear me--Health and Human Services Administration on Departmental Disabilities. So what do you think of Minnesota--Minneapolis, Minnesota? I see someone over there from Minnesota. Usually you think of Fargo or maybe new in town and I got to tell you the weather is right for new in town, you saw that one. The Minnesota Vikings and weather. Our winters are very cold and dry while our summers are hot and humid. Minneapolis has the full range of participation and related weather events including snow, sleet, ice, rain, thunderstorms, tornados, heat waves, and fog. The warmest Minneapolis temperature was 108 in July of 1936; The coldest minus 40 below in January of 1888. January and February are bitterly cold. So cold your skin can freeze in five minute if it's not protected. Our average temperature is 45 degrees and we are the coldest major metropolitan area in the continental U.S. Last year, we were at this conference as representatives of Minnesota. My sister, MiMi, and I were delegates. And I brought up the needs of urban poor neighborhoods in Minneapolis. North Minneapolis. What if a major event happened in a poor neighborhood? What would happen if people with access and functional needs who are afraid to leave their homes due to the realistic fear that when they came back their possessions would be gone? I was told at the conference, don't worry about that. That's a public safety issue. And I said, well that's--let's be real; that's our community. And there was a myth that there was no--there's no way that a tornado would ever hit an urban area. And when you think about that, if you think about, it's kind of a, you know, I talked to some folks and one of the things they were talking about was it's due to geography. You know, there's just a lot of rural communities. I grew up in Morris, Minnesota, which is, you know, a small rural community and they were a lot of tornados that whipped through there. Or if you think about it, it really doesn't make any sense. You should plan. So what happens if much a small tornado, an F1 on a scale of 1 to 5 with winds up to 112 miles and hour, a tornado like one that's pictured here in our slide. And what--here what happened on Sunday, May 22nd is a story of serving the whole community of North Minneapolis. The next slide. I'm known for doing this. Yay. Okay. IPSII Inc. Is a 501C3 organization founded in 2002. Our board of directors is comprised of people with disabilities and their families. Our mission is to increase independence, productivity, self-determination, integration,



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and inclusion for people with disabilities and their families. We're a small community-based organization founded by a group of partners who also graduated from the Minnesota Partners and Policy Making program. The program is funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities; the same program that is funding our program--our grant that we have for emergency preparedness. We met during the 1990's when the Governor Carlson proposed to divert dedicated funding to children with complex needs to children who are at risk of failing, failing Minnesota newly proposed grad standards. We organized ten-thousand families, they hadn't made a deal with us. And we organized, went to the capital, and at a legislative hearing or from the Department of Education stated there are no children with complex needs with the State of Minnesota, just like Lake Wobegon with Garrison Keillor. You know, every one is above average. We had our kids going up and down the halls in wheelchairs and they're going, well, I just see all these kids all over. So based on that--based on that activity in a result of the organization, I was offered a fellowship to go to Harvard. Now, this is a new thing for us. We come from a family that no one goes to Harvard. You know, this doesn't--this doesn't happen. But the real challenge was moving to Massachusetts. I have a son that complex needs who, as a result of a progressive seizure disorder, talked at one year and walked--talked at six months--walked at six months and talked at a year, and he progressed into a child who was rated the most difficult child to serve in the State of Minnesota. Had extremely challenging behavior and we had never spent more than 20 minutes in the car together. But I really wanted Joseph to have a college experience. So here is this fellowship and I was awarded the fellowship so we got in the car. I told my husband, we're on a train; we're just going down the tracks. We're not going to leave. And we went to--we went to Kennedy School, came back, and wanted to change the world. The whole purpose of our life is to make things better for people with disabilities; serve the whole community. And that--at that--at the Kennedy School they let me hop and skip and a jump over getting a bachelor degree, getting a masters degree. And I need those little initials as after my name to get federal grants. Am I doing it right? Here we go. So once again we are very fortunate. We started up our non-profit, first start up. As you know it's really difficult to do. We were awarded two grants, federal grants, once again by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities to fund a youth center in North Minneapolis. We had partnered with the Minnesota Governor's Counsel on Developmental Disabilities. We worked with faith-based organizations in a community that was really devastated by crime, poverty, and the foreclosure. We did leadership training and committee organizing, and we were a great success. We met with policy makers at the Minnesota capital and after six years of our youth center we said what are we going to do? Funding's out, right? So then there was this--then there was this RFP that was put out--do you want to do emergency training? Well, they know about emergencies because they live in the community. They know about shooting and guns and everything like that. So we said yes, let's go for it. So we were awarded--we were awarded the [inaudible]. So what we idea is we took our 60 families at youth centers that had gone through our training program and they became our Emergency Preparedness Center. So when you look at Minnesota this is what you think of. You think of the beautiful skyline. You think of the rivers. You think of just a gorgeous place.

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This is our--this is our people working in North Minneapolis, walking down Broadway doing get out the vote efforts. We usually have to stop--stop all of our activity at three o'clock because there's too much crime. Much, much different environment than other neighborhoods in Minnesota. And here we go. Hit by foreclosures. Ever single dot there shows a family that has been lost, lost their home, lost their faith, lost whatever they had. And for FEMA what it also means is there's no money. There's no money there. Every house there is worth no money. Zero dollars. So here's our being prepared Emergency Preparedness Center. This is one of our young people. Her name is Jennifer. And we have--so our program is funded through the--through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. And we have 60 families. And the best thing that we're doing is we're working with first responder groups. If you can imagine it's very difficult for a small non-profit to work with first responder groups. But we live next door to Beth, who's a cop next door, and she has a brother with autism and so we've been able to liaison with her and then we've been able to work with the City of Minneapolis, and they have a very strong presence for a community member recruiting and they have all kinds of things that they do for us. And then here we go. Is it Regina?

>> Yeah. We do have cards to give out for tips on autism. And we train first responders to work with people disabilities, especially kids with autism. And we've done five first responders this year, to teach them and then they can teach their groups how to work with--because most of them when they go and see a kid with autism they assume that they're being combative or they're fighting, really, they don't like to be touched. And so we're training them cause they don't get that training in Minnesota. They just think that, you know, if they're having a behavior, then they should be in cuffs. But we're teaching them what they should do, how to speak to them, how to respond to them, and it's getting better. So I'll share these.

>> Yep. And you can pass--Fatima's going to pass them out. Just like with Hawaii--I hope you saw their wonderful presentation. We do the Feeling Safe, Being Safe, my personal safety plan; this is funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the State of California. Like Hawaii, we had to adapt it to make it functional for people with disabilities in Minnesota. We also use the--the magnet that goes on to the--onto the refrigerator so that it's available. They know what their name is, their [inaudible], the important things they use, what's in their Go Kit, and 911, and their neighbors and family members are attached to it. The other thing that we did that was unique to our program and found out that we need is--so let me tell you a little bit about our people. They're a little bit different than other people is that I've heard about. Our people are--have developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities. From a policy point of view they're exempt from minimum wage. Think about that. They're also changes in medically necessary services. So people with developmental disabilities will only get to have



services to stay the same. Whereas people without developmental disabilities can get services to get better. And they also are exempt from sentences in some institutional settings. So we're talking about people that are living in a poor neighborhood who are also exempt from several of the federal funding programs. Then how do we make it work? We make it work through adapting materials that are functional so that people, whoever, wherever they are, can participate fully. This is one of the products that we developed. It's on the fund drive and I think that we're going to give away this copy to anyone that asks questions later. And this shows my son, Joseph, and it says--it talks about his preferences. So each person with a disability has their own preferences.

>> Next slide. Where did I put it? There it is. Now, there's Vishai [phonetic]. We should say a little about Vishai. He's one of our 60 graduates. He's had [inaudible]--does anyone now about [inaudible]? Okay. And he's nonverbal but he fully participated in our three day training and he's having a great time as you can see there. Here's our first day of training. As you can see we're a very diverse group. We have a lot of fun. We have a large staff. This was at a church in North Minneapolis. And this was the day before the Minnesota training--before the Minnesota--North Minneapolis tornado. We spent that day talking about the emergency preparedness plan and they really worked on it. We talked about tornados but our function that we worked on that our advisory committee had chosen was H1N1 because when they came out with the RFP they chose this one because they were afraid of influenza and H1N1. So we did an informational book on this. And then of course, snow and cold weather. This is all available on the fund drive. And take a look at it if you get a chance. So our first training was held Saturday, the 4th, and then lo and behold Sunday came. So has anyone been in a tornado? Anybody? Okay. Do you want a pen? Here we go. What was it like?

>> Very scary.

>> Where we were in--when we presented in Hawaii it was so interesting because they talked about tsunamis and you go up with tsunamis and there's no wind so when we're were presenting in Hawaii that was so interesting. So there's a lot of wind. There's a lot of rain. It's comes fast. You have very little, little--not very prepared and it's very scary. So on Sunday, May 22nd, we were hit with an F1 tornado. We had winds of 112 miles and hour. Just 200 people or so were displaced from the storm. So it's really small compared to the other stories I've heard today and yesterday. But we had a curfew of three day curfew imposed to help emergency workers move around and prevent looting of damaged homes and businesses. I think is it one person that died?

>> Yes. One person.

>> One person died and three people were taken to hospitals. So here's a path of the tornado and here are the zones that they have for the checkpoints and going to the community. On Sunday afternoon I got a call from my friend, Bonnie Jean. She has four children, three of whom have autism, and she was in the path of the tornado. We couldn't get to her. She didn't have any power. They had live wires in the house. They had gas mains that was broken and her children were afraid to leave because they were afraid of the crime and something happening. So the next day my sister, MiMi, came by and she--I shouldn't tell you this but she kind of skipped over the barricades and brought her a Go Kit and some water and things because they were not prepared. Five minutes after the power went out, looting started. This liquor store was emptied in five minutes. This is the owner of the liquor store and he's just beyond himself. You know, there's very few businesses--remember the, remember the slide about the foreclosures--very few businesses and very few homes that weren't under or going through foreclosure and he just didn't know what to do. Destruction of homes was unbelievable. And vehicles. This is a before and after for a block. And so does anyone work or live in a poor community? Okay. So then you know what we're talking about. So when people lose their cars, they don't know what to do. So it was the end of the month so their checks will not come for another couple of weeks. So the lessons learned, we learned is that North Minneapolis citizens who were already stressed by lack of housing, jobs, crime, required more support than we thought. Much more support than we thought. Low property values and rental properties impacted housing. Crime impacted response, recovery, mitigation efforts. Northern Power Company was telling me that they were really concerned that they had people out trying to repair the overlying power lines without a police presence. It was very, very dangerous. So the challenge of urban families with access and functional needs chose to stay in their homes. Even though their yards were littered with live wired, [inaudible] gas leaks, and no power or water. Promising practice would be to urban community members included in local state and national preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs. One of the things I suggested to Minnesota was something that Washington D.C. has. On every drivers' license they have a place that you can put the donor and do you want to volunteer in an emergency. That would mean a lot for us. That would mean that people could sign up and they would know who to call in emergencies. One of the things that the--that the neighborhoods really didn't like was to have people come from the suburban areas, bussed in, and helping out. They really wanted people from their own neighborhoods to come in, people like them, helping doing it together. The challenge of urban communities who have access and functional needs, citizens who are nonreaders, new immigrants and others with reading challenges must have emergency preparedness programs in a way that they can understand. This is--we consider this an ADA issue.



That if you have something that's--if you have materials that is not available for nonreaders or easily translated for people in stress how are people going to be--how are people going to be safe? So that's one of the things that we've done with our small non-profit. I have a son who's a nonreader but he's very, very smart. If you show him something like this, he can follow it. Do you want to talk about--do you want to talk about the other people that we have? This is Fatima.

>> Well, what we did--we did a lot of things that were icon based and we made sure that everybody could understand because North Minneapolis really is a poor neighborhood. A lot children skip school. They don't finish school, drop out of school and so. And the population we served some of them have difficulties with reading, reading disabilities, and learning disabilities. So we did a lot of--if you go through the scenes that I was sharing yesterday you'll see preparedness plan. And a lot of them is icon based where you can tell what it means without having to be able to read. So with that folks are able to have a plan. And our trainings, the 60 families that we trained, we gave them backpacks filled with everything that they needed. We gave them the training; not just the training but the supplies they needed to make sure that everything was in place. And we stated that your back pack should stay by the door, you know--if they're people in a house who will pick up stuff, the [inaudible] know where to put things so that the children who are, you know, who have a problem will not take it and throw it away. So we made sure that everything they needed they got, especially information. Education is key. They know what to do. We do role playing. If there's an emergency, what to do. So that's the people we serve. People with disabilities and their families.

>> Yes. We also transport--oh five minutes. We also transport everybody. We provide stipends for them--\$50 stipends--and we feed everybody. We found out that you're really not welcoming people unless you get them there and feed them and get them home. So here's some pictures. I'm just going to go quickly through. I'm so glad I'm almost done. Okay. Here we go. Promising practice, being prepared through out emergency preparedness plan that they--that everyone should have one of these and develop their own plans because if you don't develop your own plans you're not going to be compliant with implementing them and you're not really going to be part of the Emergency Preparedness Team. Replication, the State of Georgia's told me that they're using this in the deinstitutionalizing of people with disabilities. I know that other people in the conference have used it. Anyone can use it. On our CD's it's free. Just tell me that you've used it and I'll report it to my federal officers. Okay.

>> Where do I get the cd?

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>> Well, I had 200. We have four here but if you ask a question you can get one.

>> I just did. [Laughter]

>> There you go. Give her one. Okay. Okay. I know. And here's our--we're one of five centers. I'm hoping that you had a great time listening to University of Hawaii. I had a great time in New Jersey today. So questions. Hey. And there's my family. There's Joseph and my husband and me with my short hair. Any questions? Yeah.

>> Have you--there's a document that's called Tips for First Responders.

>> Yes.

>> Have you--what are your views on that particular issue or the book and that kind of thing for the first responders to have?

>> We have a video that we have, that we've gotten to disseminate just to our cop, our cop, Beth, where it shows a twenty minute of first responders who are also parents of kids with autism. They have a cop and a firefighter talking about doing a positive behavioral interventions with firefighters. And so we have the cop present that. I don't really--I guess the cops [inaudible] so hey. But I think that we have to have--we formed it just for people in Minnesota. It was a faced--we took everything that we wanted. I showed it to the cop and said what do you think will work? And she picked out what she thought would work with her folks. So that's the best example. The other part I should tell you that we had some problems getting access because we're a small non-profit but we went to the UASI conference. I suggest that everyone go if you can. And we went there and we saw Marcy speak, Marcy [inaudible], and my sister, MiMi, and I went. We had our little pink hoodies on with our little stuff. We didn't look like the cops there but you know what? They started to listen to people with disabilities. I think it was really

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important. And next year they've invited me to speak. So, you know, you make some progress. UASI is Homeland Security for urban centers. Any other questions? You get either a flower or any CD's left?

>> I have a question. With, with the widespread looting that happened immediately after the disaster, how did that effect the way first responders response to the situation? Did--were--I mean, were they, were the firefighters, EMS responding, police officers trying to control the situation? How did that dynamic occur?

>> Well, we had a lot of at the beginning right away. But then what happened is everybody left. We had 5000 people that were getting services through Hennepin County, Child Protective Services, Disability Services, who left. And actually the crime left too, but unfortunately, it's come back now and there's been more shootings than ever. And so we're having a major fair with them and our 60 graduates. And usually we close at three o'clock, we're doing one o'clock now because there's just too much shooting. It's a wonderful neighborhood. That's the part I wanted to say is that they've embraced us. We really have a great time. It's just a work in progress and it's--what I'm trying to say is that every neighborhood, every community, the whole community is worthwhile, and don't count out the poor people in the community. Anything else? I'm done? Yay. Thank you so much. [Applause]