



## Charleston County News Release

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*See photo of graduation:*

<http://www.charlestoncounty.org/NewsImages/TeenCERT.htm>

### **Charleston County Graduates First Teen CERT Class**

*Students spent 10 weeks learning how to serve their community in a disaster*

[Charleston County Government](#) announces that the Charleston County Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) pilot program class graduated on Thursday, Dec. 18.

Sponsored by Charleston County Emergency Preparedness Division, the pilot program took six West Ashley Middle School eighth grade students through 10 weeks of training. The students were part of the first teen CERT class to be conducted in the Tri-county area.

The goal of Teen CERT is to better prepare the community at an earlier age and offer positive extracurricular activities to the youth of Charleston County. The students in the pilot program learned how to identify the types of disasters and hazards most likely to affect their homes, schools and communities.

Based on the success of the pilot program, County staff plans to continue the course for teenagers in 2009.

The local program is based on the FEMA CERT national curriculum, where young adults ages 13-18 are trained to assist in the event of an emergency or natural disaster, and to be prepared to assist their families and emergency services.

CERT is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security program that trains volunteer citizens across the nation to be first responders in their neighborhoods and to assist emergency agencies in the event of man-made or natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, fires and terrorist attacks.

Including the adult graduates of the course, there are currently 450 CERT members in the Tri-county area. In the CERT training, citizens learn to:

- Manage utilities and put out small fires
- Treat the three medical killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding and treating for shock
- Provide basic medical aid
- Search for and rescue victims safely
- Organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective
- Collect disaster intelligence to support official first responders

Training in the Tri-county area is provided by the [Charleston County Emergency Preparedness Division](#). Training is free and is available for citizens 18 years and older. [Lowcountry CERT](#) is a non-profit organization that raises funds to equip, train and sustain teams in the Tri-county area.

For more information or to learn more about Lowcountry CERT and how to become a member, visit [www.lcert.org](http://www.lcert.org), call (843) 202-7405 or e-mail Jim Tarter at [jtarter@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:jtarter@charlestoncounty.org).