

**Senait Gebregiorgis**

Reporter

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**WINTER SPRINGS, Fla. —**

We're in hurricane season and there's a team of Central Florida helpers coming together this weekend to prepare before a disaster could hit.

Amateur radio operators are taking part in a 24-hour drill to test their skills.

This year, there's a team that's called "Blind Guys Station." The members of that team are radio operators who are blind.

This annual nationwide contest Field Day is for the teams to set up their radios under simulated emergency conditions, and then make as many contacts as possible in order to prepare for any future disasters.

When a hurricane storms through neighborhoods, ham radio operators often become the communication's lifeline.

"This is our hobby, but we love to serve the public and we're your communications people when all the cellphones go out of service," Rich Wilson, the lead organizer said.

Wilson is leading the Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society in this weekend's Field Day in Winter Springs.

This year's contest has brought ham radio operators from Orange and Seminole counties.

They have their equipment set up in a public location to compete against thousands of other radio clubs by trying to make as many contacts as possible – just like they would do in a real emergency.

"It was the hams who were able to communicate in and out of Puerto Rico when they had their disaster down there. Mexico City as well," Wilson said.

This year Dave Hillebrandt, station captain of Blind Guys Station, and Tom Moore, a member, want to show people that anyone can help others.

"With the right skills a blind person can do much the same things in this hobby especially as someone who's sighted," Hillebrandt said.

They're using morse code and logging through a computer with a voice screen reader.

"We make double the contribution the way I look at it," Hillebrandt said.

"I put an antenna up in 10 to 15 minutes and I can help people out," Moore said.

Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society wanted to take an inclusive approach to make sure no one is left behind no matter what may come.

"I'm intended to get us lots of points," Hillebrandt said about the contest.

"They can do it, we can do it. We can do it together and we want to do it together," Wilson said.

The club put in the effort to make things accessible for the Blind Guys Station.

Since they'll be there for 24 hours, they've attached a rope to their trailer so they can independently find their way to the public bathroom.

The contest will wrap up Sunday at 2 p.m.