

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



### ON THE HORIZON

- **Native American Heritage Month**, November. Learn more [here](#).
- **Military Family Month**, November. Learn more [here](#).
- **Daylight savings end**, Nov. 1, test your smoke alarms.
- **Election Day**, Nov. 3.
- **Veterans Day**, Nov. 11.
- **Thanksgiving**, Nov. 26.



## 28

Disaster responses in October. Clients helped: **103**



## 53

Volunteers joined us in October.



### MILESTONES

- CAROL KILLIAN, 15 years
- JEFF CAHILL, 10 years
- BURLEY JOHNSON, 10 years
- CHRISTINE McFARLIN, 5 years



Volunteers LayLa Johnson, left, and Vicky Johns during their deployment to the Houston area following Hurricane Dorian. Johnson was severely injured in a cycling accident in April, suffering traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. She is making significant progress in her recovery.

# Recovery, one step at a time

*Severely injured in bike crash, Idaho volunteer starting to walk again, sets sights on deploying*

LayLa Johnson had just battled her way to the top of a steep hill she had biked many times before and was preparing for the payoff – the adrenaline surge of “an epic downhill.” Then something went horribly wrong.

“It’s a hill you take very seriously,” the Idaho Falls Red Cross volunteer said. “What possibly happened? Not a clue.”

A friend who was biking with LayLa eventually doubled back when LayLa was nowhere to be seen. He found her crashed along the side of the road and called an ambulance, immediately realizing the severity of the situation.

LayLa underwent emergency surgery in

Idaho Falls where she spent 10 days in intensive care before being sent to a hospital in Colorado. She would spend the next three months there, beginning the long, grueling recovery and rehab associated with a traumatic brain injury and a spinal cord injury.

She was told she may never walk again, a diagnosis LayLa isn’t willing to accept.

“I am going to walk again, and it can’t come fast enough,” she said. “I have a lot of movement, but a lot of weakness.

With a spinal cord injury, it all comes down to the nerves, but what we have no control of is the nerve recovery and the nerve recovery is everything.”

In June she returned home to Idaho Falls, where she’s undergoing up to six physical therapy sessions a week including regular trips to Salt Lake. It’s all incredibly exhausting.

“I look at it as an infant becoming a toddler,” she said.

“Now I understand why they

sleep all the time and are grumpy the rest of the time. It’s enormous work and just some-

“ I have seen enough disasters that I’ve known from the beginning that I really have to be an active part of my recovery. — LayLa Johnson ”

SEE RECOVERY, PAGE 2

# Stepping up during tough times

As you know, it’s been an extremely challenging last few months. Besides responding to our own wildfires in Idaho and Montana, we’ve also helped families across the country, in places like California, Colorado, Oregon and Texas, recover from disaster. Below is quick rundown of happenings across our region.

**WITH GRATITUDE:** We received this wonderful thank you from Forrest Ford, a public information officer who assisted with the Bridger Foothills fire in Gallatin County in September.

### IN THE KNOW



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

“Good morning. I’d like to give a heartfelt thank you and commendation to those members of the Red Cross (Bozeman) who worked at the Lutheran Church. I was assigned there as a PIO for the Bridger Foothills fire for a couple of days. Everyone there was kind and accommodating to those who

came in needing assistance. They were pros and did a great job. In addition, they were welcoming and friendly to me as well. I couldn’t have been treated better. Thank you.”

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**ANSWERING THE CALL:** We would like to recognize the volunteers and paid staff who deployed, either in-person or virtually, to help families impacted by disaster across the coun-

SEE KNOW, PAGE 2

# Region transitioning to RC Care

To better serve our clients and mission, the Idaho and Montana Region (along with our peers across the country) will transition to the RC Care platform.

What does this mean for you? There are several substantial changes RC Care will bring, but chief among them is how we will conduct client intake. The Disaster Action Team workforce will now have the ability to complete client intake and provide financial assistance, all from the field.

Pretty cool, right!?

There's much more to this transition, of course, and if you would like to learn more, please visit the [RC Care Toolkit](#) on the Exchange. The region will also continue to host weekly RC Care learning sessions at 5 p.m. MST on Wednesdays.

To attend, please access the meeting through the following link or dial-in information.

Join [Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)  
+1 901-248-1330

Conference ID: 413 802 896#

In the weeks ahead, you'll see additional information in your inboxes about the training required to help us navigate this transition, as well as some fun details about training incentives. RC Care will launch in December, which adds urgency to our preparations.

If you have any immediate questions for the region's RC Care Rollout Team, please submit them using this web-form: <https://bit.ly/34kJyTA>.

# Know: Card inventory approaching

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try. Below are those who have deployed in the past few weeks.

### Responding to the Oregon wildfires:

Scott Davis, Mary-Jo Egervary, Mason Engebretson, Coleman Kavanagh, Beth Ann Kavanagh, Vincent Maio, Joan Mainwaring, Kimberly Monson, Donald Nesbitt, Joanne Ramundo, Karen Sare, Gordon Simpson, Will Steinbrugge, Carol Tally, James Thornton, Belinda Unger, Bruce Wenigmann and Robert Whetten

### Responding to the California wildfires:

Robin Cory, Scott Fairfield, Nathan Gilbert, Kent Jay, Craig Jensen, Judith Miller, Kenneth Miller, Hank Nowak, Terry Tippery, Stephen Tis and Betty Van Gheluwe

### Responding to the Colorado wildfires:

Wendy McGrew

Thanks again to everyone who has raised their hands during times of need.

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**REAL ESTATE UPDATE:** The property we are currently leasing that houses our Bozeman Blood Donor Center, 300 North Willson Ave., has been purchased by a new owner. We are not able to remain at this facility, and our move-out date is November 2021. We are beginning a search for a new



Montana Red Cross volunteer Hank Nowak, in a mask, assists with damage assessment during his California wildfires deployment.

Bozeman location.

We want to strongly emphasize that this real estate change will not affect the services we provide to the community every day. We will provide periodic updates as new information becomes available. Feel free to reach out any time if you have questions by emailing [IDMT.info@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.info@redcross.org).

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**CARD INVENTORY:** The next quarterly inventory of client assistance cards and mission cards is Dec. 1-8.

The disaster cycle services workforce will receive more information in late November including the link to the online reporting template. If you will not have access to your cards during this reporting window, please plan ahead to report your cards to your disaster program staff member or to Angela

James at [angela.james@redcross.org](mailto:angela.james@redcross.org). This should be done as close to Dec. 1 as possible to ensure an accurate count as of the report "snapshot date" of Nov. 30.

Every inventory conducted in 2020 continues to improve in accuracy and efficiency in large part because of cardholders reporting in a timely manner. Your help is greatly appreciated and has made a big difference in our region.

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**GIVE THROUGH AMAZON:** The American Red Cross is a featured charity of Amazon.com's charitable online venture, AmazonSmile. Through this partnership, customers who visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) may designate the Red Cross as their preferred charity, and .5 percent of the sale price of each eligible item purchased will be donated to the Red Cross by Amazon for as long as they shop with AmazonSmile.

Here's how to join and turn on AmazonSmile in the mobile app:

1. If you are not already an AmazonSmile member, sign up on your web browser. Simply select the American Red Cross to start generating donations.
2. Download the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app on your phone. You can find it in the App Store for iOS or Google Play for Android.
3. Open the app and find 'settings' in the main menu. Tap on 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile on your phone.

# Recovery: Lessons from deployments

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thing you think you should be able to do you can't do."

A disaster action team member — among the many Red Cross hats she wears — LayLa has returned to her Red Cross activities including working with programs including RC View, software the organization uses to collect information during damage assessments following a disaster. It hasn't been the easiest road back — the software has changed in the past few months and LayLa is of course facing new hurdles.

"The information is all in my brain, it's just a matter of telling it how to come out," she said.

Normally LayLa is one of the first to raise her hand to head out the door to a national disaster, but that isn't possible this time around. And that's hard to accept.

"It's another reminder of what's been taken away from me," she said. "Deployments are a huge part of my life and this would have been season five

for me."

But her own personal disaster has given her a more realistic perspective of what families face when forced from their homes by a hurricane or wildfire.

"The first few weeks after I came back, I thought a lot about this in a disaster context," she said. "This is what the clients are going through when they just lost everything. They're not in their homes, oftentimes they may not be with their families and basically life looks like nothing. This is a disaster on a scale of one.

"We often look at it that 50,000 people have been impacted by a disaster, but not as individuals who lost everything, and for them, it's on a scale of one and it's horrific."

The things she's learned on deployment watching others cope with tragedy has helped in her recovery, she said.

"I have seen enough disasters that I've known from the beginning that I really have to be an active part of my recovery and that I can't wait for people to take care of things for me. And I

haven't.

"I constantly have to be on top of these things because I want to walk today."

Since her accident in early April, LayLa has made significant strides. She's now walking during her physical therapy sessions and hopes to be walking at home by the new year. She and her husband recently purchased a tandem bike — one which will allow LayLa to pedal from a recumbent position while her husband sits upright.

And if all goes as planned, LayLa said she would love to deploy next season.

"You just can't dwell on the loss," she said. "It just has to be step by step moving forward."

LayLa thanks all her fellow humanitarians who have sent get-well wishes and donations along the way.

"I got a lot of cards from Red Crossers, even Red Crossers I worked with on national jobs," she said. "A lot of people reached out and that helped."

"People were fantastic for sure."