

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



## ON THE HORIZON

- [May – Wildfire Awareness Month](#)
- [May – Water Safety Month](#)
- [May – Military Appreciation Month](#)
- [May – Nurses Month](#)
- [May – Month of the Military Caregiver](#)
- [May – Trauma Awareness Month](#)
- [May – Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#)
- [May – Mental Health Awareness Month](#)
- [May 6 – Nurses Week](#) begins. Learn more about a virtual Nurse Appreciation event on page 2.
- [May 8 – World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day](#)
- [May 12 – Military Spouse Appreciation Day](#)
- [May 13 – Children of Fallen Patriots Day](#)
- [May 14 – Mother’s Day](#)
- [May 20 – Armed Forces Day](#)
- [May 25 – Stop the Bleed Day](#)
- [May 29 – Memorial Day](#)



# 33

Disaster responses in April. Clients helped: **123**



## MILESTONES

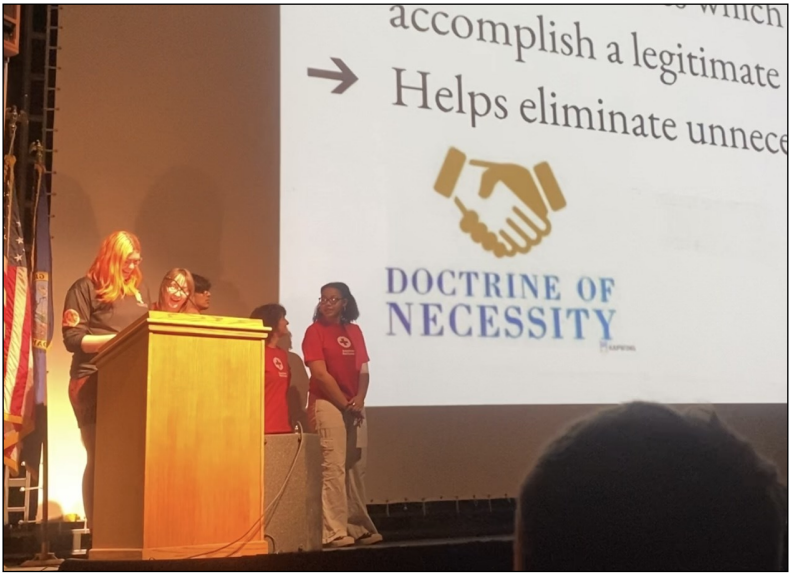
JENNY ERICKSON, 15 years

WAYNE CHILCOTE, 10 years

RAY KYWERIGA, 5 years

CHERYL MINTO, 5 years

MIKE MOORE, 5 years



TOP: Youth Action Campaign participants share what they learned about international humanitarian law with their Idaho Falls High classmates during an assembly. BELOW: From left, youth Action Campaign members Hadley Lundblade, Aiyanna Horne and Leslie Stephens.

# LEARNING THE RULES OF WAR

*Teens teach peers about international law through Red Cross youth program*

Students at Idaho Falls High School are learning about international humanitarian law and the rules of war thanks to the passion and dedication of some of their classmates.

The Youth Action Campaign is a project of the American Red Cross of Idaho, Montana and East Oregon and covers issues like the measures in place to protect lives during war and efforts to preserve human dignity. Youth Action participants learn about neutrality, targets vs. nontargets (locations like hospitals can't be attacked during war, for example) and the treatment of prisoners of war.

This is a heavy but important topic for high schoolers, 16-year-old Leslie Stephens said.

“Last year it became very relevant with the war in Russia and Ukraine,” said Leslie, a junior who started volunteering last year with the Youth Action Campaign. “It became something I needed to know about.”

“Just learning about this makes us better people.”

Leslie serves as the project’s youth leader and first heard of the International Humanitarian Law project through a close friend whose parents are Red Cross employees. Leslie is also a member of the high school’s Key Club that regularly works with the Red Cross on their community blood drives.

“I consider myself an activist to make the world a better place,” she said. “We can try to

SEE RULES, PAGE 3



# Welcoming our blood donors

Small veins and a big heart led Brenda Branchley to volunteer with the Idaho Red Cross.

Brenda is a blood donor ambassador, welcoming donors to Pocatello blood drives, signing them in and making sure they have a good experience. A happy blood donor is a returning blood donor.

“I wanted to do something to give back,” said Brenda, who has been volunteering for about two years. “Since my veins are so small, I can’t really donate blood so this is a good way to help out.”

Brenda said being a blood donor ambassador is



Brenda Branchley volunteers as a blood donor ambassador, welcoming donors to Pocatello blood drives, signing them in and making sure they have a good experience.

SEE AMBASSADOR, PAGE 2

# Red Cross goes green; come join us

After being awarded a Red Cross grant for its environmental sustainability efforts, the Red Cross of Idaho, Montana and East Oregon’s soon-to-be-formed Green Team is looking for more ideas and more help to make the organization eco-friendly.

In March, the region used the grant money to install a water bottle refilling station in the Boise office, replacing a water fountain that was well past its prime and hopefully keeping more single-use bottles from ending up in the landfill while also encouraging people to drink more water.

“It even lights up each time you refill a bottle, and it calculates how many plastic bottles have been saved through its use,” said Wendy McGrew, regional chief operating officer.

As of April 25, the new station had saved 407 plastic bottles. The region is

hoping to build off that momentum by forming a Green Team that will look for other ways to be environmentally friendly.

Initially, the Green Team is being facilitated by Wendy and Regional Disaster Officer Scott O’Connell but is looking to round out the group with new members – either paid staff or volunteers. People who want to learn about or join the Green Team can email [wendy.mcgreg2@redcross.org](mailto:wendy.mcgreg2@redcross.org).

“This fountain is a good first step on identifying where the Green Team could go,” she said. “The more people who are involved, the more buy-in you get.”

Wendy foresees the group meeting once a quarter to go over initiatives and vet ideas.

— By Red Cross writing team volunteer Amy Joyner



Red Crosser Jake Reines gets a refill at the Boise office’s new water station. The station will keep more single-use bottles out of the landfill.

## Satisfaction surveys, Sound the Alarm

Remember to complete your volunteer satisfaction survey, help us celebrate our nurses and volunteer to Sound the Alarm below.

### VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION:

If you have not completed your annual volunteer satisfaction survey please log in to your Volunteer Connection account and complete this year’s survey. Find your survey link on your Volunteer Connection account “My profile” page under the “surveys, forms, and recognition” section on the left side of your screen.

In addition to this annual survey, we welcome your feedback at anytime.

Email [IDMTE-OR.Teamwork@redcross.org](mailto:IDMTE-OR.Teamwork@redcross.org) with any feedback you would like to share regarding your volunteer experience. Feedback sent to this email address and feedback shared in the Volunteer Satisfaction survey is shared with the regional leadership team.

**NURSE APPRECIATION:** Nurse Appreciation Week is May 6-12. You are invited to a virtual Nurse Appreciation event to celebrate our region’s nurses and their impact on our mission. Please join us on Thursday, May 11, at 4 p.m. (MST) by using this Teams meeting link: [Click here to join the meeting](#).

**VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER MEETINGS:** We are excited to kick off virtual All Volunteer Regional Meetings. These events will occur quarterly. We are offering the same meeting at two

### IN THE KNOW



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

different times. These meetings will provide an overview of current and upcoming priorities within each line of service and highlight our region’s progress toward our shared goals.

We will also share a summary of volunteer satisfaction survey feedback and actions taken (based on survey responses) to improve your volunteer experience within our region.

- **Meeting Option 1:** May 17 at noon (MST). [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- **Meeting Option 2:** May 18 at 6 p.m. (MST). [Click here to join the meeting](#)

### POSITIONS OF THE MONTH:

Do you enjoy a little detective work? Check out the **Lives Saved Lead Specialist** volunteer position.

This virtual position focuses on documenting lives saved thanks to the home fire campaign. Follow steps to verify case information and determine if the installed smoke alarms or education session helped the clients escape the home fire safely.

**Time commitment:** Caseload dependent but approximately one to two hours per week. All training provided!

Learn more and complete your application at [www.redcross.org/volunteer](http://www.redcross.org/volunteer). Have additional questions?

Email our team at [BePrepared.IDMT@redcross.org](mailto:BePrepared.IDMT@redcross.org).

Are you detail oriented and enjoy providing great volunteer service? We need your help to grow our Preparedness programs! As the **Preparedness Program Onboarding and Engagement Lead** you work virtually to provide support to new and current volunteers as they train to deliver preparedness education presentations across our region.

**Time commitment:** Varies depending on regional activities, approximately 20 hours per month. All training provided! Learn more and complete your application at [redcross.org/volunteer](http://redcross.org/volunteer).

**SOUND THE ALARM:** We have four Sound the Alarm events in our region in June and need volunteers to help install free smoke alarms in homes and provide home fire safety training to families.

- **June 2-3** — Browning, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. both days
- **June 3** — Idaho Falls, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **June 9-10** — Nampa, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **June 10** — Billings, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

To sign up to volunteer for the Idaho events, visit [soundthealarm.org/Idaho](http://soundthealarm.org/Idaho). To sign up to volunteer for the Montana events, visit [soundthealarm.org/montana](http://soundthealarm.org/montana).

Training will be provided.

## Ambassador: ‘It gets you out and about’

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

an easy, rewarding volunteer experience, and she’s made friends with Red Cross staff and donors along the way. There’s time to crochet or read a book during her shifts, she said, and she enjoys the flexibility of choosing which days she volunteers. She typically helps out at four to six blood drives a month.

“I chat with the donors and see how they’re doing,” she said. “I think it makes the wait go faster for them.”

The Red Cross of Idaho, Montana and East Oregon organizes more than 4,200 blood drives each year, and blood donor ambassadors help make sure these

drives run smoothly.

Sixty-eight years old, Brenda began volunteering with Red Cross a few months after retiring as a secretary. The opportunity to connect with others is one of the best parts, she said, especially following the isolation that came with COVID-19.

“It’s good for me mental health-wise,” she said. “It gets you out and about visiting with other people. We need that interaction.”

But above all, she knows she’s helping keep Idaho’s hospital shelves stocked with the lifesaving blood products that so many depend on.

“It’s an opportunity to help everyone

around me, and that’s what we’re here for – to serve one another,” she said. “It’s knowing that I’m doing good.”

### BECOME A BLOOD DONOR AMBASSADOR

Are you interested in becoming a blood donor ambassador volunteer like Brenda? The Red Cross has opportunities available across Idaho, Montana and East Oregon.

Red Cross asks that these volunteers help at least one drive a month. A typical blood drive lasts four to six hours.

To learn more, visit [redcross.org/volunteer](http://redcross.org/volunteer) or call 208-488-5231.

— By Matt Ochsner



Executive Director Diane Wright chats with volunteers Karen Wandel, Elli Olson and Mary Caparelli in Helena.

## Hitting the road to say thank you

Led by Nate Gilbert and Amanda Schmierer, Red Crossers hit the road in April to say thank you to our dedicated volunteers. The tour included 13 stops across three states over 10 days as we handed out prizes, shared stories, taught CPR and celebrated all things Red Cross. Thank you to everyone who joined us, and for those who couldn't make it, we hope to catch you next time. You make our lifechanging mission possible.

— Photos by Ken Stanton, John McGrew and Matt Ochsner



Red Cross of Idaho, Montana and East Oregon CEO Nicole Sirak Irwin thanks volunteers at a Boise event.



ABOVE: Volunteer Alan Colvin selects his prize from Nate Gilbert during the Missoula appreciation event. RIGHT: Red Cross staffers Amanda Schmierer and Courtney Wilson share a laugh with volunteer James Bell at a Boise event.



LEFT: Ray and Lorraine Barnicoat with the Red Cross candles they won at the volunteer appreciation event in Helena. ABOVE: Angela James, Todd Neighbor and Rick Baker show their creative sides during an art activity.

## Rules: Project sparks conversations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

prevent war as much as possible but learning about all of this is a way that we can help alleviate the human suffering of war.”

This year, the Youth Action group meets at least two times a week, when they often find themselves having intense discussions.

“We are constantly debating things like what should be considered a war crime even though it’s an everyday action (during war),” she said.

She brings up the example of whether poisoning water or bombing agricultural crops are an act of war because they also cause human suffering.

Also on hand is Idaho Falls High School English teacher Meighan Perry, who advises the students.

“(We) have some really great conver-

sations together,” she said. “It really wound up some of the students last year when Ukraine was bombed. I knew then that it was going to be tough content ... I have activists this year who really want to make a difference.”

To further her humanitarian learning, Leslie has also paired her interests with another project Meighan leads — building a greenhouse for an Environmental Club project focusing on sustainability.

“This greenhouse will bring the groups together and help us educate even more people,” Meighan said. “The greenhouse project is tying together this year’s themes of the environment and the arms conflict campaign.”

“These students then can take what they learn and share that information with their classmates.”

And that’s exactly what they’ve done. Earlier this year, the Youth Action team

developed a presentation for the entire student body during an assembly during Multicultural Week. At least 1,000 students attended, and some began to ask further questions, Meighan said.

Meighan credits students Aiyanna Horne and Leslie for developing and delivering the presentation.

“Next year I am going to recruit again at the beginning of the year to see if we can collect more activists,” she said.

To learn more about Red Cross International Humanitarian Law projects, visit [www.redcross.org/humanityinwar/international-humanitarian-law-youth-action-campaign.html](http://www.redcross.org/humanityinwar/international-humanitarian-law-youth-action-campaign.html).

Anyone interested in starting a Youth Action Campaign team at their high school or college can contact Sara Cease at [sara.cease@redcross.org](mailto:sara.cease@redcross.org).

— By Red Cross writing team volunteer Amy Joyner