

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



ON THE HORIZON

■ **International Youth Day**, August 12.

■ **World Humanitarian Day**, Aug. 19. Visit [org/en/events/humanitarianday/](https://www.redcross.org/en/events/humanitarianday/).

■ **National Preparedness Month**, September. Learn more at <https://rdcrss.org/3hHxdl>



28

Volunteers joined us in July.



24

Disaster responses in July. **Clients helped: 129**



MILESTONES

LANDIS MEEKS, 30 years

ANNE HARRIS, 15 years

SHERRY BAKER, 5 years

GAYANN DeMORDAUNT, 5 years

JETTA JOHNSON, 5 years

BRUCE OLENICK, 5 years



Pat Freebury donates the quilts she makes to the Red Cross to give to families following a home fire. More than 40 years ago, her parents lost their Thompson Falls home in a fire and someone from their church gave them a quilt. Now she's giving back.

Wrapped in compassion

Kalispell woman gives homemade quilts to the Red Cross for families following a home fire

KALISPELL —With every stitch, Pat Freebury honors a recipient she'll never meet and a quilter she never knew.

More than 40 years ago, Pat's parents lost their Thompson Falls home to a fire. Someone from their church gave them a quilt, which comforted them in their loss and then adorned a bed in their new home for decades.

"I always thought, I want to give back someday," she said. "I had lots of fabric and just started making quilts."

Pat donates the quilts to her local Red Cross chapter, which has given away 25 or so during the past couple of years. With so much time at home during the pandemic, Pat has finished 24

quilts already this year, with another three in the works.

"As fast as I can make them, they give them away," she said.

The quilts go to people after home fires and, recently, to people whose homes were destroyed by a powerful storm.

"The gals tell me the tears just flow when people get the quilts," Pat said. "It's the first nice thing that has happened to them since the fire."

Lew Savik, a disaster response volunteer in the Flathead, has seen those tears firsthand.

"The quilts are so special when everything else has gone wrong," he said.

The quilts are given with a little card that marks the quilt's size. Pat sews infant-sized quilts to adult sizes. On the back of the card, she's printed a heartfelt message offering her wish that the quilt may be "warming and comforting."

SEE QUILTS, PAGE 2

Support available to families grieving loss

Families struggling with the loss and grief that comes with COVID-19 can get much-needed comfort and support thanks to specially trained Red Cross volunteers like Abbie Colussi.

Colussi, a disaster mental health lead from Helena, is part of a nationwide network of mental health, spiritual care and health services volunteers who serve as the backbone of the Red Cross Virtual Family Assistance Center. Over the phone, these volunteers offer condolences, connect families to state and local resources, provide support for

virtual memorial services and host online classes that build resiliency and coping skills.

"It's extremely important to be able to support our fellow neighbors out there who are impacted by COVID," Colussi said. "Sometimes they feel like they don't know where to go — they feel like they don't know who to talk to —



Colussi

and for many people it's easier to be in the comfort of their home and to be able to make a phone call and connect with someone."

Colussi said they're hearing from people who are mourning the loss of a loved one and those who have lost their job and are trying to figure out how to make next month's rent, including a mother and her four children who were living in their car.

One call in particular stands out to

SEE LOSS, PAGE 2

Urgent need for shelters workers

It's certainly been a wild 2020 already! With an active wildfire and hurricane season predicted for many areas across the country, Red Cross is looking for volunteers to work in disaster shelters when the need arises over the next few months.

The Red Cross of Idaho and Montana has an urgent need for volunteers who can respond in-person to disasters here at home and who are willing to deploy to help communities across the country.

During the current pandemic, we have established new guidelines for sheltering designed to keep our workers and clients safe, such as setting up more small shelters, each with fewer clients.

Please consider supporting our mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering by helping during this hurricane and wildfire season. During this unprecedented time, volunteers like you are helping to provide critical support to our communities.

Never deployed before? Get started on your training now to get out the door and make a difference. Please share with your friends and family who might also be a good fit.

If you are willing, able and interested, please contact Recruitment Specialist Gini Kay at 406-493-8778 or email IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org. Learn more about our most-needed volunteer opportunities at www.redcross.org/volunteertoday.

Providing comfort, care in Gardiner



Red Cross disaster responders provided assistance to at least nine people displaced by the multi-building fire in Gardiner in mid-July. The volunteers met with clients, providing them with food and lodging assistance, helping replace medications and lost medical supplies and connecting them with mental health resources.

Loss: All services free, confidential

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Colussi. A service member told the team his father was in the hospital and was severely ill.

He had been granted leave but didn't have the money to pay for a plane

ticket back home to see his dad one final time. The family assistance center was able to connect him with the Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces program, which provided the man the financial help he needed to make the trip.

"That felt really good to be able to help him," she said.

To learn more or request help, visit <https://www.redcross.org/get-help.html> or call 833-492-0094.

All the work is done virtually and is free and confidential.

Quilts: 'Cradled in hope, kept in joy'

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"May the one who receives this quilt be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, wrapped in love and know this quilt was stitched in love and prayer," she wrote.

Pat doesn't include her name, but a fellow quilter who lost her house to a

fire tracked her down so she could send a thank you. It takes a fellow quilter to really appreciate all the work that goes into a homemade quilt.

Pat uses a variety of patterns to keep things interesting or to showcase a particular fabric. When arthritis forced a friend in her church to give up quilting, she passed fabric and thread onto

Pat for the project. Pat recently used those fabrics for a dragonfly quilt.

"With help like that, it's really been a community effort," Pat said.

As for her parents' quilt, which started it all, Pat passed it on to comfort another family in their moment of need.

— Story written by Red Cross writing team volunteer Kristen Inbody