



Red Cross Month: a Time to Honor Community Heroes

Molly Dalton

March is Red Cross Month, and the American Red Cross is kicking off its annual celebration by honoring community heroes who help ensure their neighbors never face crises alone.



Red Cross nurse Charlene Walker visits with Peggy McCurdy at McCurdy's home in Silver City, Mississippi after a tornado struck it. McCurdy, a certified nursing assistant, was working the night of the tornado. Her boyfriend, who arrived at their home after the tornado touched down, was the first to call her to tell her: "Baby, the house is gone," McCurdy said. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Red Cross Month is a national tradition that began in March 1943 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the first Red Cross Month proclamation — and each U.S. president has followed ever since.

During Red Cross Month, we are proud to honor the people in communities across the country who step up to support one another when help can't wait during emergencies. This relief and hope wouldn't be possible without these local heroes. Volunteers

comprise 90% of the national Red Cross workforce, along with generous blood and financial donors, people trained in skills like first aid and CPR and other supporters.

Join the Red Cross Month celebration by visiting [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) to make a financial donation, give blood or platelets, become a volunteer or take a lifesaving skills course. Those who donate at [redcross.org/givingday](https://www.redcross.org/givingday) on March 27 will be part of the 10th annual Red Cross Giving

Day, which aims to rally 30,000 supporters nationwide to help provide shelter, food, relief items, emotional support and other assistance for people affected by disasters big and small.

Nursing Students Engage with the Community Through Smoke Alarm Installation

Lynn Sagara, RN, MPH

On January 13, 2024, 550 lives and 161 homes were made safer in Tucson, AZ. The American Red Cross Southern AZ Chapter and their partners installed 652 smoke alarms that morning, and the University of Arizona, College of Nursing played a key role.



Nursing students from the University of Arizona College of Nursing participated in the Southern AZ Chapter's Sound the Alarm smoke alarm installation event. Photos by Michael Sagara.

students were the largest group from one organization attending the smoke alarm installation event. Other agencies included The Arizona Burn Foundation, Tucson Fire Department, South Tucson Fire Department, and Tucson Electric Power Company.

Lynn Sagara, RN, MPH, American Red Cross Academic Service-Learning NM/AZ Region Coordinator, partnered with Nancy McGuckin, MPH, MBA, MSN, RN Senior Lecturer, Nursing and Health Education Division, the University of Arizona (U of A), College of Nursing, recruiting 24 nursing students for the event. The U of A nursing

The Southern AZ Chapter hosted its annual "Sound the Alarm" smoke alarm installation in South Tucson, where population density increases the risk of home fires. Over one hundred volunteers gathered at 7:30 a.m. in temperatures close to freezing to check in, have a light breakfast while being

entertained by mariachis, and listen to keynote speakers, including a Tucson Councilwoman, a Tucson Fire Department Chief, the AZ Burn Foundation CEO, and the Mariachi Los Diablitos de Sunnyside High School Band Director. Ashley Bevier, Red Cross Regional Disaster Preparedness Lead, provided instructions on the roles of the installation teams, including the installer, the educator, and the documenter.

Red Cross volunteer Public Information Officer Mike Sagara accompanied one of the U of A nursing student groups (hereafter referred to as the group). The group consisted of four seniors and Nancy McGuckin.



Four seniors were in one group.

The group decided to walk to their installation neighborhood, which was 13 minutes away. The weather was brisk and not yet 40 degrees. They stopped at each assigned house, knocked on doors, and spoke to residents. When the homeowner did not speak English, the group was

resourceful by providing a card translated into Spanish that explained the process of the smoke alarm installation. They also asked if there was a family member that spoke English. The group was respectful to the homeowners and took off their shoes at one of the homes when requested by the homeowner. At the end of the allocated time, the

Red Cross Blood Drive: The Gift of Donating



Angela Rezai, RN (left) & Steph Nguyen, RN (right)

Taking on the role of Blood Program Leader to help address the nation's dire blood shortage has been an amazing experience, and showed us clearly how we as individuals and nurses can contribute and make a difference. As Red Cross Blood Program leaders, we gained valuable insights into the process of blood donation, coordination, recruitment and the all-around worthwhile effort.

group had canvassed about half of the assigned homes and installed fourteen smoke alarms in four homes.

When asked what their key takeaway from the morning was, the students had various responses. Bri said, "I have experienced what the Red Cross does, and I was happy to expand outside of my bubble" referring to her life as a nursing student at the U of A. Franna said, "I am happy to be working outside the organization [U of A] to expand my horizon." Felix said, "This was a great experience, and I've never done anything like this before."

All the students agreed that their impact on the people they visited was enriching. The people were incredibly grateful that they had working smoke alarms provided for free by the students and made possible by the generosity of donors.

American Red Cross AZ/NM Regional CEO Edgar Olivo had this to say when I told him of the reaction of the nursing students to participating in the smoke alarm event, "They were doing community."

"Doing community" is community mobilization, listening to needs, and assisting in building resilience. The nursing students played a crucial role in installing smoke alarms, listening to the residents, and providing information to help them become more resilient.



One group of nursing students installed 14 smoke alarms during the event.

Stephen Nguyen, RN and Angela Rezai, RN

Volunteers from California State University East Bay's (CSUEB) Post-Licensure (RN to BSN) Program and Pre-Licensure BSN nursing students offered to help. This article's authors, Blood Program Leaders Angela Rezai, RN and Stephen "Steph" Nguyen, RN coordinated planning, utilized CSUEB's social media outlets to spread awareness for the upcoming blood drive, and spearheaded in-person community outreach to sign-up prospective blood donors. It was a labor of love, though collaboration and logistics helped contribute to a successful blood drive. On November 1st, 2023, the

Red Cross registered nurses and CSUEB's student volunteers worked together to produce a seamless process from donor check-in, to health screening, to completed blood donation.

What began as a project for a post-licensure course entitled "Community Health Nursing" turned into a mission dear to our hearts. Blood is needed by many as a life saving measure. Our professor, Dr. Sahar Nouredini, PhD, RN, CNS, offered the tools needed for first-time Blood Program Leaders to accomplish the task at hand. This educator inspired her students to lead with integrity and by example. Her guidance allowed us to lead this event from its development to its success while honoring the mission of the Red Cross. The Red Cross Donor Recruitment Team was also instrumental and was available for support the whole way through. At the start of the blood drive, 31 appointments were scheduled, which grew to 36 individuals screened for donations. Having surpassed our target goal, 26 blood donations were collected in total.

"Working as an inpatient RN, I administer blood at the bedside. We keep hearing that blood is in short supply and a precious gift. Donors at this event consisted of health professionals – nurses

and an MD – and expanded to curious students from many different walks of life stopping in to donate. What an impact we witnessed seeing everyone come together in the community." Angela Rezai, RN, Red Cross Blood Program Leader.



Dr. Sahar Nouredini, PhD, RN, CNS (left) & Angela Rezai, RN (right)

"This blood drive was such a success since we not only succeeded in our blood donation goal, but being able to make this event happen on campus after the pandemic was a challenge in itself. My colleague, Angela Rezai, along with faculty members and volunteers, made this drive a successful one. Though perhaps this event was a small drop in the bucket, it made a tremendous impact – I know it!" Steph Nguyen, RN, Red Cross Blood Program Leader.



Steph Nguyen, RN

American Red Cross Applauds Election of Kate Forbes as President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The American Red Cross is pleased that Kate Forbes has been elected as president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). She stepped into office on December 11, 2023. The IFRC is the world's largest humanitarian network supporting local Red Cross and Red Crescent action in more than 191 countries, bringing together almost 16 million volunteers for the good of humanity.



Kate Forbes

Kate Forbes' election is a historic moment, making her only the second woman to hold this prestigious position. This milestone underscores the global Red Cross and Red Crescent's continued commitment to diversity and gender equality in its leadership and further strengthens our steadfast dedication to our international mission delivery around the world.

This election marks a pivotal shift toward

addressing the complexities of the modern world. As IFRC president, Kate Forbes is committed to addressing the impacts of the climate crisis, geospatial tensions, migration and health emergencies - issues that have also become front and center here in the U.S.

Kate Forbes' journey with the Red Cross and Red Crescent began over 40 years ago as a local volunteer at the American Red Cross chapter in Phoenix, Arizona and then moved into roles at the regional and national levels. She served as the vice chairman of the Red Cross Board of Governors and then the national chairman of volunteers. In those roles, she mobilized more than a million volunteers to deliver assistance, connect with local communities and provide training. As an auditor by training, Kate Forbes has been a member of the IFRC board since 2018 and served as the chairman

of the IFRC Audit and Risk Commission where she increased transparency and accountability to deliver lifesaving assistance efficiently around the world.

As a businesswoman and humanitarian with more than 40 years of volunteer experience with the Red

Cross and Red Crescent, her extensive experience makes her incredibly well-prepared and a fantastic match for the volunteer position of IFRC president. We know that Kate will bring a focus of integrity and accountability to the position, and we look forward to seeing strong progress for our global humanitarian Movement under her leadership.

American Red Cross President and CEO Gail McGovern to retire

The American Red Cross has announced that Gail McGovern will retire as president and CEO of the humanitarian organization on June 30, 2024, after more than 15 years at the helm. In line with its succession plan, the Board of Governors elected Chief Operating Officer Cliff Holtz as the next president and CEO.

As the longest-serving CEO since Clara Barton, McGovern has provided the strong and steady leadership needed to ensure this world class institution is ready to meet its vital humanitarian mission in the future.

“It has been the honor of my life to lead the American Red Cross and be part of an organization that serves millions of people at times when they are at their most vulnerable. The extraordinary skill, compassion and commitment I have seen in our more than 300,000 volunteers and employees across this country humbles me every single day,” said McGovern. “I could not be prouder of how we have stepped up to address the challenges of our time.”

McGovern has led the organization through some of the worst domestic and international disasters in the world as the number and severity of disasters continues to grow. She harnessed the power of technology to improve service delivery including developing a world-class system to ensure the highest standards of blood safety. In addition, McGovern put the Red Cross on the path to financial stability by managing expenses, enhancing fundraising, and reinvesting in service delivery. These efforts eliminated a \$209 million annual operating deficit in her first two years in office. Even with all of the changes underway, employee and volunteer engagement has steadily improved



Gail McGovern, President and CEO, American Red Cross

each year, and the Red Cross has been recognized repeatedly for its commitment to diversity and inclusion, including being on the Forbes list of Best Employers for Diversity in 2023.

“The American Red Cross has been transformed under Gail’s brilliant leadership,” said chairman of the Board of Governors, Bonnie McElveen-Hunter. “She has led the Red Cross with the one-of-a-kind combination of her heart and her mind, bringing her deep compassion and also the superb

business skills to ensure our humanitarian mission continues to be a beacon of hope and help for generations to come. We’re delighted that Gail has agreed to continue to serve on the Board of Governors.”

McGovern joined the Red Cross in 2008 from the faculty of Harvard Business School, and prior to that held leadership roles as executive vice president for AT&T’s consumer markets division, a \$26 billion business, and as president of Fidelity Personal Investments, with \$500 billion of assets under management.

As chief operating officer, Cliff Holtz has overseen all mission delivery for the 142-year-old organization, comprising Blood Services, Training Services, and Humanitarian Services – which includes domestic and international disaster response activities and Service to the Armed Forces. Holtz leads strategy for the organization and under his direction the organization has achieved the financial stability required to put the Red Cross on a trajectory that will enable critical investments and mission growth.

“Cliff and I have worked closely since his first day here and during the past year we have prepared for

my transition. He has been integral to our progress, and I have absolute confidence and trust in his ability to assume the reins with continuity and care,” McGovern added.

Prior to joining the Red Cross, Holtz held several executive leadership positions at for-profit companies including Pelco (a Division of Schneider Electric), Nortel Networks Corp, Deloitte Consulting LLP, Qwest Communications, Gateway Corporation and AT&T, where he rose to president of metro markets, a \$4.5 billion unit.

“It has been a privilege to be a part of Gail’s

leadership team these past 12 years. I am grateful for the support of the Board of Governors as the Red Cross faces unprecedented humanitarian needs,” said Holtz. “Our world is changing faster than any of us have anticipated – from escalating climate-driven disasters to a rise in tragic mass casualty events, the growing need to increase and diversify our blood donor base and complex international crises. People rely on us to be there. And it is my commitment to our country and to my colleagues that the Red Cross will be there for them, no matter what.”

These leadership transitions will go into effect in July 2024.

The Value and Impact of the Chief Nurse: Introduction to a Series

Elizabeth Kazmier, BSN, RN, CRRN

A few years ago, Vivian Littlefield, PhD, RN, FAAN, who, among many other roles of more import, was Chair of the Heritage Subcommittee that produces this newsletter, shared her idea for an article highlighting the importance of the role of Red Cross Chief Nurse. Last year, with the committee’s agreement, Vivian started actively working on the article. She gave it a title: “The Value and Impact of the Chief Nurse,” outlined how she saw the pieces fitting together, and reached out to former chief nurses for their stories and to longstanding Nursing partners for their insights. We know from her discussions and her outline that in her own comments, as a former Volunteer Chair of Nursing, Vivian planned to highlight the importance of the Chief Nurse and the “partnership with a lay leader of the National Nursing Committee and the nurse leaders of the



Vivian Littlefield, PhD, RN, FAAN at NHQ in 2017.

National Nursing Network.”

Sadly, [Dr. Vivian Littlefield](#) passed away on August 22, 2023. The words that she would have written as an introduction to support and weave together the stories of the chief nurses, grounded in the breadth and depth of her leadership experience and 35 years of service to the Red Cross, departed with her.

With this series of articles to be published over the next few newsletters, we will try to honor Vivian Littlefield’s final contribution to this newsletter and to the past, present and future of nurse leadership within Red Cross Nursing. As she wrote in 2011 in an article for the first edition of this newsletter, “OUR HERITAGE ASSURES OUR FUTURE.”

“In my more than sixty years as a Red Cross volunteer I’ve come to appreciate the critical role of Chief Nurse. The position is our ambassador to the external health services community, both governmental and non-governmental, promoting our mission and building essential relationships for service delivery, recruiting, education and health promotion. Internally, the Chief Nurse is a unifying and inspiring force who supports nurses and allied health professionals, both volunteers and employees, across all lines of service and in all divisions. The Chief Nurse is an essential part of the Red Cross leadership team as it strives to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies.”

Ross H. Ogden, Executive Volunteer, American Red Cross Blood Services

Personal Reflection of a Former Red Cross Chief Nurse

Cynthia Vlasich, MBA, BSN, RN, CEC, FAAN



Cynthia Vlasich, MBA, BSN, RN, CEC, FAAN, in 2023.

My journey with the American Red Cross, leading to being appointed the first “modern-day” chief nurse, started with the [swine flu](#) – specifically, volunteering with the Red Cross to help administer swine flu immunizations while I was a nursing student. It was the mid-1970s. To take a long trip in a few words, my next many years

included both paid and volunteer positions with the Red Cross, including leadership roles and volunteer experience in various areas in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Europe, Arizona and Washington, D.C. My experience included engagement in activities related to or led by Disaster Services, Service to the Armed Forces and veterans, International Services and Biomedical Services; these diverse experiences turned out to be very important to my success as chief nurse.

There is a specific milestone in the history of the organization that needs to be mentioned here: the 1980s was a time of frequent organizational restructuring. Many major corporations and organizations, including the American Red Cross, found themselves needing to cut back on staff and expenses. Consequently, Richard F. Schubert, President of the Red Cross at the time, launched a major reorganization, which included taking advantage of departures due to attrition as well as the release of significant numbers of national headquarters staff, allowing those people to apply for and if qualified, be hired into a scaled back, different structure. The eventual reduction in staff reflected a goal to decrease national headquarters (NHQ) staff by approximately 25%, from 1022 to 774 people.

It was during this time that Nursing and Health Services was reorganized into a new entity, Health and Safety Services, created by merging Nursing and Health Services with Safety Services. At the time of this reorganization, I was the Director, Nursing and Health Services, European Area Headquarters. My role included a dual reporting structure: administratively reporting to the head of the American Red Cross European Area

Headquarters, Narciso (Narce) Caliva, and professionally reporting to the Director, Nursing and Health Services at NHQ, Pat Bachman. With Nursing and Health Services no longer in existence at NHQ, my professional nursing reporting structure was severed.

Fast forward: after my return to the U.S. and roles in related positions, I was asked to be the Manager, Programs, Health and Safety, at NHQ. In this role, I was the highest-positioned nurse within the Health and Safety structure. As such, volunteer nurses around the country started reaching out to me regarding nursing/nurse-related volunteer questions and issues within the organization, including the need for formal representation. It was also at this time that I was asked to represent the American Red Cross as a member of the six-person Federal Nursing Chiefs Council, as it was commonly called at the time. It was there I first met and worked with wonderful colleagues who became friends that provided amazing support, which was invaluable as I navigated my way through

organizational issues. These leaders who were members of the Federal Nursing Chiefs Council when I first joined them included General Clara Adams-Ender; Dr. Vernice

Ferguson, Rear Admiral Mary Hall, Rear Admiral Julia Plotnick, and Brigadier

General Barbara Goodwin. Later, I had the honor of working with their respective successors.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, there was also an external effort going on to officially reestablish a senior leadership role to support nurses within the Red Cross.

While functioning in this expanded managerial role,



Nursing Spectrum cover dated March 24, 1997, depicts Federal Nursing Chiefs. From top left: Assistant to Brigadier General Bettye Simmons, Colonel Susan McCall, Rear Admiral Joan Marie Engel, Cynthia Vlasich, RADM Carolyn Beth Mazzella, Brigadier General Linda J. Stierle, and Dr. Nancy Valentine.

one day I was called to meet with the president of the Red Cross, Elizabeth Dole. She said that she had heard from nurse leaders around the country and from national nursing organizations regarding the issue of not having an official role of chief nurse. She offered to create the position of chief nurse if I would accept it; she stated she would not create the position if I did not accept it.

Moment of clarity: Nursing and Health Services, and Safety Services had at times seemed to have a competitive relationship within some Red Cross chapters. When they were merged during the reorganization mentioned above, most leaders in the newly formed Health and Safety Services appeared to come from a Safety Services background. With that merger at times there seemed to be relational challenges between safety leaders and nurse leaders within the merged area, so collaborative relationships often required sustained, intentional effort. Today as I look back through the lens of my experience as a professional executive leadership coach, I realize much of the problem was attributable to the lack of an effective cultural merger between the two very different lines of service. Knowing and living within this challenging environment I realized that, if I accepted this newly created role, there could be significant obstacles to overcome, however, if I didn't accept the opportunity and President Dole did not create the chief nurse position, nurses and



Cynthia Vlasich on the cover of Nursing Spectrum dated April 8, 1996.

the nursing presence in the organization might have been set back and negatively impacted mission delivery. I accepted. Supporting a sustained, intentional collaboration was a shared effort between my colleagues with a safety background and those of us coming from nursing and led to some of the strongest relationships I created during my time at the Red Cross; staying in touch with some of those colleagues to this day, decades later.

Over the next many years, in the role of chief nurse, there were developments and progress within the organization. With amazing volunteer leadership,

including Rose (Yuhos) Park, Mary Silverman, Hope Cooper, and Donna Dorsey among many others, we created the Division of Nursing. We established the National Nursing Committee; members of this committee recommended and designed the structure and defined the role for State Nurse Liaisons, which we were able to gain approval to implement. We continued the process of enrolling volunteer nurses with the Red Cross, including individually designated nursing badges within the organization. We also elevated the awarding of the Florence Nightingale Medal, so it was presented in the Oval Office by the President of the United States. Because of my diverse Red Cross background and experience, I was able to establish relationships with the leads of various lines of service to provide support, including volunteer leadership staff, professional regulatory guidance, brokering relationships for chapters with local entities of nursing organizations, and interpretation of organizational issues from a professional healthcare perspective, including sitting in on hearings regarding consent decree issues to report to President Dole.



"Til Help Arrives" plaque dated 1992, recognizing Cynthia Vlasich's outstanding contributions to the American Red Cross First Aid and CPR program.

The value of the chief nurse role was very evident when in August, 1994, President Dole traveled to Zaire to visit Rwandan-refugee camps during the midst of a massive health crisis. In a broadcasted statement, she promised a large number of nurses to be provided onsite within a short amount of time. We in the American Red Cross did not have that number of disaster-experienced nurses with active passports, able to get the necessary immunizations and leave within two weeks' notice as was needed. However, with the relationships created with my colleagues on the Federal Nursing Chiefs Council, the Red Cross was able to have a significant number of appropriately prepared nurses on site nearly within that time frame.

One of the largest challenges was determining where this role of Chief Nurse and Director, Division of Nursing, fit within the organizational

structure. It was decided to place this entity within Volunteer Services, however it wasn't a perfect fit for various reasons, including: 1. the leadership of Volunteer Services didn't have knowledge of the professional requirements for nursing leadership and licensure; 2. this placement created a challenge in providing support to Biomedical Services whose nurses were primarily paid staff; 3. direct engagement in Disaster Services was diminished with this lack of 'operational' positioning; and 4. it situated nurses in a non-revenue producing role contrary to the foundation of Nursing and Health services, whose courses had directly contributed to organizational revenue, and whose past and present work had positioned the organization as both relevant and valuable to Americans in managing their family's health.

One of the unique opportunities I was offered was to be part of a 5-person U.S. State Department disaster relief assessment team sent to Albania in April 1991, shortly after Albania opened its borders to the world. The members of the team were led by Andrew Natsios, the Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) at the time. In



Cynthia Vlasich, left, with other members of the disaster relief assessment team and Mother Teresa in Albania, 1991.

addition to a member of Natsios' staff, other members of this team included a physician, an

New Red Cross Science Twitter Feed

We are excited to launch the [@RedCrossScience Twitter/X feed](#). The feed uses this social media platform to promote newly published science, particularly that involves members of the Red Cross

agricultural expert and me. While there, I had the opportunity to confer with Mother Teresa regarding the needs of the children within the country. Though her origins were little known at the time, Mother Teresa was originally from Albania and had been able to visit the country quietly, even though the borders were officially closed to most travel. The results of this disaster relief assessment team were noted in the [press](#), and led to significant aid being provided to the country.

In the mid-1990s there was a shift in the organizational structure within Volunteer Services, during which the Division of Nursing along with other areas within Volunteer Services, such as Youth Services, were disbanded; however, the role of Chief Nurse was retained.

I retired from the American Red Cross in 1997 and have had the great fortune to enjoy three significant careers since. During my tenure as Chief Nurse and Director, Division of Nursing, I was happy to have hired Nancy McKelvey as Assistant Director, Division of Nursing, to work with me during this journey, and when I decided to advance my career outside of the Red Cross, was pleased that she was hired to succeed me as the next Chief Nurse of the Red Cross.

My last formal disaster work with the Red Cross came after my retirement, in 2005 during Hurricane Katrina, when I was asked to return to volunteer in the Disaster Operations Center providing training and guidance regarding management of medical donations and support for volunteer nurses on the ground.

As a certified executive coach focused on leadership development, I am now actively supporting the success of senior leaders in various organizations. I also have the honor of volunteering as a senior nurse consultant with Dr. Linda MacIntyre, current American Red Cross Chief Nurse.

Marie Manning, APR

Scientific Advisory Council. If you are on Twitter/X, we encourage you to follow us ([@RedCrossScience](#)). Join the conversation.

Red Cross Dogs: Furry Help, from History through Today

Molly Dalton

Throughout its history, the Red Cross around the world has depended on 'man's best friend' to help soldiers and veterans.



Throughout history up to the present, the Red Cross around the world has depended on 'man's best friend' to help soldiers and veterans.

WORLD WAR I

While the American Red Cross did not use dogs during World War I, several other Red Cross societies employed dogs that greatly aided the Allied forces during the war. A number of these dogs were attached to ambulance units and aided their handlers in the search for wounded soldiers. The Red Cross dogs were trained to seek out a wounded soldier and get as close as possible so the soldier could access the dogs' saddle bags, which contained first aid supplies and rations. Instead of barking and alerting the enemy, the dogs were trained to bring back something belonging to the soldier.

The retrieval method was eventually replaced when it became apparent that the dogs would occasionally rip off a bandage in their eagerness to return with something from the wounded soldier. Some Red Cross societies trained the dogs to return to their handler with an attached leash in their mouth to signify the discovery of a wounded soldier. Red Cross dogs did more than just locate wounded soldiers, they provided messenger and delivery services, often times carrying 25 to 30-pound packs of ammunition and rations through dangerous territory. These dogs also acted as scouts and guarded strategic posts, such as weapons factories.

THERAPY DOGS TODAY Following World War II, the American Red Cross began using therapy dogs with convalescing service members in the Army Air Force Convalescent Center in Pawling, New York.



The Red Cross still uses therapy dogs today. These dogs and their owners volunteer in shelters and nursing homes across the country and in hospitals around the world. Red Cross animal visitation teams are active all over the world. The American Red Cross has animal visitation teams set

up to support veterans and military families stationed in the United States and overseas. From Walter Reed to veteran facilities across America, furry Red Crossers are on the scene helping in a variety of ways. The dogs are required to undergo special grooming to be in the medical treatment facility and they are specifically trained how to behave in hospital or special needs settings. Recognizing who needs their affection ([for example](#), when a human is more stressed than usual) is an innate ability of each dog.

Red Cross dogs use their training and calming presence to help and heal. Wherever they go, they turn heads, and people can't help but smile. Many



Davin, 3 years old, was cheered and comforted by Faith, a Red Cross volunteer therapy dog, handled and owned by Carol Janssens, also a Red Cross volunteer, during the wildfires in California in 2017. Davin's dad, Billy said of their experience at the UCSB Red Cross shelter, "When we evacuated the kids were scared by the dark and red sky. The volunteers here at the shelter really helped me with them, they feel much better. Last night Davin said that he knew the people in the red vests would keep him safe." Photo by Dermot Tatlow/American Red Cross

people don't even realize the impact that animal therapy can make on their staff or patients – but the effect is immense.

Gift Annuity – A Good Thing Just Got Better

Corie Story

No matter the vagaries of the financial markets or the economy, a gift annuity is an excellent way for you to make a generous contribution to the American Red Cross while securing a lifetime of payments for yourself or others. The gift annuity is now even more attractive because the amount the Red Cross can promise to pay you has increased.

A gift annuity is a simple agreement between you and the Red Cross, promising to pay a certain amount of money to you, or someone you choose, for life. The amount paid to you will not change for the rest of your lifetime and your payments are guaranteed by the financial resources of the Red Cross.

The amount the Red Cross can commit to paying you will depend upon your age at the time of your contribution. For example, if you are age 70 when you make your contribution, you could be paid 6.3% of the value of your contribution each year for the rest of your lifetime. Payments can be made to you or to someone else, or payments can be made for two lives, for example to you and then to your spouse.

You can receive an income tax charitable deduction now for the charitable value of your contribution. In addition, a part of each payment you receive can be tax free and, if you contribute appreciated investments like stocks or mutual funds, only a portion of the capital gain will be

taxed, and that portion can usually be spread over your life expectancy.

For example, here are the results of a \$25,000 charitable gift annuity for various ages:

Age	Gift Annuity Rate	Annual Annuity	Charitable Deduction
65	5.7%	\$1,425	\$9,590.75
70	6.3%	\$1,575	\$10,041.25
75	7.0%	\$1,750	\$10,379.00
80	8.1%	\$2,025	\$11,353.75
85	9.1%	\$2,275	\$13,246.50

(Your actual results will depend upon the timing of your contribution and other factors.)

Best of all, your gift annuity will provide future support to help ensure that the Red Cross will be ready, serving our communities in times of need.

We would be happy to show how a gift annuity could work for you. For information, 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; April Matthias; Cheryl Schmidt; Corie Story; Mark Tannenbaum



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!