

90% - 95% of all people rescued in a disaster are rescued by a neighbor





Helping hands push trouble out of way

■ As rivers rise and hills slide to upend people's lives, neighbors all over the city rush to each other's rescue

By **NORM MAVES JR.,**
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of *The Oregonian* staff

More than 6 inches of rain in less than four days turned Portland's West Hills into Mudslide Central.

And down on the banks of the Willamette River, workers at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry fought to keep floodwaters out the heart of the museum's electric system.

In other words, things looked bad Thursday. But that didn't scare Portlander Judy Thomas. Like a lot of others, she saw a need, so she climbed in her truck and found a way to help. That was the way a lot of city residents handled things. As the river rose, they tried to rise above it.

Lending a hand

Thomas, who lives in Southwest Portland, was among those who found her way to the city's inner east side warehouse district.

There, she joined a swarm of hopeful heroes at a pile of sand. Their goal: Try to save businesses in the warehouse district on the east side of the Willamette River by filling sandbags.

Thomas lives near Portland Community College. She has water in her basement. But that was too tame for her. So she went cruising for action.

"I just got up this morning," she said, "and decided I had to do something. I couldn't help myself."

So she and the others dug into the sand, and shoveled it into white woven plastic bags. All afternoon, nearby businesses rolled trucks up to the site and picked up the sand-

bags almost as fast as they were filled.

Getting organized

Some of the volunteer help was a little more organized. Like the Neighborhood Emergency Team, which knew Wednesday night it would be in action early Thursday morning.

The NET is an all-volunteer force, made up of people who have real jobs and real lives but are always on call for trouble.

Thursday's mission was to walk through the central eastside business area passing out orange flyers with an official city flood advisory. As if the businesses needed to know — most of them were already taking stock out of their basements and moving it to higher floors. But the NETworkers weren't taking any chances.

Thomas Slavin was one of them. Normally, he drives a school bus for Portland Public Schools.

"I don't have anything to do between now and this afternoon. So here I am," he said.

But no group of volunteers could do much to stop nature's attack on the West Hills.

On Southwest Broadway Drive, a collapsing hillside tore a seven-unit apartment building off its foundation while another slide swept away a porch, and buried prime vineyards and olive and plum trees under muddy debris.

"There's just a massive amount of water pouring down these hills," said homeowner Deborah Coleman as she mourned the demise of her once-terraced orchard along Southwest Broadway Drive.

The water was loosening the glue that binds the silty loess soil to the basalt rocks of the hills, said Scott Burns, a professor of geology at Portland State University who drove the area.

Burns said mudslides have been

eating away at the hills for several days, and will continue for days after the rains end. From Monday through 4 p.m. Thursday, 6.64 inches of rain fell in Portland. In an average February, the city gets only 3.9 inches.

"It's terrible," said Randy Johnson, public works manager for the street repair section of the Portland Bureau of Maintenance. "It's absolutely terrible. We can't get the streets open as fast as (mudslides) are coming down right now."

Johnson said his crews punched through mud dams on Northwest Cornell Road three times Thursday.

By Thursday afternoon, the city's Bureau of Buildings had received 10 reports of properties affected by mudslides. Street repair workers, meanwhile, collected reports of about 80 mudslides during the day — on top of 56 reported Wednesday.

Trying to hold on

Back down along the Willamette, where OMSI has been in a fight for its financial health for months, the battle now turned to the river.

OMSI staffers, some of whom had been working around the clock, had been scurrying to get enough pumps to drain the rising river water out of the multiple basements of Turbine Hall, a wing of the museum that is an old PGE powerplant.

Those basements house the heart of the museum's electric system, and if the water gets into it, the museum shuts down for at least a month. Probably more.

On Wednesday, crews thought they had the situation under control with seven pumps. But by 3 or 4 a.m. Thursday, said Rod McDowell, the vice president for facility services, "we had to call somebody."

More and more pumps were added and by late Thursday, officials believed they were winning the battle. But if they don't, and if the electrical system is damaged, the museum



JAMES REXROAD/for *The Oregonian*

Kevin Clack, who works at Wholesale 4 along Southeast Grand Avenue, reads a flier from Jackle Sequin of the Neighborhood Emergency Team.

will have to shut down. President Ed Gibson said for at least a month. McDowell said it might be four or five.

Insurance? OMSI has it, against disaster damage and against loss of revenue. But there is a catch: The policy has a \$500,000 deductible, and OMSI might have a hard time getting that kind of cash.

Homeless again

Others were facing a different kind of cash-flow problem. Many of those who use the city's homeless shelters prepared for the possibility of having to relocate.

In the Portland Rescue Mission, 111 W. Burnside St., employees were ready to move residents to the second-floor chapel and dining room overnight, said supervisor Ken White.

And The Salvation Army arranged to move program residents from the Harbor Light, 134 W. Burnside St., to other facilities on higher ground, said Maj. Neal Hogan.

For the homeless who showed up Thursday night, Hogan said, the Army was trying to find city and other agencies with shelter space. Also, he said, Army workers went among homeless persons on the streets during the day and handed out fliers warning them to stay out of floodwaters.

Meanwhile, in outer Southeast Portland, more sandbags were fly-

ing, this time near the intersection of Southeast 122nd Avenue and Harold Street. There, firefighters nominated Joanne O'Shane, 43, and her son Jon, 23, for unquestioned MVP awards.

"That woman out there directing traffic has been out here in the rain all day," explained firefighter Tom Seybert. "She's the most dedicated volunteer we have here, and they're all outstanding. I keep telling her to take a break, but she won't let up. Both she and her son."

O'Shane said she had done everything she could to preserve her property, "so I thought I'd help other people preserve theirs."

"I saw everybody over here helping and I just felt that I needed to join them," said O'Shane, a 13-year grocery clerk at the downtown Safeway store. "Now, it would be hard to leave. It's one of those things — you got to do what you got to do."

Still filling sandbags

All of which brings us back to Judy Thomas.

In all the rain, it didn't take long to get soaked to the skin stuffing sandbags on the inner eastside. So why do this?

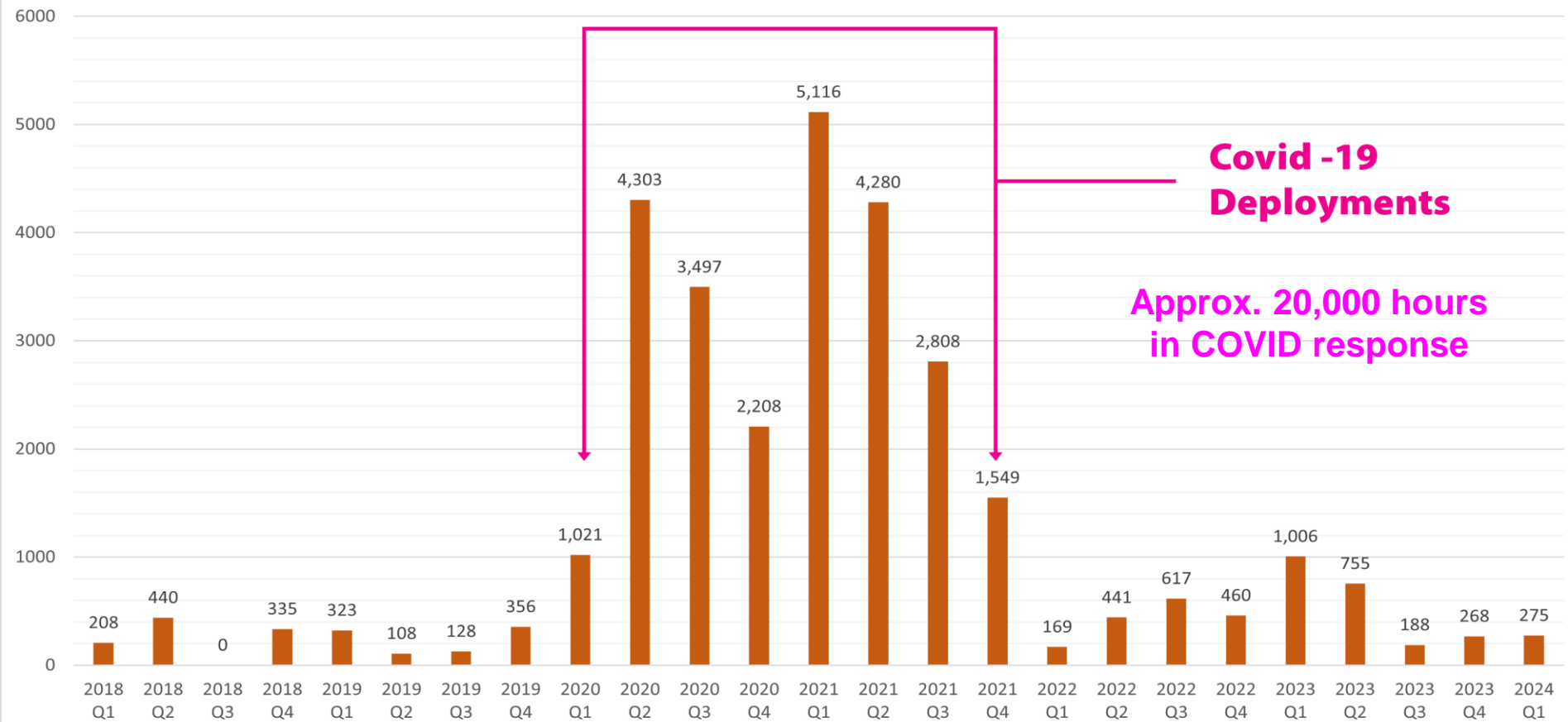
"I want to help my own kind," she said. What kind is that?

"My own Portland."

Janet Christ and Osker Spicer contributed to this report.

Portland NET: Emergency Response Hours by Quarter

NET Deployment Hours by Quarter



YOU TO OUR AMAZING
AND VOLUNTEERS
N'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT

ALL4ORION
ORIGINATING TO
ID-19

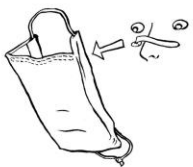




Keep mask folded when not in use to keep germs off inner lining.

HOW TO USE THE U-FIT MASK

ADJUSTABLE FACE MASK

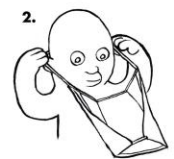


The metal tab is designed to bend around the bridge of your nose.

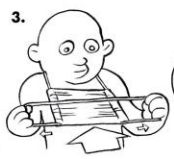


1.

The knotted loop is the bottom. Place this over your head first with the lining facing up.

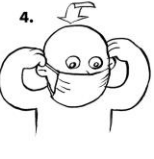


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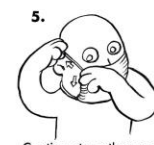


3.

Gather mask material together by pulling loop out of other end and placing that over your head.

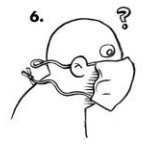


4.



5.

Continue to gather mask material by pulling cord until the mask makes a good seal around your head.



6.

The mask may be too loose. Tie a knot on the knotted end to change the size.



7.



Machine washable.

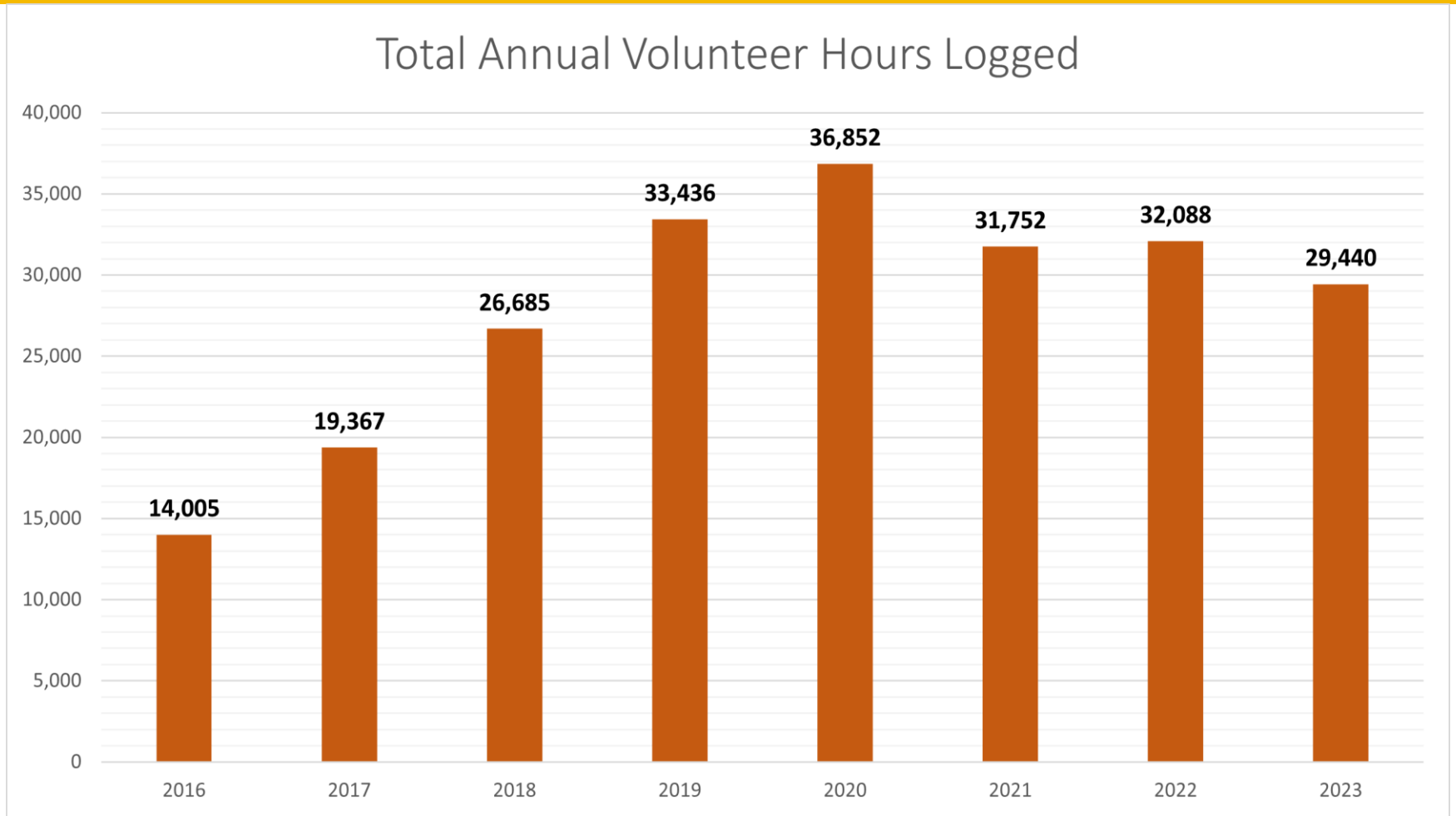
Portland Emergency Management

EMERGENCY
TEAMS





Annual NET Volunteer Hours Logged



Return on Investment: Volunteer Hours

