



Gratitude

For your care and compassion, thank you.
For your courage to find a way to “Yes” for those whom you serve,
for your solution focused approaches,
for listening closely to those who trust your confidence,
for collaborating when it adds complexity,
for caring for yourself,
Thank you.

Linda MacIntyre, PhD, RN, PHN, FAAN



Thank You from the Bottom of our Hearts

This fall, massive back-to-back hurricanes devastated the Southeast. First, Hurricane Helene left a path of heartbreak and tragedy across five states. Then Hurricane Milton cut a large swath across Florida, spanning coast to coast. Residents are struggling to recover, and lives have been changed forever. Thankfully, those affected aren't alone during this challenging time.



Johanna Linnersten is a Red Cross Disaster Health Services volunteer nurse, one of numerous Red Cross nurses caring for minor injuries and replacing things like eyeglasses and medications in shelters across the region. She helped at the Red Cross shelter in Hudson, Florida. Photo by Marko Kovic/American Red Cross.

Thousands of selfless American Red Cross disaster volunteers were on the ground in multiple states working tirelessly alongside partners to provide shelter, meals, comfort and support. From across the country, they left their homes and loved ones to lend a hand to help people living with unimaginable destruction.

Red Cross President and CEO Cliff Holtz visited our Hurricane Helene response efforts in western North Carolina and described the Red Cross volunteers as symbols of care and hope. “I was in awe of what I saw,” he said. “The devastation this massive storm caused was heartbreaking. But, during my visit I also saw American Red Crossers delivering so much hope, compassion and comfort. Everywhere we went, people came up to me thanking us for what we are doing to help.” He went

Molly Dalton

on to add that volunteers “shine as a symbol of care and hope when people are facing the toughest of days right now.”

Here are a few stories of these selfless volunteers:

Bradin Howell hails from Indiana and started with the Red Cross less than a week before he was deployed, after wanting to give back to those impacted by the recent storms

in Florida. “This is my first of hopefully many Red Cross deployments,” he said. “I feel like every day is hard work but when I get off, it’s a different feeling than I have ever felt before. I feel like I was put on this earth to help people, and the Red Cross is a way to do that.” Bradin is 19 years old and encourages other people of his generation to get involved and volunteer. “This is the world we are going to inhabit our entire lives, and it is important to take care of one another,” said Bradin. “Our generation has faced some difficulties, and we are still trying to find our voice.



Bradin Howell. Photo by Marko Kovic/American Red Cross.

I think one thing everyone could agree on is that we need to do more to be a community. I think the Red Cross provides a really great community and we are doing great things.”

Candis Hoptowit is a Red Cross Hospital Services staff member and former phlebotomist who took time off from her Red Cross career to volunteer as a shelter worker during this disaster. She has many reasons to want to give back to the organization. “People were in need. That’s why we work for the Red Cross. We are humanitarians,” she said. “When I heard that everyone was in such need down here — I’ve never been through a hurricane — I wanted to come down to help out. I



Candis Hoptowit. Photo by Marko Kokic/American Red Cross

looked around, and there were people with all that they owned in bags in their arms, and I just knew I was in the right place to help.”

Ruben Rivera is a Red Cross volunteer from Oklahoma deployed to Florida. This was his first time volunteering for the Red Cross and he said it was the opportunity to help fellow Latinos that drove him to sign up. “I was watching the news, and they said they really needed volunteers for the Red Cross, and I said why not me, and I signed up,” he said. “I knew nothing about the Red Cross, and I really wanted to volunteer my time. I knew some of the places that had been affected had a large Latino population and I speak Spanish, and I had the time.”



Ruben Rivera. Photo by Marko Kokic/American Red Cross.

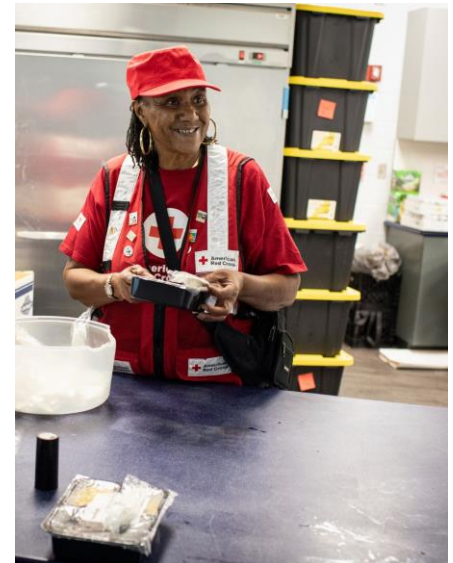
Pamela Pittman started volunteering for the Red Cross this summer after retiring from NASA as a computer scientist. “I loved my job but one of the reasons I wanted to retire as soon as I could is because I wanted to give back. I want to be young enough to give back,” she said. “Maybe that’s why it

is so exciting for me. I loved working for NASA but it’s nice to do something not so technical. It’s refreshing to do something about the people.” This was Pamela’s first deployment, and she is working as a sheltering service associate.



Pamela Pittman. Photo by Marko Kokic/ American Red Cross.

Essie Hopkins is a long-time Red Cross disaster volunteer who is known for her patience, care and big heart. A veteran, Essie calls Washington, D.C. home. She was helping at the Ross Norton Recreation Shelter in Clearwater, Florida, where she developed a special relationship with fellow veterans taking refuge in the shelter. Their nickname for her was “Sunshine” because of her warm personality and ability to light up a room.



Essie Hopkins. Photo by Marko Kokic/ American Red Cross.

These disaster responders dedicated their time to provide safe refuge, comfort and support as people across the Southeast grapple with the aftermath of the storms. As recovery begins, they will be crucial in helping people who have been impacted. Their commitment reminds us that even in the most challenging times, there are always those willing to make a difference. The Red Cross couldn’t meet its mission to serve communities experiencing disasters without the service and dedication of these volunteers, so on behalf of the Red Cross to all volunteers and staff who contribute to the mission: THANK YOU!

If you want to make a difference in the lives of others, consider putting on a red vest and joining us. Find more information at redcross.org/volunteer.

Hurricane Helene: Courage and Compassion While Facing the Storm

Molly Dalton

A year ago, American Red Cross Disaster Health Services Volunteer Cindy Pennie was on a plane to Maui following the devastating wildfires. Now, she finds herself in an emergency evacuation center at Pineview Elementary School in Live Oak, Florida, helping care for those seeking refuge from Hurricane Helene.

“I just brushed my teeth, put my jammies on, and was sitting on the edge of my bed when Tony (another shelter worker) came in and told me someone was having chest pain,” Pennie said. “We walked to the cafeteria, where over 300 of the 500 total people who evacuated were staying, and I saw an older woman complaining of chest pains.”

As a longtime nurse, this wasn’t the first time Pennie encountered someone with a medical emergency — it wasn’t even the first time that night. Hours earlier, an ambulance took a different woman to the hospital. Just as she did before, Pennie instructed fellow responders to dial 911, but the full force of Hurricane Helene was already active, delaying any emergency response intervention.

Looking around the large, bustling cafeteria, Pennie and other volunteers helped the woman walk to the nurse’s office to offer some privacy and a quiet place to rest. Still struggling with chest pains, the older woman laid on a cot while Pennie tried to find a pulse, but it was weak and faint. Pennie and her team found aspirin and administered pre-emptively to the woman.

“As soon as she swallowed, she started having a seizure and went into cardiac arrest,” Pennie said. This time, when Pennie instructed others to dial 911 again to communicate the cardiac emergency, dispatchers agreed to release an ambulance.

Having just recently completed her latest American Red Cross CPR and AED training, Pennie quickly reached for the AED and followed the instructions.



Red Cross nurse Cindy Pennie saved the life of an evacuee in a Red Cross shelter in Live Oak, Florida. Photo by Kim Mailes/American Red Cross.

“Analyzing...shock required...begin CPR...”

“I’ve never done CPR on a real person before,” Pennie said. “I’ve been certified forever and I had just been recertified a couple of weeks before I came [to Florida].”

After two minutes of CPR, the AED chirped again, “Analyzing...shock not required...continue CPR if needed...”

The woman’s pulse returned and she started murmuring to the responders around her. About 20 minutes later, after navigating downed trees, power lines, torrential rains and hurricane-force winds, the ambulance arrived and transported the woman to a hospital where she was stabilized.

Still reeling from the adrenaline of the situation, Pennie texted her husband back home in Oklahoma a summary of the evening she just experienced. “Oh wow,” he texted back. With a reassuring chuckle, Pennie added, “he’s very supportive.”

Pennie has been a Red Cross volunteer since her first deployment to Florida in response to Hurricane Irma in 2017. Back in 2021, after watching news coverage of the devastating tornadoes and storms across western Kentucky, Pennie’s husband turned to her and said, “You have to go; you just have to go.”

As the parish nurse at her church, Pennie also explained how supportive her faith community has been for her deployments. “I feel like I’m doing this on their behalf, too, because they would be here if they could be,” Pennie said. “I just feel like I have all of [my community] back behind me supporting me and helping me.”

That’s her favorite part of disaster response operations with the Red Cross. “Everybody working together and agreeing we’re all in this together, and we’re in a safe place and we can do this,” Pennie said, tearing up. “That’s just really awesome seeing the goodness of people.”

The best way to continue this goodness? Get trained in CPR and how to use an AED, Pennie says.

“I think everybody should learn CPR,” Pennie said, “and not be afraid of it. It’s a lot easier than you think to save a life. If I can do it, you can do it.”

Reunification Teams Help Loved Ones Get Back Together

Disaster can tear families apart when they need each other the most. The American Red Cross and its reunification teams can help your family members reconnect, whether the separation was caused by a recent emergency here at home, war or natural disaster overseas, or events as far back as the Holocaust.

After Hurricanes Milton and Helene, millions were without power and connectivity. Getting in touch with loved ones was extremely difficult.

Thousands of people were missing. Our reunification teams sprang into action, working tirelessly to try to reconnect people. There were more than 11,800 requests for help finding someone.

So, how does the Red Cross help reconnect families after a disaster? After someone reaches out to the Red Cross, we collect as much information as possible including both legal and preferred names (i.e., nicknames or maiden names), pre-disaster address, birthdate, nationality, languages spoken, etc.

We compare this information to our shelter registration lists and any information available from community partners, law enforcement and government agencies. We call local hospitals to see if the person is registered as a patient, comb through media reports and social media sites, and may go in person to a last known address. It’s important to note that each search can be different depending on the individual circumstances and disaster impacts.

As Pennie holds back tears, she remembers what her husband would tell her every day before leaving for her work as a nurse: “Do good work. Save lives.”

Red Cross CPR/AED online, in-person and blended learning courses are available at redcross.org/takeaclass.

Molly Dalton



Shelter resident Mike Brannon shares a warm embrace with volunteer Karen Moehring at the Red Cross shelter in Fletcher, North Carolina. Mike was recently featured on the American Red Cross Facebook page and Karen took it upon herself to show Mike how his post “went viral.” While the post may not have met the qualification for “going viral,” it sure did reach the right audience. Mike’s son, whom he had not spoken to in more than six months, saw the post and called the Red Cross. The reunification team was able to contact the shelter manager who connected Mike with his son. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross.

If you are unable to locate or connect with a loved one or friend who has been impacted by a current disaster event, the Red Cross can help you locate them if they meet certain criteria:

- If your missing loved one is elderly, has a functional or access need, suffers from a medical or mental condition made more severe by the disaster event or has difficulty understanding the English language (spoken or written), you can reach out to your local Red

Cross chapter for assistance. A representative from your local chapter may connect you with Reunification Activity workers in the disaster area to assist with locating your loved one. (Ask for help with an Emergency Welfare Inquiry.)

- If your missing loved one or friend and you resided in the same home prior to the current disaster event but became separated as a result of evacuations or other circumstances, please reach out to your local Red Cross chapter for assistance. Again, a representative from your local chapter may connect you with Reunification Activity workers in the disaster area to assist with locating your missing loved one/housemate.
- If you OR your missing loved one is a member of the “military-connected community” (Active Duty, Reserve, Guard, Retired, Veteran or immediate family), please reach out to your local Red Cross chapter for assistance. A representative from your local chapter may connect you with Reunification Activity workers in the disaster area to assist with locating your missing loved one/friend. (Ask for help with a

Military Welfare Inquiry.)

If your missing loved one/friend doesn't meet one of the above criteria, we recommend that searchers be creative and persistent; if one of the following contact methods doesn't work, try another and don't give up!

If you are looking for someone, we recommend:

- Sending a text message
- Checking your loved one's social media accounts
- Sending an email
- Calling friends and relatives
- Calling during off-peak hours
- Calling people and places where the person

spends time (i.e., neighbors, employer, school, place of worship, senior center, etc.)

If searching for a loved one affected by these storms, please complete the form at [redcross.org/helene](https://www.redcross.org/helene) for the state where they live. Provide as much detail as you can.

Armed conflict, international disasters and migration leave millions of people around the globe in urgent need of humanitarian assistance every year. As the world's largest humanitarian network, Red Cross and Red Crescent teams can also help reconnect families separated by international crises. [Learn more here.](#)

Red Crosser Supports Fellow Service Members after 20 Years of Military Service

Mac Hightower

Sean Day came to the American Red Cross after 20 years of service in the U.S. Army. A job posting for a Hero Care Center in Lawton, Oklahoma caught his eye while on retirement leave in 2019. It was not his first brush with the Hero Care Network. He received an emergency communication while stationed in Germany.



Sean Day is a senior specialist at the Hero Care Center in Fort Sill.

"I remember when I was in Germany and getting a Red Cross message in regard to my grandfather's illness. I was able to come back to the States and see him before he passed," he says.

When a military family experiences a medical emergency or significant life event like a death in the family or the birth of a child, they can relay the news to their service members even when deployed to secure locations, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, either online, on the phone or through the app. When a case is open, specialists like Sean will contact medical personnel to verify the event and liaise with the soldier's command to get that member home. It's a role that Sean says is both fun and challenging, and where no two days are the same.

"Working at the Hero Care Center gives me a sense

of accomplishment – it just gives me something that I want to wake up and do every day, to get out there and help service members and their families get their service members home, whether it be good news or bad news," Sean shared.

Having the chance to come home and be with family while his grandfather passed is an experience that Sean draws on frequently now that he's on the other end of the phone.

"For me, working on this side of the American Red Cross after receiving that Red Cross message in the past, I see how much work goes into trying to get a verified Red Cross message. I mean, there's times that we're dealing with a doctor's office for two, three, four days in a row, sometimes a week, just trying to get the information we need."

Sean works at Hero Care Center in



Sean Day (right) helps coworker Leilani Stancell-Copeland with a case in the American Red Cross Hero Care Center at Fort Sill.

Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the nation's largest facility of its kind, receiving over 317,000 calls each year. And the American Red Cross is the only agency that can officially verify an emergency.

"Every case that we're able to help somebody, it always makes me feel good," he said. "So, whether that be just to try and get somebody home to see their child's birth or whether it be to bring somebody home so they can, you know, say the last goodbyes to grandpa — it definitely makes you feel good."

NATIONAL DONORS JOIN LONG LEGACY OF RED CROSS MILITARY SUPPORT

American Red Cross International Services

[International Services](#)

[\(IS\)](#) is one component of American Red Cross Humanitarian Services, alongside Disaster Cycle Services and Service to the Armed Forces. All three share the Red Cross mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies, by mobilizing the power of volunteers and generosity of donors.

IS works within the International Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement and beyond to support global humanitarian efforts. We strive to be a trusted partner in the RCRC Movement, collaborating with local national societies and communities to prepare for emergencies and support recovery efforts, especially in the most vulnerable regions.

Engaging with communities is at the heart of our work, involving local voices in every step. Our work is inclusive and representative of the communities we serve. We are committed to locally led, climate-adapted disaster risk management, working hand-in-hand with local leaders to build stronger, more resilient communities.



Lombok, Indonesia, community-based action team. Photo by Sydney Morton/American Red Cross.

Generous donations from Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces Giving Program members enable the Red Cross to maintain a global network of thousands of volunteers and employees to support the military 365 days a year through emergency communications, training, community resources and support to ill and injured service members and veterans. Contributions from partners like Bank of America, Lockheed Martin Corporation and Wilf Family Foundations ensure the Red Cross is there 24/7 to provide comfort and care to members of the military, veterans and their families as they prepare for, cope with and respond to the challenges of military service.

Mark Tannenbaum, EdD

We prioritize innovative solutions and sustainable practices, leveraging cutting-edge technology and data-driven approaches to respond swiftly and efficiently. We focus on capacity building and knowledge sharing to empower local communities. We

foster unity and collaboration and enhance our collective impact through a stronger one RCRC Movement approach.

To this end, American Red Cross is supporting the RCRC Movement's global efforts to scale up climate-smart disaster risk reduction and anticipatory / early action, enabling climate-smart livelihoods and services, with a commitment to improving expertise in climate change adaptation, anticipation and response.

Specifically, we respond to emergencies around the world with financial and technical resources. Since 2020 we have contributed resources to over 110 emergencies, including major disasters such as [Hurricane Dorian](#) in the Bahamas, the protracted crisis in [Ukraine](#) and surrounding countries, and now the [Middle East](#). We also support community disaster preparedness work in Nepal, Bangladesh,



Bahamas Hurricane Dorian response. Photo by Holly Baker/American Red Cross.

Since 2022 we have begun climate preparedness work in the Pacific Islands of Vanuatu, Palau, Tuvalu, Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands, as well as in Honduras and Colombia in South and Central America.

Another key objective of IS is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, scalability and accountability of IFRC secretariat, National Societies' operations and systems, by leveraging our own resources, expertise and partnerships. Overall, American Red Cross investments help expand the disaster risk management capacities of local National Societies and of the IFRC secretariat to sustainably meet community needs, especially those resulting from climate-related disasters.

In addition to this work, we are a founding partner of the Measles and Rubella Partnership, with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance; UNICEF; United Nations Foundation and WHO. This legacy health partnership focuses on

Philippines, Indonesia and Timor Leste in Asia-Pacific, and in El Salvador and Guatemala in Latin America and the Caribbean.

engaging local partners to understand gaps in routine immunization systems, engage communities during vaccination campaigns, and address maternal neonatal child health issues in vulnerable communities. Its goal is that all children are protected through vaccinations and measles and rubella are eliminated around the globe. Since 2001, the partnership has supported 88 countries to deliver more than 3.86 billion doses of measles vaccine, helped to raise measles vaccination coverage to 83% globally, and reduced measles deaths by 82%. To date, the partnership has invested more than US \$1.2 billion in measles and rubella control activities.



Malawi measles vaccination campaign. Photo by Niki. M. Clark/American Red Cross

Lastly, two international programs are implemented domestically in the United States. Our International Humanitarian Law program is guided by the Geneva Conventions to provide advocacy and education to the American public on humanitarian protections during armed conflicts. In addition, as members of the RCRC Movement, we reconnect families separated internationally by humanitarian crisis, through the globally operated Restoring Family Links program.

More detailed information about [International Services](#) and the [RCRC Movement](#) are available through these links.

New Elevate™ SMART Manikin Training Solution Delivers Enhanced Precision and Greater Training Flexibility

Marie Manning, APR

The American Red Cross and Elevate Healthcare, Inc. have released the new, innovative Elevate™ SMART Manikin training solution designed for American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED and Basic Life Support (BLS) education and skills assessment.



Tailored for self-directed learning, this educational

model maximizes instructor efficiency while ensuring participants learn essential skills with greater technical accuracy, objectivity and consistency. This training solution, incorporating Red Cross best-in-class curriculum, results in one of the most precise assessments of lifesaving skills. It is not intended to replace

instructor-led classes, but instead adds an option that expands the accessibility of Red Cross training and certification to meet the round-the-clock needs of hospitals, EMS units and B2B workplaces.

“We have reimagined the learning environment with this training solution to offer expansive reach and greater training flexibility,” said Dom Tolli, senior vice president of Product Management and Platform Development for the Red Cross. “This new self-directed training solution goes beyond the traditional classroom environment with first-to-market features such as AED and severe bleeding skills” (included with the Elevate™ SMART Manikin Plus).

Personalized Lifesaving Training That Goes Beyond the Traditional Classroom Environment

Learners begin their certification experience with a didactic eLearning course taken at a time and day of their choosing. Upon successful completion of the eLearning course, learners engage in a skills session with the Elevate™ SMART Manikin, connected to a tablet that accurately measures and assesses their performance. On-call support by a Red Cross instructor is available if needed.

“As the foremost training organization for first aid and CPR, we are committed to advancing lifesaving education and skills so that learners are prepared to respond properly when moments matter,” added Tolli.

Streamline Tracking and Reporting

Reminder: Deadline for [Nursing Award](#) Nominations is December 6

The deadline for nominating a nurse for the Ann Magnussen Award and/or applying for the Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award grant has been extended until Friday, December 6. This date continues to be the deadline for the Florence Nightingale Medal nominations.

[Ann Magnussen Award - OneSource](#)

The Ann Magnussen Award is presented annually to a volunteer or employed registered nurse with three or more years of Red Cross service who has

Intuitive dashboard reports enable administrators to quickly evaluate learner performance, pinpoint areas for improvement and track progress over time, all while meeting compliance and regulatory requirements.

“This new self-directed training solution offers greater accuracy, convenience and efficiency for both learners and organizations,” said Brian Truesdale, CEO of Elevate Healthcare.

Training Solution Options

“The broad spectrum of skills options allows the Elevate™ SMART Manikin training solution to easily integrate into a wide variety of environments such as training provider facilities, workplaces, public safety agencies, hospitals, military bases or educational institutions,” continued Truesdale. Two versions of the Elevate™ SMART Manikin training solution are available with different functionality.

As the leader in First Aid and Resuscitation training, the

Red Cross advances training education, standards and tools to ensure the quality and consistency of the training given by the Red Cross and its licensed training providers. Additional details about the Elevate™ SMART Manikin training solution can be found at redcross.org/SMART.



Laurie Willshire, MPH, BSN, RN

made an outstanding contribution to strengthening or improving American Red Cross programs and services. It is the highest honor of nursing achievement in the American Red Cross.

[Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award - OneSource](#)

The Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award provides grant support of \$5,000 for a Red Cross proposal that promotes nurse and/or nursing student involvement across Red Cross lines of business, and/or in policy and leadership roles. Submissions

are invited from chapters, regions and stations.

[Florence Nightingale Medal - OneSource](#)

The Florence Nightingale Medal is the highest international honor of nursing contribution in the Red Cross/Red Crescent network and is awarded every two years by the International Committee of

the Red Cross (ICRC). The Florence Nightingale Medal honors exceptional nurses and nursing aides, celebrating their contribution to the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to humanitarian work in general.

Questions? Contact RedCrossNurse@redcross.org.

The Value and Impact of the Chief Nurse: Part Four in a Series

Following is the final entry in a series of articles about Red Cross chief nurses. With this series we are recognizing our past and present nurse leaders within Red Cross Nursing, and trying to do justice to Vivian Littlefield's final contribution to this newsletter and perhaps her last great idea to help support Nursing and nurses within the Red Cross. As Dr. Littlefield wrote in 2011 in an article for the first edition of this newsletter,

"OUR HERITAGE ASSURES OUR FUTURE."

Please be sure you do not miss the final few paragraphs from our current Chief Nurse Linda MacIntyre.

If you missed a prior part of the series, you can read them in the [Winter](#), [Spring](#), or [Summer](#) editions of this newsletter.

Reflections on My Tenure as Chief Nurse of the American Red Cross

Linda MacIntyre, PhD, RN, PHN, FAAN



Linda MacIntyre

Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross on May 21, 1881, to protect and care for civilians and those wounded during war. Today, mitigating suffering and death and promoting well-being are at the core of Red Cross humanitarian service. The vision for Red Cross Nursing and Health is to:

"Ensure a prepared, nimble, and diverse workforce of engaged Red Cross nurses and other health professionals enterprise wide that supports volunteerism across the lifespan and promotes health and resilience within our communities."

My role as chief nurse has been focused on ensuring that individuals and communities remain at the center of our mission. Supporting a diverse and prepared workforce of nurses and other health professionals, both volunteers and employees, has been a key part of this vision. To accomplish this, we have fostered a culture of inclusion, belonging and respect, with the goal of promoting health, resilience and equity in all the communities we serve.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of collaborating with nursing and health leaders from a wide array of national organizations, including my role on the Federal Nursing Service Council (FNSC). The FNSC represents approximately 125,000 federal and civilian nurses serving 8.5 million people. It was tempting to set goals that measured the success of how the council would be perceived rather than what it achieved for those whom it serves. We agreed to prioritize nurses and the individuals we serve in setting FNSC goals. By supporting the workforce, we support those whom we serve.

Background

My journey to the Red Cross was unconventional, beginning with a degree in theology, followed by work as a residential social worker in England. After returning to the U.S., I obtained a bachelor's degree in nursing; I joined the Red Cross in Kansas City as a Community Health Nurse Manager in 1998. There, I oversaw several programs, including a flu shot program and Disaster Health Services. The flu shot program reached thousands of people annually, and served 18,500 during the 2001 anthrax scare in Kansas City.

Warren Hawblitzel was my first supervisor at the

Red Cross and an excellent mentor. His appointment letter informed me that while this might be some of the most demanding and frustrating work that I had ever done, it would likely be the most rewarding. Warren made space for failures. There was no judgement, only support for trying something new and learning more. Throughout this period, I was fortunate to also be mentored by Lydia Marien, then National Nursing Committee (NNC) Chair and Kansas City Board Chair who helped me establish connections that would shape my future at the Red Cross, starting with my appointment to the NNC.

When serving on the National Nursing Committee (NNC) and traveling to Washington D.C. for quarterly meetings, I learned about the different cultures across the organization and the various perspectives these groups brought to the Red Cross. These included medical/FDA-regulated, emergency management, non-profit, corporate, military and international cultures that were all under one humanitarian umbrella. I learned about the various perspectives these groups brought to the Red Cross. I observed that some people changed when they accepted a national position, such as becoming less willing to share information, much of which seemed attributable to organizational culture. When senior leadership encouraged collaboration, information sharing improved.

Academics & Volunteering

In 2006, I moved to California to pursue a doctorate in nursing. I continued to work part-time for the Red Cross and then volunteered in various capacities. I completed my PhD and accepted a faculty position at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). In 2012 I began serving as chair of the NNC and volunteer partner to Dr. Sharon Stanley.

My goals for the NNC were to increase diversity of background and thought in our national nursing leaders. Barbara Nichols helped me reframe my expectations when responses to a diversity survey were less than I had hoped. Over the years my team was intentional in recruiting leaders who looked and thought differently than ourselves. Dr. Carmen Kynard served as the NNC Chair and my volunteer partner until 2019. In 2020, Donna Mazyck

became the NNC Chairperson and my volunteer partner. Carmen and Donna helped us achieve significant increases in non-white and male representation among nursing and health leaders.

Nurse Recognition

There are 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide. The prestigious Florence Nightingale Medal is awarded every two years with



U.S. recipients of the 2013 Florence Nightingale Medal (left to right): Dr. Marie O. Etienne, Dr. Vivian Littlefield, Dr. Tener Goodwin Veenema, COL (ret) Dr. Sharon A. R. Stanley, and Lt. Cmdr. Deborah (Lynn) Redman. Photo by Daniel Cima/ American Red Cross.

societies like the American Red Cross submitting nominations. To my knowledge all U.S.

recipients of the medal prior to 2013 were white women, though I would welcome information that disproves this. I was privileged to hear Dr. Marie Etienne's story about



Florence Nightingale Medal U.S. recipients, 2015 (left to right): Dr. Carmen Kynard, Vonnice Thomas, Diane St. Denis, COL Laura Favand.



Dr. Linda MacIntyre, Chief Nurse and RADM Sylvia Trent-Adams, 2017 Florence Nightingale Medal U.S. recipient.

her work in Haiti and nominated her for the medal. I was delighted when Dr. Etienne was selected along with Dr. Vivian Littlefield, LCDR Deborah Redman, Dr. Sharon Stanley and Dr. Tener Veenema. We have continued to ensure that diverse nurses are nominated and recognized for their outstanding achievements.

Becoming a Red Cross Employee Again

In 2013 with Sharon Stanley's encouragement, I accepted the position of American Red Cross Chief Nurse. I understood some of the position's challenges and opportunities. The Nursing unit had been moved to different departments over the years. Nursing connectivity in the Red Cross was primarily achieved through relationships rather than organizational structure. Resources were limited; however, the position had considerable autonomy. I became a Red Cross employee once again and have continued to volunteer for UCSF.

Early in my position as chief nurse, I spoke to Red Cross senior leaders and advocated for ways to expand the Red Cross influence on health. I was told that the Red Cross "doesn't do health." At that time, health was viewed primarily through a medical lens. I needed different words to explain how Red Cross humanitarian work that impacts well-being and mitigates suffering and death was related to health. Blood transfusions, water safety classes, CPR training, client casework, and disaster preparedness and response are examples of ways that the Red Cross improves and protects health then and now. Today, the Red Cross Community Adaptation Program addresses at-risk communities vulnerable to disasters and is focused on health, housing and hunger.



Mary Kellam, Nursing and Health Associate.

I am deeply grateful to Mary Kellam, Nursing and Health Associate, who supported me from 2014 to early 2016. Mary, kind and efficient, gained the trust of both employees and volunteers. When National Headquarters (NHQ) Volunteer Services (VS) was restructured in 2016, Mary's position was moved to another unit. VS was restructured two more times, and the chief nurse position has been the only



Nursing and Health leadership meeting, 2017, Washington D.C.

employee position in the Nursing and Health unit since 2016. Nevertheless, there have been several notable achievements due to an incredible group of 70-80 dedicated volunteer nursing and health leaders.

Academic Service-Learning

In 2014, I proposed a national Academic Service-Learning (AS-L) program to increase involvement of students and faculty in the Red Cross mission. I received encouragement to move forward from Gail McGovern, then Red Cross President and CEO.

I stressed that AS-L was for students in any discipline, but the message was not always received. I related how in Kansas City AS-L theater students provided fire safety skits for school children, and marketing students assisted with chapter campaigns. Several years ago, I learned that it did not make sense to some of my colleagues that I would advocate for programs outside of nursing. I was grateful when one employee shared their feedback that the "noise" of me being a nurse interfered with the message, and I appreciated when colleagues outside of nursing advocated for the program. It took almost ten years to convince NHQ colleagues of the value of AS-L, which was humbling. I needed new ways to share my vision for the many ways AS-L could benefit all who were involved. Meanwhile, Red Cross regions across the country gradually increased academic collaborations in their communities. Most of the interest was for nursing, social work and public health programs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when nursing programs lost many of their hospital clinical sites for students, the AS-L program increased by 50% over two years. Obtaining accurate AS-L data was a challenge due to many other priorities. AS-L was not required; it was a means to meet goals and metrics. I celebrated our ability to offer a “carrots only” program. We developed a toolkit and added a process to more easily complete agreements with academic organizations. I am grateful for the many academic collaborations that help us serve both students and their communities.

Well-being

Another priority for me has been workforce well-being. As disaster response is often physically and emotionally taxing, we needed tools to support our well-being that were easy to learn and use. With generous partner collaboration, I introduced [HeartMath® techniques](#) to support Red Crossers in managing stress and building resilience. The techniques are deceptively simple but effective. Today, more than 20 certified trainers are available to teach these evidence-based techniques. Workforce well-being is vital in effectively serving communities.

Service, Continuing Education & Publications

The Red Cross relies on health and mental health professionals to serve clients, and volunteers comprise approximately 90% of the Red Cross workforce. Many states require continuing education to renew health professional licenses. This can be costly in time and money. Posie Carpenter was instrumental in organizing symposiums with free nursing contact hours. Cheri



Long Beach Volunteer Meeting March 2017 with Cheri Larson, Regional Nurse Lead, back row second from right.

Larson assisted with obtaining free contact hours and worked to increase nurse engagement in the Los Angeles Region. I heard firsthand how a Licensed Vocational Nurse in L.A. found greater appreciation in her employment because of her volunteer work as a Blood Donor Ambassador.

For more than three years, my team worked with [Relias](#) on a Memorandum of Understanding to provide free continuing education for Red Cross health and mental health professionals. In April 2024 we celebrated our collaboration in a national webinar. Continuing education offerings are divided into four separate bundles with offerings for Social Workers & Behavioral Health, EMTs, Physician Assistants and Physicians and Nurses. Additionally, several courses meet requirements for pharmacists.

With much collaboration, we had six peer-reviewed publications since 2014 and a seventh will be published in 2025. The publications address disaster nursing, advocating for clients, the need for diverse blood donation, and leading to create change. Debby Dailey advocated for disaster client Janetta Sconiers, and Janetta encouraged Debby to share the story to help others ([AJN, 2019](#)). The newest article explores Red Cross AS-L opportunities that are mapped to American Association of College of Nursing competencies with pre-/post- self-scored questions to assess knowledge and confidence in applying skills. The mapping work is relevant for accreditation. Dr. Linda Fahey, Senior Nurse Consultant, led a team to complete this work. Dr. Shawna Sisler serves as a Loaned Executive on my team and is lead author of the manuscript. Lynn Sagara and many others provided valuable insights.



Debby Dailey, Janetta Sconiers and her dog Sacha. Photo by Eddie Zamora/American Red Cross.

Collaborating with Pharmacies in Non-Urban Areas

Volunteering or receiving Red Cross services can be more challenging in non-urban areas. I convened a team of pharmacists and nurses that made recommendations to address these issues through

collaborations with rural/community pharmacies. Almost 90% of the US population live within 5 miles of a pharmacy ([JAPhA](#)). Community pharmacies are often hubs where health information and support are available. The pharmacists on the team had experiences with disasters affecting their communities. Pharmacists are trusted health professionals and their communities relied on them for accurate information and to support their health needs.

Gratitude & Appreciation

I am deeply grateful to Cynthia Vlasich, Nancy McKelvey, Dr. Vivian Littlefield (who led as Volunteer Chair of Nursing during a period without a chief nurse) and Dr. Sharon Stanley who each served before me as the Red Cross Chief Nurse. Some of their stories are in previous issues. Donna Mazyck and Carolyn Nganga-Good lead the NNC and I continue to benefit from their kind and insightful wisdom. Dorothy Sawyer, National Nursing Network Director, is leading nurses nationwide in growing AS-L and helping nursing students and faculty to be ready to respond to disasters.



Ross Ogden receives honorary nursing pin, 2017.



Susan Denavit, 2017 Ann Magnussen recipient and Dr. Linda MacIntyre.

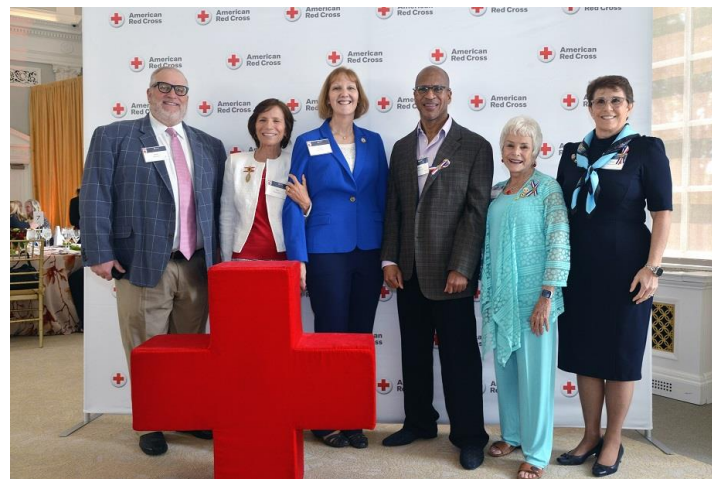
Ross Ogden, Executive Volunteer, Biomedical Volunteer Workforce Engagement received an honorary nursing pin to recognize his ongoing advocacy for nurses so that we can more effectively serve. Molly Dalton has tirelessly supported my team with internal and external communications. Samantha Taylor created the [American Red Cross Nurse story map](#) to help recognize and recruit new volunteers. Susan Denavit manages the RedCrossNurse mailbox

and supports Disaster Response Operations by verifying health professional licenses. Laurie Willshire retired from the Red Cross in 2024 and is serving as my executive assistant and continuing to serve as the chairperson of the Awards

Subcommittee. I am truly fortunate that Laurie chose to support the Office of Nursing and Health in her retirement.

Many volunteers come to the Red Cross to give back and then find a new community in Red Cross. I am fortunate that the Nursing and Health leaders are smart, dedicated and compassionate. They challenge me to think differently, and they also make me laugh.

I appreciate Cliff Holtz, American Red Cross President and CEO for his commitment to ensure organizational sustainability and I value Gail McGovern, Chairman of the Board, for her compassion and business acumen. I applaud Trevor Riggen, President of Humanitarian



Matt Bertram, Dr. Sue Hassmiller, Dr. Linda MacIntyre, Ryland Hamlet, Pat Chappell & Posie Carpenter, 2023. Photo by Dermot Tatlow/American Red Cross.

Services for challenging us to better serve communities. I am grateful to Matt Bertram, Vice President of Volunteer Services for improving the volunteer experience



Neal and Nancy McKelvey with Dr. Linda MacIntyre.

through innovation. I have had the good fortune to work with hundreds of outstanding humanitarians.

Challenges and opportunities

I see the Red Cross as a microcosm of our larger society. The challenges that are faced within the organization are often found externally as well. Examples include practices that limit or expand

inclusion and belonging of groups of individuals based on their background, race/ethnicity, or identity. While progress has been made, there is more to do to ensure equitable access to serve as a volunteer and access to Red Cross resources nationwide.

There are more than 13,000 Red Cross health and mental health professionals across the organization. The impact of their work is tremendous. There are nurse and physician employee positions in Biomedical Services and Training who do outstanding work. Yet there are only three NHQ full-time employee positions in Humanitarian Services that require a registered nurse license and to my knowledge, there are none in the field. This is a cause for celebration because of the amazing work that nurses do alongside other health/mental health professionals and colleagues.

There is also an opportunity. Many Red Cross nurses volunteer across the organization. They also volunteer for other organizations and often care for older adults and other family members. Nurses bring a wealth of expertise to the Red Cross. A colleague told me that she hired nurses because a nurse has skills to address physical health, mental/emotional health, and provide safe environments, or “three employees in one.”

Increasing the number of Red Cross nurse employees with dedicated time to support teams of

volunteers would expand capacity for service delivery. If three nurse employees have successfully led teams to deliver Disaster Health Services for thousands, supported all five lines of service, and facilitated overseas deployment, imagine what is possible with a few more nurses. Volunteers are at the heart of humanitarian services and sufficient employee support can expand their reach.

None of the buildings or programs that we have labored over will last forever. However, I believe that the impact of our care will continue long after we are gone. As I leave the role of chief nurse on November 30th, I am confident that the Nursing and Health leaders will keep individuals and communities central. The infrastructure and roadmap for sustainability are in place. The way that the Red Cross delivers services will change, and I trust that the humanitarian focus that began in 1881 will continue.

I am grateful for and honored by the opportunity to serve in this unique position. These accomplishments could not have been achieved alone. I am delighted that Dr. Linda Fahey has agreed to serve as Interim Chief Nurse as a volunteer until the new Chief Nurse is appointed. New leaders are emerging, and I look forward to seeing how they shape and inspire our humanitarian service.



The graphic features a dark blue background with white snowflake icons. On the left, there is a heart-shaped collage of winter-themed icons (gifts, snowflakes, hearts, a Red Cross cross) and a photograph of a young boy hugging an elderly woman who is wearing a red American Red Cross volunteer vest. In the top right corner, the American Red Cross logo (a red cross in a white circle) is displayed next to the text "American Red Cross". Below the logo, the text "GIVE SOMETHING THAT" is written in a white, bold, sans-serif font, followed by "Means Something" in a white, elegant script font. At the bottom center, there is a white rectangular button with a black border containing the text "Give now" in blue.

 American Red Cross

GIVE SOMETHING THAT
Means Something

[Give now](#)

Remember Year-End Contributions

Corie Story

This can be such a busy time of year—the seasons are changing, the holidays are approaching and the new year is just around the corner. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle, we encourage you to remember to make your charitable contributions before December 31. There are many reasons why year-end is the ideal time for charitable giving.

Tax benefits—In many cases, charitable contributions are tax-deductible. By making your contributions before the end of the year, you may be able to reduce your taxable income for this year, which will lower your tax bill when you file your taxes next spring. We would be happy to work with you and your advisors to help determine the tax implications of a year-end contribution and explain the many gift giving options available to you.

Year-end momentum—Did you know that the majority of charitable contributions are made in the last quarter of the year? Like many charitable organizations, we count on this momentum for an influx of contributions to support our crucial programs and life-saving services. By giving before the end of the year, you can help ensure we have the resources we need to continue to make a difference.

Matching gift deadlines—Some employers and others offer matching gift programs, which can multiply the impact of your contribution. These programs often have deadlines and making your contribution before the end of the year can help you maximize your impact.

Peace of mind—Making your charitable contributions early can help you avoid the last-minute rush and ensure that your contribution is processed in a timely manner. Especially, if you are considering a contribution of mutual funds or other securities or a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA, it's best to avoid waiting until the last minute.

If you would like more information or assistance in making a gift as a year-end contribution please contact Sr. Gift Planning Officer, Corie Story, at 314-239-2524 or by email at: corie.story@redcross.org.

AMERICAN RED CROSS National Nursing Committee
Heritage Sub-Committee Members: Elizabeth Kazmier, Editor; Molly Dalton; Bill Darr; Donna Dorsey; Linda MacIntyre; Cheryl Schmidt; Corie Story; Mark Tannenbaum; Laurie Willshire



Help us connect with and recognize other current and former Red Cross Nurses!

Please send the email, phone, and address of your friends and colleagues to us at RedCrossNurse@redcross.org. Share this newsletter via email and/or your preferred social media. Go to <http://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/nursing-health/nursing-network> and select a link under “View Previous Issues.”

Thank you!