

Connections

SERVING AMELIA, CHESTERFIELD, GOOCHLAND, HANOVER, HENRICO, NEW KENT, POWHATAN AND RICHMOND

RED CROSS IN ACTION

Disaster Assistance Provides Comfort, Much Needed Help



Luis Amaya and daughter Keila stand in front of their Chesterfield County apartment that was destroyed by fire. The Red Cross assisted the Amayas and their three children with housing, food and clothing.

“We left in pajamas. I just kept thinking, ‘I can’t believe this is going on.’”

Keila Amaya, 16 year old fire victim

That night, Binui Amaya, 13, stayed up late to watch T.V. with her sister, Sarai, 10. She fell asleep in the living room of the Amaya’s ground floor apartment.

Binui woke up at 3 a.m. to a strange popping noise—and a bizarre light. Through the picture window, she saw fire raging on the back deck. The sliding glass doors were already cracking from the heat. She raced to awaken her five family members.

“We could hear stuff breaking. We only had time to get to the front door. The fire filled the whole apartment,” said Keila, 16. “We left in pajamas. No shoes, no nothing. We had to walk in the street barefoot. I just kept thinking, ‘I can’t believe this is going on.’”

Luis Amaya shudders, recounting the loss: “Three computers, stereo, television, papers, clothes, beds—everything was gone. All my books—ten boxes of them—they melted into a ball of plastic in the closet.”

“Everything my parents ever worked for is gone,” agrees Keila. “Wasn’t there a Bible story like this about some guy named Job?”

The Amayas are philosophical about their plight. Their strong faith, along with help from friends, neighbors, their church and the Red Cross, has sustained them.

“Gracias a La Cruz Roja. The Red Cross was here from the beginning. They helped us with money for food, for clothing, and stood ready to assist us with whatever we needed,” recalls Mr. Amaya. His employer, Steeber and Father Co. Inc., helped the family find a house to rent.

The Amayas may never know what caused the fire on the apartment’s concrete deck, but there are some certainties: “God has a purpose for everything.” And, “We will definitely get renters’ insurance for the new house.”

A Tight Knit Friendship Helps People In Need

“We do for people who don’t have any other way of getting help.”

Pat Tune, Web of Hope volunteer

The Web of Hope is a wonderful example of a program that exemplifies the mission of the American Red Cross. And Pat Tune and Mae Jordan are two examples of the volunteers who make the Web the outstanding humanitarian effort that it is.

Friends for over 50 years, when Pat approached Mae about knitting, it was an easy sell. “I would come to Mae’s house to visit and when we talked I was always knitting,” said Pat who has made about 400 items since she began with the Web ten years ago. “So I said, ‘Mae you need to learn to knit.’”

Mae has made several scarves which take about ten hours each to create. They will be added to the hundreds of items that Web volunteers ship worldwide every month. “Pat was my inspiration and I really do love it,” said Mae. “I think this is really great as it gives me an opportunity to do something for somebody else.”

Often the Web receives notes and pictures of orphans or other clothing recipients wearing the Richmond creations. “We do for people who don’t have any other way of getting help,” said Pat. “The Web is filled with so many giving, talented people. It’s energizing to be a part of the group.”

For information about free knitting classes or joining the Web of Hope call 780-2270.



Friends since the 1940s, Mae Jordan, left, and Pat Tune both knit for the Web of Hope, a Red Cross project that has shipped 61,125 items to underserved populations worldwide. Pat has knitted over 400 items since she became involved with the Web of Hope.

S E R V I N G O U R T R O O P S



Dear Friends,

Once again our newsletter is filled with stories of people helped by the Red Cross. Our world is ever-changing and we must grow to meet those challenges. With the addition of Amelia, New Kent, Goochland and Powhatan counties, our territory has significantly increased. The populations we serve are also changing. For example, we are now teaching classes in different languages in an effort to reach more people and to recruit new volunteers and donors.

No better example of that challenge was when Tropical Storm Gaston flood waters caused the Falling Creek community to be evacuated. Many of the residents spoke no English, making the rescue and aid efforts difficult.

When such a tragedy happens again, we will be well-prepared. Chesterfield's St. Augustine Catholic Church, which has hundreds of Hispanic families in its congregation, is now an approved Red Cross shelter. About 40 St. Augustine members have also been trained in shelter operations.

Partnerships such as this allow us to more efficiently respond to emergencies. And no partnership is more important than that of our volunteers, clients and donors. Please help us continue the much needed help that we are daily called to provide.

This year many of our donors chose to designate their gifts to tsunami relief in Southeast Asia instead of giving to support local needs. Greater Richmonders also need your help.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Kathleen B. Barrett
Kathleen Burke Barrett, CEO
 Greater Richmond Chapter

J. Theodore Linhart
J. Theodore Linhart, Chair
 Board of Directors
 Greater Richmond Chapter

Man's Best Friend Brings Comfort, Healing To Veterans

Red Cross worker Camille Gaffney has seen first-hand the impact of "Caring Canines" on patients at McGuire Veteran's Medical Center. A memory she will always carry was when an unresponsive patient lit up when he saw one of the dogs walk into his room. On the next visit the patient laughed, something he had not done for a long while.

"It was incredibly moving to watch how he responded to the interaction with the dog," said Camille. "Even the doctors were amazed and now they are true believers in the benefits of this therapy."

Camille and "Caring Canines" owner, Donna Henley, bring four-legged critters to McGuire to provide companionship, provide physical assistance and to help patients form therapeutic bonds with the animals. The dogs also



Caring Canine therapy dogs Alex (above) and Pixie visit patients at McGuire Veterans Medical Center. Interaction with therapy dogs has dramatically enhanced patients' recovery rate.



bring physical, psychological and social benefits to the veterans. Time spent with the animals has lowered blood pressure, reduced loneliness and depression and improved the self esteem of patients.

Brushing a dog's hair has become recreational and physical therapy, giving patients inspirational alternatives to traditional therapies. The therapeutic interaction has resulted in improved motivation and motor skills in several patients.

"Many of our veterans have recently returned from Iraq and some of them are having to learn to live with severe disabilities," said Camille. "Sometimes the dogs reach them in a way that humans can't. Caring Canines perform miracles at McGuire every time they visit."

For information about the Chapter's Armed Forces Emergency Services program or to volunteer, call 780-2270.

A N O T H E R Y O U T H P A R T N E R S H I P

You Go Girls: Get Prepared!

At Disaster Preparedness Day, the Greater Richmond Chapter trained 147 Girl Scouts and their troop leaders in Red Cross preparedness skills. Through a series of hands-on activities, Scouts were introduced to the five steps of Red Cross preparedness: make a plan, build a kit, get trained, give blood and volunteer.

"This was a tremendous learning event because it made the girls so much more aware of the environment we live in today," said Kathleen Burke Barrett, CEO of the American Red Cross. "Knowing about preparedness and developing these skills will allow them to spread their knowledge through out the community."

The Together We Prepare program, developed by the American Red Cross and the Girl Scout Commonwealth Council, teams Scouts with Red Cross preparedness experts to help the Scouts, their families and their communities prepare for unpredictable events.



Girl Scouts with "Community Caren," the United Way mascot, proudly display bags of safety materials collected at the Red Cross preparedness training.



SAFETY TIPS AND TRAINING

Top 10 Water Safety Tips



Call 780-2280 for more information about Red Cross courses, including swimming and water safety classes, or go to www.greaterrichmond.redcross.org.

- 1 Learn to swim.
- 2 Swim with a buddy, never alone.
- 3 Obey rules and signs at the pool and beach.
- 4 Watch out for the "dangerous toos": too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- 5 Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies.
- 6 Do not mix alcohol and swimming.
- 7 Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts.
- 8 Keep basic lifesaving equipment nearby and know how to use it.
- 9 Watch children at all times around water.
- 10 Get trained in Red Cross CPR and first aid.

Lifesaving Skills Only a Mouse Click Away with Blended Learning

Beginning July 1, the Greater Richmond Chapter will launch a Blended Learning Program.

Blended Learning offers first aid, adult CPR and automated external defibrillation (AED) training to individuals and businesses through a combination of online and hands-on instruction. The online portion allows self-paced learning and testing. The hands-on portion includes training with a Red Cross instructor, practice of skills and assessment.

Blended Learning provides a flexible, convenient training option to accommodate individual learning styles and needs.

For more information, call 780-2266 or go to www.greaterrichmond.redcross.org.

AEDs: The Power to Save a Life at Your Fingertips

Imagine two jumbo jets crashing and killing everyone on board—that is how many people die of sudden cardiac arrest each day in the US. With an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and Red Cross training, *ordinary* people can become *extraordinary* lifesavers and gain the power to save some of those lives. An AED is an easy-to-use device that is about the size and price of a laptop computer.

To purchase an AED for your home, workplace, place of worship or community group, call 780-2262.



Everything Is Frightfully Different in America... Except The Red Cross

Coming to Richmond for a new life, the Somali Bantu women found almost everything was different: culture, language, customs, food, clothing. Yet, they recognized the Red Cross, the same benevolent international relief organization, from their years in refugee camps.

The Greater Richmond Chapter is now partnering with the Refugee and Immigration Services of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond to train Somali and Liberian immigrants.

"Since the needs of this population are more basic, our standard orientation was expanded from two hours to eight weeks," explains Lynn Saunders, Refugee and Immigration Services community liaison. "We have added budgeting, parenting, and the Red Cross First Aid and Babysitting courses. Learning lifesaving skills will allow the women to better care for their families and teach others about resources available in this country."

Translators interpret for Red Cross instructors who teach audiences to whom almost every aspect of daily life can be a learning experience.

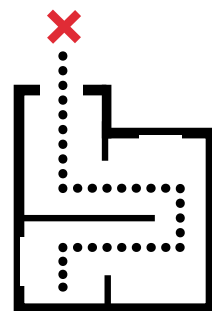
"The goal is to establish trust and create links within immigrant communities to enhance access to Red Cross services," says Peter Von Der Lippe, the Chapter's manager of multicultural services. "If we prepare individuals now, when there is an emergency, we will know who to contact, and how to provide services that are culturally appropriate."




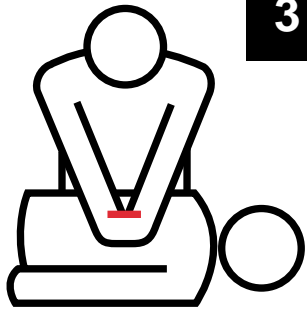
Four generations of Somali Bantu learn lifesaving First Aid skills from Red Cross instructor Dennis Shannon.

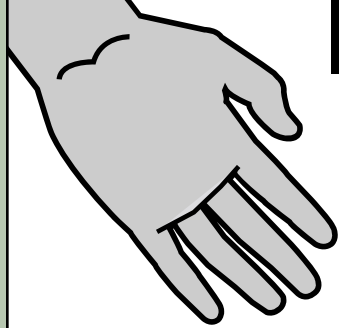
TOGETHER We Prepare


5 ACTIONS FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

1  **Make a Plan**

2  **Build a Kit**

3  **Get Trained**

4  **Volunteer**

5  **Give Blood**

For more information go to www.greaterrichmond.redcross.org or call 780-2250.

Greater Richmond Chapter

FAST facts

JANUARY TO MARCH

Responded to 76 local disasters and assisted 271 people. Over 90 percent of local emergencies were fires.

Provided 2,266 free one-way trips to life-sustaining medical appointments.

Taught 6,990 people lifesaving skills such as first aid, CPR, automated external defibrillator, babysitting and aquatics courses.

Educated 632 people in disaster preparedness.

Helped 29 military service members and their families with financial aid and counseling.

Successfully concluded three international tracing cases to help families communicate with members abroad.

Interpreted and translated for 32 non-English speaking people during emergencies.

Donated 1,626 items of handmade clothing made by Red Cross volunteers to people in need around the world.

Recruited 72 new Red Cross volunteers.

ENCOURAGING YOUR SUPPORT

What Does It Cost to Save A Life?

\$10,000...

- Assists 116 low-income families—after a disaster—with temporary food, clothing, shelter, and medical needs. 89 percent of disaster victims say they would have no place to go without Red Cross disaster assistance.
- Helps provide eight weeks of emergency food and lodging for ten families of brain-injured soldiers who are undergoing intensive rehabilitation at McGuire VA Hospital after suffering severe injuries on the battlefield.

\$5,000...

- Trains more than 100 at-risk young teens in “street-smart” lifesaving skills and HIV prevention.
- Provides 242 free trips to medical appointments for the frail, elderly, disabled and disadvantaged for life sustaining treatments such as dialysis and chemotherapy.

\$1,000...

- Ships 750 boxes of hand-knit hats and gloves—made by Richmond area “Web of Hope” volunteers—to orphanages, hospitals, shelters and reservations in Greater Richmond, the U.S., and around the world.
- Ensures that 50 latch-key children receive first aid and babysitting training to safely care for younger siblings.

\$500...

- Helps dozens of military children cope with fear after a parent is deployed to a war zone —through Red Cross “Facing Fear” counseling programs.
- Gives eight infants new cribs, clean sheets and blankets after their bedding was destroyed in a flood or house fire.

\$100...

- Provides food and shelter for one night for a family of four that has been displaced by disaster.
- Gives 50 children affected by disaster new stuffed animal companions and comfort kits containing activity books, crayons, soap, shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste, and washcloths.

Your American Red Cross serves Amelia, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan and Richmond. Please use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter to send your help today, call the Financial Development office at 804-780-2269 or go to www.greaterrichmond.redcross.org.



Connections is published by the American Red Cross, Greater Richmond Chapter. Comments are welcome. Contact the editor at (804) 780-2250.

www.greaterrichmond.redcross.org

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