

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



### ON THE HORIZON

- **National Preparedness Month**, September. [Build a kit, make a plan, stay informed, give blood.](#)
- **Sickle Cell Awareness Month**, September.
- **International Day of Charity**, Sept. 5.
- **Labor Day**, Sept. 6.
- **20th anniversary of 9/11**, Sept. 11.
- **Hispanic Heritage Month**, Sept. 15.
- **International Day of Peace**, Sept. 21.



## 42

Disaster responses in August. Clients helped: **118**



### MILESTONES

#### September

**TERRY TIPPERY**, 20 years

**MARY MANGOLD**, 5 years

**LAUREL THOMPSON**, 5 years



### BLOOD NEEDED

Please help keep shelves stocked and make sure lifesaving blood is available by scheduling a donation today. Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or call 800-RED-CROSS. A donation takes less than an hour.



- ◆ *Partner collaboration key to Polson disaster outreach / Page 3*
- ◆ *Photos from our wildfire response in southeastern Montana / Page 3*

## Tending evacuees



Photo by volunteer Mary Dixon

Red Cross disaster responders Sue Henderson, Michal Delgado, Jackie Oram and Jeff Daniels provide comfort and care to those displaced by the Boulder 2700 fire in Lake County. Red Cross provided 80 overnight shelter stays over the course of a week.

## Resident roused in wee hours thankful for Red Cross shelter

It was 1:30 in the morning when Robert Strehlow got the knock on the door telling him it was time to leave his Lake County home. The wind had changed, and the Boulder 2700 wildfire had jumped the road and was coming his way.

“I got a flashlight and a few things together and headed out,” he said. “The wind was blowing terrible, and it was hot. I thought we were going to be burned out for sure.”

Robert spent a couple nights in Kalispell before making his way to the Red Cross shelter in Polson, where he would spend the next few days. A team of Red Cross volunteers was there, ready to help.

“I appreciate them. They’re real good people,” said Robert, a retired farmer from South Dakota who spends summers in western Montana.

“I don’t think I want to go through this every day, but it’s nice to know you have a place to go.”

Over the course of a week, the Red Cross provided 80 overnight stays and plenty of comfort and care to displaced clients. And they got an outpouring of help along the way.

Community partners including local churches and the Elks Club provided meals, local hospitals were on hand to assist with



Robert Strehlow

medical needs like replacing medications and helping clients cope with anxiety, and businesses donated everything from water to care kits. The public pitched in, too.

“I can’t overstate the value of our partners

SEE EVACUEES, PAGE 3

## Outstanding volunteers honored for service

The Red Cross of Idaho and Montana recognized several amazing volunteers at its annual board meetings earlier this summer.

At the Idaho meeting, **Vicky Johns** received the Dane Watkins Award, presented to the most active volunteer in Idaho and East Oregon. This year, Vicky worked 1,740 hours, was on call for 1,105 hours and has been on deployment for 600 hours, for an amazing 3,445 hours of service to the Red Cross mission.

Vicky is on the Disaster Action Team in Ada County and acts as a supervisor and coordinator. She is the regional lead for recovery, and oversees the recovery team. In addition, Vicky can be counted on to be at events to support Service to the Armed Forces.



Vicky

**Sherry Israel** is the recipient of the Roy Eiguren Award, presented annual-

ly to a volunteer from Idaho and East Oregon who exemplifies excellence in volunteering.

Sherry is a standout in her role as a duty officer and duty officer supervisor. This past year, she worked more than 500 hours to support and direct our Disaster Action Teams as they



Sherry

SEE OUTSTANDING, PAGE 2

# Outstanding: Amazing skills

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

respond to disasters and single-family fires. She is a true leader and is dependable and reliable.

She deployed to the Northcentral California wildfires in 2020 to help with sheltering and was a pillar of the region's successful launch of RC Care.

As our regional outstanding volunteer recipient, Sherry will be nominated for our national Presidential Award for Excellence, the highest honor within the Red Cross.

Also at the Idaho meeting, **Liam Elms** was recognized as the Idaho Biomedical Volunteer of the Year, awarded to the Idaho biomed volunteer



Liam

who logged the most hours in the past year. Liam came to the Red Cross as part of an Easter Seals program but continued volunteering after the program ended because he loves the work he does as a donor ambassador.

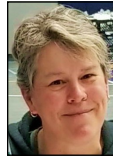
Liam volunteers at the Boise donor center four days a week and has com-

pleted more than 1,300 hours of service.

Liam consistently goes above and beyond in his work, providing outstanding customer service to donors, training new volunteers and jumping in to lend a hand when needed.

At the Montana annual meeting in June, **Sue Hawthorne** received the Tom Wozniak Volunteer Award for Excellence.

Sue's ability to manage within guidelines while doing the most good for client recovery is one of her strongest assets to the Disaster Cycle Services teams. She has the flexibility to do whatever the job requires, including driving hundreds of miles at any hour.



Sue

Sue also embraces technology and fast rollouts and is enthusiastic about learning new things and helping her teammates succeed with the new tools.

Sue has uniquely combined her technology and structure skills with an overwhelming sense of empathy and compassion. Even in the most stressful of times, she deals with our clients in

the most respectful way.

Sue will be nominated for our national Presidential Award for Excellence.

**Tom Coleman** received the Idaho and Montana Blood Services Region Biomedical Services Volunteer Excellence Award. Based out of Kalispell, Tom has been a volunteer transportation specialist (blood delivery driver) for more than 10 years.



Tom

Not only has he given 650 hours of service, but he regularly goes above and beyond to help others.

A few years ago during a particularly snowy winter, Tom was concerned about his fellow drivers using a vehicle that was not winter-ready. Tom purchased snow tires for the van and donated them to the Red Cross so that staff and volunteers could safely transport life-saving blood product through hazardous driving conditions!

It is Tom's love for the Red Cross and those around him that shows why he is the Montana Volunteer of the Year.

Congrats to all of our winners.

## Shelters need folks to step up

Training videos are highlighted below, and fellow volunteers continue to gather virtually to hang out. This week read about the Position of the Month. Maintaining a trained and ready volunteer workforce allows for quick, efficient disaster response.

Check out what is needed.

**NEEDED: DISASTER SHELTER VOLUNTEERS.** We are preparing for another extremely busy disaster season. This year's wildfire outlook is already very active and dangerous because of the severe drought and dry woodlands across the West. We need help.

**Disaster Shelter Volunteers** (Supervisory roles available to those with previous deployment experience.)

### 1. Shelter Service Associate

**Volunteer responsibilities:** In-person shelter support to assist with reception, registration, feeding, dormitory, information collection, and other vital tasks to help those we serve.

### 2. Health Services Service Associate

**Volunteer responsibilities:** Health professionals are needed in shelters to provide hands-on care, health education, health assessments, and additional health-related support.

### IN THE KNOW



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

**Location:** As needed within our region.

**Time commitment:**

Disaster deployments are a 14-day commitment with ability to work 4-12 hour shifts on consecutive days.

To learn more about these positions click on the **Urgent Volunteer Needs** tile in Volunteer Connection or contact our team by email, [IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org)

### KETCHUP WITH FRIENDS 2.0.

This message from Red Cross leader Nate Gilbert: "We heard a few were on last month, but not on the actual meeting that was going on. If you join and I am not there, or you don't have access, please send me a message to my personal email and we will see what I can do to help. Hope to see you all there!" [Nathan.Gilbert@RedCross.org](mailto:Nathan.Gilbert@RedCross.org)



Nate says that if you are curious how

to access the meetings, you can watch this video to get help joining the meeting. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYdZYP9tTg>

Please join us for our next social time together on Tuesday, Sept. 14, from 7:30 – 8 p.m. No training, no agenda, just fun connecting with fellow Red Crossers from all lines of service volunteers. You also will have an opportunity to win a Red Cross notebook. You must attend to win. Madlyn Bracco-Taylor was the winner at the August get-together.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**TRAINING VIDEOS.** The Red Cross has created at least six training videos, and they will be featured in upcoming Red Alerts.

This month's featured training is "Setting Volunteer Availability for General and Disasters IDMT." It can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaOf43TLf4>

Also, the organization continues to look for training suggestions. Any volunteers who have training videos they would like to share, please reach out to

[IDMT.VOL@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.VOL@redcross.org).

## It's mission card inventory time again

It's time for the quarterly inventory of client assistance and mission cards. Thank you in advance for your help in making this mandatory process a success.

We will compile a "snapshot" of the location of cards in our region on **one specific date only – Aug. 31** – using an online form as in the past. The online reporting form will only be open **Sept. 1 - 8**. Please note the cards you have on Aug. 31 and report that, even if that information changes because you use cards during the open reporting window that follows.



To ensure data are comparable, it is vital that all reporting is for cards in hand on the "snapshot date," (Aug. 31).

DCS volunteers should watch for an email on Sept. 1 from Regional Disaster Officer Ted Koenig. It will provide a **link to a short form** to record card information you can find on the outside

of the envelopes in which these cards were provided to you. All DCS workers with client assistance cards or mission cards must complete the form, regardless of position.

If you will not have access to your cards Sept. 1 - 8, please contact Angela James at [angela.james@redcross.org](mailto:angela.james@redcross.org) prior to Sept. 1 with your card information and she will assist you with reporting on time. Cards that are not reported will be electronically destroyed shortly after the form closes on Sept. 8 so our records will remain accurate.



# Evacuees: Help pours in

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

who worked with us,” said Michal Delgado, one of six Red Cross volunteer disaster responders in Lake County. “The churches, the food pantries and the individuals who showed up with cars loaded with stuff. They would ask ‘what do you need?’ and we would ask for water or towels and then everything would just show up. It was amazing.”

The Red Cross team also went the extra mile to accommodate clients’ needs. A woman who uses a heart monitor was given her own private area with a power outlet for her medical device. It also made it easier for staff to check in on her. Several elderly women were staying at the shelter by themselves, and the Red Crossers made sure they had the support they needed.

There were even some moments of celebration amidst the worry and uncertainty that comes with disaster. A family of nine staying at the shelter celebrated a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with a small party, and the Red Cross team was able to find them some private space where they could be together.

“They brought a birthday cake and everything, and they were very appreciative,” Michal said.

The team on the ground also got support from other Red Cross volunteers from across the region.

## BECOME A RED CROSS SHELTER VOLUNTEER



Last year, the Red Cross of Idaho and Montana provided immediate emergency assistance to **1,500 people** after wildfires and other disasters.

We could use your help.

Become a Red Cross disaster responder and help those in your community and beyond during times of emergency. If you’re interested, send an email to [IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org) or call 406-493-8778. Training will be provided.

A relatively new Red Crosser, Jackie Oram from Emmett, Idaho, raised her hand and made the trip to Polson. This was her first assignment in a Red Cross shelter.

“I was able to sit with one client – you could just tell she needed someone to talk to – and wholeheartedly listen and give her my attention,” Jackie said. “These are human beings who have a lot on their minds wondering if their homes were still there. If I was in their shoes, that’s how I would want to be treated.”

With her background as a certified nursing assistant, Jackie was also able to help with clients’ medical needs. When an elderly woman with diabetes wasn’t feeling well, she was able to help check her blood sugar.

“I’m a hands-on person who has always cared about the people around

me,” she said. “I was glad I was there to help out somebody else in need.”

Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte and Montana Red Cross Board Chair Craig Stahlberg even paid a visit to the shelter to thank volunteers.

“This is what you do to help your neighbors,” Michal said. “It doesn’t matter if the disaster is big or small, you just walk with them and help them process their way through it.”

About a week after he had to flee his home in the wee hours of the morning, Robert Strehlow also celebrated a birthday. And he got the best present ever – the opportunity to return to his cabin and the four acres it sits on and see that it was all still intact.

“Everything turned out pretty good,” he said. “Everybody did a good job, I would say, and it’s nice to know you have someone looking out for you.”



Scott Davis and Jacki Kaelin Williams help with feeding during our weeklong response to the Richard Spring and Lame Deer fires in southeast Montana.



# Fires prompt huge response

When a pair of wildfires threatened several communities in southeastern

Montana last month, the Red Cross was there to help families forced from their homes.

More than 30 volunteers and staff from across the region assisted

with the Red Cross response to the Richard Spring and Lame Deer fires.

Red Cross partnered with Northern Cheyenne and Crow nations to provide more than 358 overnight stays at shelters in Busby and the Crow Agency and served more than 3,200 meals and snacks. Two emergency response vehi-

Photos by John McGrew

cles assisted with feeding operations.

“We were honored to work closely with the Northern Cheyenne and Crow nations to provide assistance to so many people affected by these fires,” said Diane Wright, Montana Red Cross

executive director. “We’re also incredibly grateful for our tireless volunteers who worked around the clock to meet the needs of these families. They train year-round to be prepared to respond to disasters like these, and we couldn’t be prouder of their work.”

Read more about this response and a family of 20 we helped in next month’s RED ALERTS.

