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Make Your Neighborhood Safe Moraga Night Out is Sept. 22

By Sophie Braccini

2013 Moraga Night Out**September 22, 2013**

Image provided

close." He adds that, in his professional opinion, a large part of emergency preparedness is about creating relationships and knowing what to do when something out of the ordinary happens. "Knowing your neighbors and the capabilities of local police and firefighters will help us all get through the next big disaster," says Rein, who just returned from the Rim Fire scene in Yosemite.

Neighborhoods are organizing a variety of get-togethers, ranging from a barbecue at the neighborhood pool to an ice cream social. The Moraga Chamber of Commerce invites residents to come to the Rheem Center and get to know their neighbors and the business community. Police and fire representatives will be on hand to answer questions. The Rheem event is from 4 to 6 p.m. and involves the art gallery as well as the restaurants.

"I thought it was a good idea," says Gordon Nathan, who lives on Carr Drive and has been talking to his neighbors about emergency preparedness for years. "It is important that we think about keeping safe, and having neighbors get together to talk about it is a great idea." In his neighborhood, Nathan has invited people in 47 homes to come to his house for a potluck dinner, and there will be games for the kids.

Moraga police lieutenant Jeff Price is in charge of organizing the visits of his officers to neighborhoods. "It is important for us that people be on the lookout and know their neighbors," he says. On Sept. 22, officers will visit the neighborhoods having a Night Out event and will share information about current crime trends and how to make homes less attractive to would-be criminals.

'Neighborhood' in Moraga is a loosely defined concept. "There are really no boundaries to a neighborhood. What's important is getting people together," says Rein. There is still time to invite your neighbors and register your block party with the town - just send an email to nightout@moraga.ca.us to schedule visits from elected officials, police, and fire representatives.

The devastating fire in the Sierras and the perception of an increase in the number of home and car burglaries closer to home have Moraga residents asking questions about their safety. The town's first Moraga Night Out on Sept. 22 is a perfect opportunity to get answers. Think of it as a block party with special guests - police and fire safety professionals, who will come to share information.

The event is a project of the Moraga Citizens Corps Council. In Orinda, the annual event is well established and many neighborhoods are in the habit of getting together every year. In Moraga, three neighborhoods have signed up so far, in the Sanders Drive/Carr Drive area and Campolindo. In addition, restaurants at the Rheem Center will feature "Family Specials." Most of the events will be held from 4 to 6 p.m.

"The traditional National Night Out has a crime prevention focus," says Dennis Rein, safety coordinator for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. "Ours will be broader based and include crime prevention, emergency preparedness, fire safety and an opportunity to meet our local political leaders, police and firefighters, and see emergency vehicles up

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