



Wildfire Evacuees Seek Safe Haven at Shelters

Red Cross Provides Assistance after Homes Burn

Still reeling from the devastating San Fernando Valley wildfires in mid-October, Southern Californians endured a new round of wildfires the weekend of Nov. 14 that destroyed hundreds of homes in several counties.

Mandatory evacuations in the Sylmar area caused nearly 900 people to seek refuge at four Red Cross shelters opened by the Greater Los Angeles chapter. As of Nov. 17, the Red Cross provided 500 overnight stays at the shelters, including many people from the Oakridge Mobile Home Park where nearly 500 homes were leveled. This fire destroyed the largest number of housing units in Los Angeles since the Bel Air fire in 1961.

During the Nov. 14 weekend, more than 7,900 meals and snacks were served to first responders at the fire scenes and at the four shelters located at San Fernando Valley, Sylmar, Chatsworth and Kennedy High Schools. Red Cross nurses and disaster mental health specialists were part of the Red Cross volunteer team at each shelter helping evacuees cope with the disasters and providing emergency medical assistance.

October Wildfire Response

In October, four Red Cross shelters were also opened by the Greater Los Angeles chapter in response to twin wildfires in the San Fernando Valley. The Red Cross served more than 8,000 meals and snacks to evacuees and first responders. At that time, nearly 170 chapter volunteers



(top and left photos) Four shelters were opened by the Greater Los Angeles Red Cross during the October wildfires, including one at San Fernando High School. (photos by John Lazar, Daily News)



Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and numerous other government officials visited evacuees at Red Cross shelters opened by the Red Cross during the wildfires.

and staff members assisted evacuees at San Fernando, Sylmar and Canoga Park High Schools, as well as Shepherd of the Hills Church, which partnered with the Red Cross during the fires. The Red Cross provided more than 300

overnight stays for residents.

One of the volunteers who helped at Shepherd of the Hills Church is a new Red Cross disaster volunteer Sharon Jones, whose sister and her family lost their home during a wildfire in San Diego seven years ago. She said the information she learned in her disaster training classes helped her understand the dynamics of a disaster shelter.

"One of the things I learned is that people are comforted by eating something because it brings normalcy to an otherwise chaotic situation," said Jones. "And when you come with just the shirt on your back, it's also comforting to hold a blanket. I saw the importance of providing just those basic essentials to evacuees."

After the shelters closed, the Red Cross continued its commitment to disaster-affected residents by helping them develop a plan to get them back on their feet.

You Can Help by Supporting:

- **Disaster Relief Fund** (See page 3, "Support the Disaster Relief Fund" for more information.)
- **American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles** (The Greater Los Angeles Chapter responds around the clock, 365 days a year, to assure that Red Cross services are provided when they are needed in our community.)

Preparing the Disabled Community for Disasters

Forty representatives and clients from organizations that assist Los Angeles citizens with disabilities learned about disaster preparedness and assembled a personal disaster kit at a half-day workshop held at the Greater Los Angeles chapter. The event was sponsored by the California Safe Corps program (the AmeriCorps service



program affiliated with California chapters of the American Red Cross), the Greater Los Angeles chapter and the UCLA Tarjan Center.

The purpose of the event was to prepare participants and also to recruit and train people with physical or cognitive disabilities to assist the Red Cross in providing disaster education programs to the disabled community. These volunteers will work alongside California Safe Corps members to provide education to at-risk communities throughout Los Angeles County.

Karen Leventhal, director of the Tarjan Center Service Inclusion Project, said "I couldn't have asked for a better-run project to represent



Calif. Safe Corps member Justin Yuen (left) helps the disabled community learn about disaster preparedness.

the goals of the Los Angeles Service Inclusion Network." The Los Angeles Service Inclusion Network is a 200-member coalition of volunteer programs and disability stakeholders that collaborate to include more individuals with disabilities as local volunteers.

The following 12 organizations participated in the preparedness workshop: Beyond Elite, Westside Regional Center, City of Commerce Urban Literacy Program, Volunteer Center of Los Angeles, Community Senior Service of Claremont, El Rancho Unified School District, Mariposa Endeavors, Easter Seals, Advantage Day Program, LA Works, Options for Life and the Disability Rights Legal Center.

Directory

On the web: www.RedCrossLA.org

General Information: 1-800-627-7000

Blood Donations
Dial 1-(800) GIVE LIFE or visit www.GiveLife.org

Communication & Marketing
(310) 445-2650

Community Events
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Credits

AcrossLA is produced and distributed by the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles as an information source for supporters of the American Red Cross and the people of Los Angeles.

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Message from the Chair

Progress Report on the Chapter's Catastrophic Disaster Plan

Dear Friends,

As the year comes to a close, I wanted to update you about the progress we have made in implementing our Catastrophic Disaster Plan — our readiness initiative that will allow us to feed and shelter 250,000 people for up to seven days if a major earthquake or other disaster hits the Southland.

When the Catastrophic Disaster Plan was launched at the end of 2006, our chapter could realistically provide shelter spaces for about 20,000 people and feed approximately 6,000. This year, we have partnered with a number of community and governmental agencies to increase our capabilities. We have now identified shelter spaces for 88,000 people and can provide more than 800,000 meals per day.

We are also recruiting and training thousands of leadership and front-line volunteers to assist in a major disaster. Los Angeles County is helping our chapter reach that goal by allowing us to provide disaster training to its employees, starting with the L.A. County nurses. We have made a concentrated effort to increase our volunteer base, which paid off in the recruitment and training of 400 new Red Cross volunteers this year.

Working with city and county governments, we now have

designated sites for 80 Red Cross disaster relief containers, each to be filled with enough food, water, cots and other supplies for 300 people for five days. And we have developed solid partnerships with a number of community organizations that have agreed to help us provide assistance to disaster victims.

Our financial goal to support our Catastrophic Disaster Plan is \$10 million. This is an ambitious target and is over and above our local response and program needs. To date, we have secured about 30 percent of what we need.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported this endeavor, as well as all of our other Red Cross programs. We would not be able to provide all of our on-going humanitarian assistance without your help.

I wish you a joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,



Edmond Lelo, Chapter Chair

Responding to the Metrolink Train Crash

Mental Health Counseling, Mobile Feeding Provided

After the horrific train collision on Sept. 12 in Chatsworth, more than 70 Red Cross volunteers provided assistance to family members of train passengers and to first responders at the crash site.

Shortly after the incident, the chapter opened a Family Information Center at Chatsworth High School, where family members could wait to hear the fate of their loved ones. As disaster volunteers readied the high school to act as an overnight shelter, volunteer Red Cross Disaster Mental Health specialists and nurses provided comfort to those people who were trying to get through the emotional time period.

At 1:30 a.m. Sat. morning, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa addressed the more than 200 people gathered at the center. Paul Schulz, CEO of the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles, explained that Red Cross mental health workers and nurses were on site and that shelter and food would be available to everyone as long as necessary.

"You can imagine the anguish as government officials released the names of those who were injured but not the names of those who had died. The longer into the night we stayed, the more despondent the families were who received no confirmation of their loved ones," said Schulz.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross provided snacks, beverages and



meals to the hundreds of first responders and people at the Incident Command Post near the accident.

As part of its disaster response, the American Red Cross sends mental health workers and nurses to major transportation accidents to provide emotional support during distressing times.

"I am so proud of the many volunteers and staff who gave up their weekend to assist families and first responders during this horrible tragedy," said Paul Schulz.



Nick Samaniego from the Chapter's Communication & Marketing department (left) assists an evacuee of Hurricane Ike in Galveston, Texas. He was one of more than 70 Los Angeles volunteers and staff members who assisted with the Gulf Coast hurricanes.

L.A. Red Cross Relief Workers Assist LA and Texas Hurricane Victims

The Greater Los Angeles chapter assisted the American Red Cross with massive relief efforts in the Gulf Coast after Hurricanes Gustav and Ike caused widespread damage in August and September.

Nearly 70 volunteers and staff members joined thousands of Red Cross volunteers in helping residents of Texas and Louisiana with their immediate needs, including the distribution of clean-up supplies to those able to return home. Red Cross workers have served more than 10 million meals and snacks at the more than 900 shelters opened in Texas and Louisiana.

To help with the staffing of this massive relief effort, the chapter conducted a two-day training session for 25 Los Angeles area residents who answered the urgent call for Red Cross disaster volunteers. In each day-long disaster training course, volunteers learned all aspects of becoming Red Cross disaster shelter workers and or case management workers for national and local disasters. Five of those volunteers were sent immediately to the Gulf Coast.



Visit www.RedCrossLA.org for more information or call 1-800-627-7000



Be More Prosperous This New Year — By Giving and Receiving

Leave a Lasting Legacy

By John Charnay, Director of Major Gifts

With the holiday season approaching, it is time to reflect on those things for which we are grateful and plan for the coming year.

Please consider helping us to continue our work by joining The McCoy Society, which honors our generous benefactors who have left a lasting legacy of support for our vital, life-saving humanitarian work by remembering the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles in their wills, trusts, insurance policies, retirement or estate plans.



Before the season ends and we celebrate the New Year, please also take a moment to consider making a year-end cash gift to the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles. Doing

so will benefit you, your family and all the people throughout Greater Los Angeles. Here are some benefits to making a gift before the end of this year:

Lower Your Taxes by Giving Now — And Save Money

Charitable gifts to the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles at year-end can result in extra savings for you next spring. And the greater your tax rate, the greater these savings can be from each dollar donated.

Other Options Exist

Retirement plans and insurance policies can offer convenient opportunities for giving as well. Please check with your advisors to see if they can help you to supplement your retirement income and achieve other goals with these types of gifts.

Turning Losses to Gains: Depreciated Securities Can Help

If you own stock or other investments that have decreased in value since you acquired them, you could sell them and donate the cash proceeds to the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles. The loss you incur may also be deductible from other income for more tax savings. You can sell the stock yourself



Red Cross youth volunteers from throughout the Greater Los Angeles area attended a retreat to learn leadership skills.

Asking What They Can Do: Red Cross Youth Attend Leadership Retreat

Fifty students from throughout the Greater Los Angeles area attended a retreat on Sept. 14 to learn leadership skills, meet other Red Cross youth and become part of an exciting new Red Cross youth program.

The retreat brought together young people, ages 14-18, from the following high schools: Mira Costa, Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Van Nuys, and Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies (SOCES), as well as other youth from the West San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles.

"Red Cross youth have been working independently on projects at their various schools, and this retreat was an opportunity for them to work together toward common goals," said Andrea Palato, Youth Programs specialist.

Palato, a former AmeriCorps-California Safe Corps member, is working to provide a structured program in which "youth can unite, grow as leaders and change the community around them."

Red Cross youth will now have an opportunity to get involved at their nearest district office and become a district club member or lead as a district board officer. All youth activities will focus on community education, fundraising, and direct service, along with an annual winter and spring

service project. This year, the youth will be focusing on senior citizens for the winter project.

In addition, students learned how to perform the Earthquake Safety Puppet Show for children, participated in team-building sessions and were challenged to problem-solve with new friends.

"Red Cross youth have been working independently on projects at their various schools, and this retreat was an opportunity for them to work together toward common goals."

— Andrea Palato, Youth Programs Specialist

to realize the loss and take a deduction for tax purposes. Then you can generate a charitable deduction by donating the cash proceeds of that stock sale to the Greater Los Angeles chapter. The combination of the two deductions may actually be higher than the current value of the investment!

As always, your gifts will be most appreciated and used wisely. And your renewed support will allow us to respond

comprehensively and quickly when local disasters strike.

If you have any questions about the McCoy Society or you would like information on joining, please contact Amy Gross at (310) 445-2685.

This information is not intended as legal advice. For legal advice, please consult an attorney.

Support the Disaster Relief Fund

In addition to supporting the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles this holiday season, please consider making a financial gift to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. Many people take for granted that when disaster strikes, the American Red Cross will be there to provide shelter, food, supplies and other emergency services. For 127 years, the Red Cross has offered free services to those in need.

Today, the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, which enables the Red Cross to respond immediately to disasters across the country, is depleted due to an extraordinary decade of disasters. The Red Cross responded to more than 70 large-scale relief operations just this past year, including a record-breaking tornado season, the worst flooding to hit the Midwest in 15 years, a devastating hurricane season, a record-breaking tornado season and the destructive California wildfires.

The Red Cross is now relying on loans to accomplish its vital, humanitarian mission and the cost of preparation and response has exceeded donations to the Disaster Relief Fund.

That is why the Red Cross launched the Campaign for Disaster Relief, a nationwide campaign to raise an initial \$100 million for the Disaster Relief Fund. No one can predict when or where the next major disaster will strike, but it will. You can help ensure that the Red Cross will continue to be there for disaster victims by making a donation, either by visiting www.RedCross.org or by calling 1-800 RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767).



L.A. Chapter Annual Report Now Online

The 2008 annual report, which highlights the Greater Los Angeles chapter's accomplishments during the 2007-2008 fiscal year, is now available to download in PDF format from our website homepage at www.RedCrossLA.org.

The report includes a summary of the chapter's disaster relief efforts during the 2007 Southern California Wildfires and a description of the Catastrophic Disaster Plan to feed and shelter an estimated 250,000 people during a catastrophic earthquake or other disaster.



Everyone Loves Patricia

Patricia Heaton Hosts Luncheon for Tiffany Circle Women Leaders

Emmy Award-winning actress Patricia Heaton hosted a luncheon on Oct. 16 at her Hancock Park home on behalf of the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles Tiffany Circle, a group of women leaders and philanthropists who financially support the Greater Los Angeles Red Cross.

More than 40 women attended the event, including actress Marlee Matlin, who won an Academy Award for Children of a Lesser God, and actress Jennie Garth, who is currently appearing on television's Beverly Hills, 90210. Heaton, who is best known for her work in the television series Everybody Loves Raymond, along with Garth and Matlin, are members of the Red Cross Celebrity Cabinet.

In welcoming the guests, Heaton talked about the important work being done that week by Red Cross volunteers who were assisting thousands of people forced to flee their homes because of two San Fernando Valley wildfires.

"Red Cross volunteers are not aliens who just appear when a disaster strikes," said Heaton. "You and I are what make the Red Cross possible, and we need to get prepared, one neighborhood at a time."

For more information about the Tiffany Circle, please contact Amy Keller at (310) 445-2685 or email kellera@arcla.org.



Actress Patricia Heaton (second from left) hosted a luncheon for members of the chapter's Tiffany Circle Society of Los Angeles. Among the 40 women who attended the lunch were (left) Jill Valenti, founding chair of the Tiffany Circle, and Red Cross Celebrity Cabinet members Jennie Garth and Marlee Matlin.

Chapter Receives Outstanding Volunteer Organization Award

The American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles was honored as the Outstanding Volunteer Organization at the 23rd Annual National Philanthropy Day Celebration on Nov. 12. Representing the Red Cross are René Mortensen (left) and chapter CEO Paul Schulz (second from right), who were given an original piece of art by ninth grade student Connie Chan. NBC Channel 4 News weathercaster Fritz Coleman (right) was the master of ceremonies at the event. Not pictured is Jay Rodriguez, a 60-year Red Cross volunteer who won Outstanding Volunteer.



"Excellent" Volunteers and Employees Recognized



Congratulations to the seven outstanding volunteers and staff members who were honored at the Chapter Excellence Awards luncheon held Oct. 4 at the Los Angeles County Art Museum. Nearly 200 people were on hand to watch the following exemplary individuals win the chapter's top awards: (front row) Patricia Mac Neil, Shana Lynch and Linda Housden, R.N., and (back row) Patricia LaBrie, R.N., Betty Scott and Zoila Bravo. Not pictured is Don Dodson.

Annenberg Foundation Supports Emergency Operations Centers

The American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles announced Sept. 18 it received a \$95,000 grant from the Annenberg Foundation to establish seven new Emergency Operations Centers with advanced communications equipment.

The operations centers are part of the Greater Los Angeles chapter's \$10 million capital disaster preparedness program which will pre-position 80 containers of supplies to provide food and shelter after a catastrophic event.

"Given the pressing need for disaster preparedness within Los Angeles, this gift from the Annenberg Foundation is extremely timely and much-needed," said Paul Schulz, chief executive officer of the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles.

Calif. Safe Corps Members Keep L.A. Safe

Nine Calif. Safe Corps members are currently working with the American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles for a 10 and a half month period to assist Los Angeles communities before, during and after disasters. The Calif. Safe Corps (CSC) program, which began in 2002, is a national AmeriCorps service program that focuses on the safety and preparedness of California residents.

Greater Los Angeles members of the program received training in all basic disaster classes, community disaster education courses, as well as first aid and CPR. They are now providing disaster and preparedness education presentations to community groups, with a focus on assisting underserved populations. Several members spent three weeks in the Gulf Coast providing disaster recovery assistance in the aftermath of Hurricanes Ike and Gustav, and others assisted locally at the October wildfires in the San Fernando Valley.



The 2008-2009 California Safe Corps members at the Greater Los Angeles chapter are (l to r) Erica Helson, Miho Yoshimura, Roxanne Sengok, Cindy Sanchez, Richard "Sonny" Montoya, Katrina Rawls, Jeanne Patraw, Sarah Romig and Justin Yuen.

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