Red Cross responds to Wichita tornado

On April 14 a little after 10 p.m., an EF-3 tornado that struck south Wichita left many who were already without a safety net to face the harsh reality that they would have to start over. Without any input from the people it affected, the storm instantly changed the lives of nearly 150 families who lived in homes that were destroyed or severely damaged.

Yet despite the destruction the storm caused, people were remarkably optimistic about their well being. Thanks to supporters like you, Red Cross was there to help the people who needed it most.

When Santee Austin went to his neighborhood church to find protection from the storm, he would have no idea if his house was still standing. After the storm passed he was rushed straight to a Red Cross shelter. Downed power lines made the neighborhood too unsafe to check on his home.

“They put a good shelter over our heads and kept us warm with the nice blankets. I like the blankets,” Santee said. “I know some people lost their houses, but we can depend on Red Cross. If we didn’t have Red Cross, I don’t know what we would have done.”

For Robert Force, the night of April 14 will be one that he will remember for losing his home to a tornado but being lucky enough to survive. Robert’s been a proud blood donor for years. So when the tornado took his home, he knew where to turn for help.

“My home was totaled. It’s scrap…firewood but I

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Wichita tornado response

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have found a new home already so I am doing okay,” Robert said.

When the tornado destroyed Cleo Comstock’s home, she lost just about everything accumulated in her 85 years. But little by little, bits and pieces of her scattered life were found and returned, including her most precious item – the family Bible. Cleo received Red Cross assistance for food, clothing, bedding and basic necessity items such as soap and toothpaste.

“They helped me out,” she said. “I was real happy with what they did for me. It’s been real good.”

The 40-year-old Bible was battered and a little damp, but it still contained the precious family records and papers.

As the recovery continues for hundreds who were affected, Red Cross is still with them on their path to recovery.

“Red Cross is no stranger to disasters,” said Bev Morlan, Midway-Kansas Chapter executive director. “Our hearts go out to everyone who was affected, and we will walk them through this difficult time.”

American Red Cross Midway-Kansas Chapter

By the Numbers

As always, the Midway-Kansas Chapter strives for accountability, efficiency, transparency and service delivery. The Midway-Kansas Chapter wants you to have confidence that your support is making a difference. Below are the ways your support made a difference in January through March 2012.

42 families (132 individuals) who had house fires received assistance for emergency needs that included food, rent and motel lodging.

95 military family households utilized emergency communication through the Services to the Armed Forces program, keeping them connected and reassured.

62 families were helped with rent and utilities so that they could stay in their homes.

399 families received utility assistance through the Project Deserve program.

337 seniors received trips to and from their medical appointments including chemotherapy and dialysis. Volunteers made 3,726 trips.

30,416 meals served at congregate meal sites to 2,100 seniors.

13,215 meals served to 2774 homebound participants.

1,115 students trained in first aid, CPR, babysitting training, HIV/AIDS education, pet first aid and water safety.
If this summer is anywhere near as hot as the last, and all indications are saying it will be, you should seriously consider the well being of your pets that spend time outside. While some animals can handle heat better than others, no living thing should suffer through 110-degree days.

Red Cross recommends that pet owners take the following precautions when the mercury starts to rise:

Leaving an animal in the car, even for a short, time can be dangerous in warm weather. The inside temperature of the car can quickly reach 120 degrees so it’s not a good idea to leave the pet in the car, even with the windows cracked open.

Dogs with short noses or snouts, like boxers or bulldogs, are prone to heat stroke. This is also true for any obese pet, a pet with an extremely thick fur coat or any pet with upper respiratory problems such as laryngeal paralysis or collapsing trachea.

### Signs of heat stroke

During the summer, you should pay close attention to everyone who may be vulnerable to extreme temperatures: the young, old, obese and your pets. Signs an animal may be developing heat stroke include:

- **heavy panting and being unable to calm down, even when lying down**
- **their gum color may be brick red**
- **their pulse rate may be fast**
- **they may not be able to get up**

The easiest way to cool down an animal is with a water hose. Continue to cool the animal if its rectally measured temperature is above 105 degrees. Once the animal’s temperature is below 103 degrees, bring the pet to the veterinarian as soon as possible because heat stroke can lead to severe organ dysfunction and damage.

### Get trained

Red Cross offers Cat and Dog First Aid regularly to give family members the power to respond to basic animal emergencies your pet might encounter. Participants learn how to help after cardiac and breathing emergencies. They also receive a reference DVD and information on how to create a pet first aid kit. For more information and to sign up visit www.redcross.org/training.
Without volunteers, partners and donors, the American Red Cross could not fulfill its humanitarian mission to alleviate human suffering. On March 28, it recognized nearly 100 individuals and companies that have led by example through their donations.

Red Cross thanked the group of major donors with a reception and short program at the Crestview Country Club for their exemplary contributions. Special honorees included Bill Thompson, who received the Velma Lunt Wallace Award for exemplary volunteer leadership, and Don and Shirley Beggs, who received the Clara Barton Humanitarian Award for their visionary, philanthropic contributions to the community.

“It’s very, very meaningful, and I’m very humbled and surprised to be selected for this,” Bill said. “To be recognized, considering the handful of individuals who’ve received this award, is certainly humbling.”

While Bill couldn’t decide what culminated his Red Cross volunteer career – he led as board chair and helped set in motion the eventual new home of Midway-Kansas on Douglas – he did know the feeling of real satisfaction of good and extensive service that came from giving to the chapter.

Equally moved, Don and Shirley Beggs were recognized for their visionary contributions to Red Cross.

“To see the good work that Red Cross has performed locally has been an honor,” Don said. “We’ve valued our relationship with Red Cross immensely and feel privileged to accept this award.”

For information on how you can become a leading Red Cross supporter through a planned gift, legacy or bequest, contact Noel Anderson at noel.anderson@redcross.org or 219-4096.

Don and Shirley Beggs accept the Clara Barton Humanitarian Award for their family’s contributions to Red Cross from Executive Director Bev Morlan, center.

Want to make the difference in a young person’s life? Piper the Puppy, for a $100 donation, will be given to a child after a fire with a special message from you.

For more information: Noel Anderson at noel.anderson@redcross.org or 219-4096
One thing that has struck me most in the five months that I have worked for American Red Cross is the level of dedication that our volunteers have. At the Volunteer Recognition Event, we gave out a pin to a volunteer who has 40 years of service as a Red Cross volunteer. That is incredible to me, but I have learned that this volunteer’s lengthy tenure is not unusual. There are many volunteers who have served Red Cross for a great number of years, and I think this speaks well of both the organization and the volunteers. I am proud to belong to an organization where people maintain such long-term connections.

Related to the volunteers’ dedication is the high esteem in which Red Cross is held in the community. Local businesses and individuals recognize and respect the Red Cross name. I usually ask potential volunteers what interests them about Red Cross.

Though their answers vary, their comments generally reflect the positive reputation that Red Cross holds with the public. Whether I am introducing a new volunteer to the many opportunities Red Cross offers or requesting support from a business, I feel good about my association with Red Cross.

Sheri Barnes started working as the American Red Cross Midway-Kansas Chapter volunteer coordinator on November 3, 2011. Previously, she was a part-time instructor at Wichita State University while her seven-year-old son Logan was younger. She has worked in paid and volunteer positions with area nonprofits including ConnectCare, Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center and United Way of the Plains. A proud Shocker, Sheri holds an MEd in Exercise Science, an MA in Sociology and a BA in Sociology, with a minor in Women’s Studies, all from WSU.
Millie Suer became a Red Cross volunteer in 1962 at McConnell Air Force Base. As the wife of a military member, she saw daily how Red Cross helped brave men and women overseas who protected America’s interests. She originally started by helping a half day each week at the children’s clinic, but she would eventually become the chairwoman for the program that oversaw a wide range of Red Cross volunteer services to military members.

“Most of us have been military wives or retired from the military,” she said. “Red Cross was always there, and we feel like this is a way of giving back. I give all the credit to our volunteers. Just last year we gave 4,200 hours.”

After nearly 50 years of service, the team of Red Cross volunteers has done it all. They help at the on-base pharmacy, OBGYN clinic, eye clinic and schedule blood drives. If soldiers or their families have issues with insurance, it’s Red Cross volunteers who walk them through it. If someone is deployed, she makes sure both the soldier and spouse have a Red Cross emergency contact card in their billfold.

Born on the battlefield, Red Cross has a unique obligation to help the military. And thanks to our McConnell volunteers, the very first compassionate act performed by Red Cross – assisting after the Battle of Solferino – still holds true more than 150 years later.

“We’ve all seen how much Red Cross and the military have done for us,” Millie said. “It’s payback time.”

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Wichita tornado

BY THE NUMBERS

While each person's experience was unique, the numbers of Red Cross services provided after the tornado told another story.

111 overnight stays were given at the Red Cross shelter in Derby. Close to home but far enough from the destruction, the shelter was more than a place to lay your head. Counseling, first aid and information kept displaced people healthy – physically and mentally.

134 people were helped with client casework to provide things like replaced food, new clothing and down payments on new homes. Thanks to you, south Wichita families would find a new roof to put over their heads.

12,346 meals and snacks were distributed to keep families strong. Served at a Red Cross shelter and two fixed sites, the nutrition you helped fund kept people's energy and spirits high.

1,411 bulk items and comfort kits were distributed. When the storm cleared, people started cleaning up. With shovels, rakes, gloves and hygiene products provided by Red Cross, those lucky enough to have homes still standing didn't have to worry about needing the necessary recovery tools.

Red Cross launches fan extravaganza

Last year the American Red Cross set a new record for the number of fans it distributed throughout one summer. This year it made it as easy as possible to distribute 1,000 fans to families in south-central Kansas who needed relief from the summer heat.

On June 6, Red Cross attempted to distribute more fans in a shorter period than ever before. Going until close of business on June 8, families who needed help cooling down simply visited Red Cross at 1900 E. Douglas, filled out a short application and provided a proof of address. Once completed, they left with a 20-inch box fan, thanks to donors like you.

Dennis Miller named 2011 Volunteer of the Year

The Midway-Kansas Chapter recently honored Dennis Miller as Volunteer of the Year for 2011, which recognizes someone who has served in an extraordinary way in one year. Dennis began his Red Cross career after his Greensburg home was destroyed by a devastating tornado.

In 2011, Dennis helped families recover from house fires, continued training to respond to local and national disasters, helped churches, neighbors and employers be better prepared for emergencies, and drove seniors to medical appointments.

“It’s an honor to include Dennis’ name to our Volunteer Wall of Honor,” said Sheri Barnes, volunteer coordinator. “His name will be a welcome addition to the company of such respected and dedicated people.”

Bev Morlan presents the 2011 Volunteer of the Year award to Dennis Miller for a year of extraordinary service to the American Red Cross Midway-Kansas Chapter.
McConnell volunteers

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During this time of barbecues and fireworks, consider helping our members of the military. If you have a military I.D. and time to share, you can be a Red Cross McConnell volunteer. For more information, contact Laure Kendall at 219-4071.

The Battle of Solferino

In 1895, a young Swiss businessman, Henri Dunant, was traveling through Italy when he stumbled upon 40,000 men dead or dying with nobody coming to their aid. He gathered a nearby village to care for the soldiers, regardless of which side of the battle they were on.

When Henri responded to their cries, it was the first act of the Red Cross and the inspiration of its mission – to alleviate human suffering. Henry would later help found the Geneva Conventions, create the Red Cross emblem that is now the second-most recognized logo in the world, and would be the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.