

Community Forum II at Grace Covenant Church

Grace Covenant Church's second Community Forum was held on Sunday, February 24, 2008, at 4:00 p.m. with Warren and Diane Edwards leading the session.

Warren Edwards, a retired Major General of the United States Army, is the Director of the Southeast Region Research Initiative (SERRI), a ground breaking program managed by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory for the Department of Homeland Security. He spoke on the Community and Regional Resilience Initiative (CARRI)—a regional program with national implications for how communities and regions prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and man-made disasters.



According to Mr. Edwards, “A resilient community anticipates problems, opportunities and the potential for surprise. It reduces vulnerabilities to development paths, socio-economic conditions and identified threats. It responds effectively, fairly and legitimately. It recovers rapidly, safely and fairly. In addition to the key disaster management services that local governments provide, a resilient community recognizes that private sector and non-governmental organizations are critical components of the fabric of a community and play significant roles in community and regional disaster resilience. CARRI processes will integrate the full resource base of a community into planning, response, and recovery so that the community can get back on its feet as quickly as possible.”

Diane Edwards, who holds a Masters in Public Administration from the University of South Carolina, has served as a Core Instructor and Program Development specialist with the Army Family Team Building Program in Washington DC, a Director of Volunteers, Station Manager and Assistant Station Manager with the American Red Cross, a Director of Financial Education & Consumer Affairs with Army Community Service in Korea and as Executive Director, Gage County (Nebraska) YWCA. She spent 33 years as an Army wife.

Ms. Edwards spoke of her current work with the Army's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC) and its efforts to educate, train and support resilient family members—a task particularly significant as families experience the seventh year of soldiers being deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. According to Ms. Edwards, “The increased cycle of deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan means that soldiers are missing more birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and the everyday events of family life. The new normal is putting increased responsibility and stress on family members ‘back at home.’” FMWRC efforts are particularly significant in this time of increased stress.

Warren and Diane are valued members of the Grace Covenant congregation.

