In February 2010, an 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck Chile, toppling older buildings, damaging homes and infrastructure and generating a destructive tsunami that swept inland. In all, more than 480 people were killed and 1.8 million others affected.

Chile is an earthquake-prone country, and despite the impact of one of the most powerful quakes to hit in decades, preparedness measures and strict new building construction codes saved lives.

The Red Cross was also prepared. Within moments of the quake, local Red Cross responders began to help those affected, while generous donations to the American Red Cross soon helped expand both relief and recovery programs. In the first year since the earthquake, the American Red Cross has committed more than $6.3 million to response, recovery and preparedness efforts to provide assistance as Chileans rebuild their lives and communities.

Impact of the Earthquake and Tsunami:
- A tsunami measuring up to 8 feet struck coastal areas between Concepcion and Valparaiso
- 480 deaths and 1.8 million people affected in the six central provinces
- 81,000 homes destroyed
- $30 billion in damage to homes, infrastructure, hospitals and schools
The Red Cross Response

With hundreds of local volunteers on the ground, the Chilean Red Cross mobilized to perform search and rescue and provide food and basic household goods, as well as emergency health services, shelter supplies and water and sanitation services. Volunteers also provided emotional support to adults and children to help speed their recovery. In total, more than 100,000 people benefited from these services.

The global Red Cross network supported these efforts with teams assessing needs, delivering supplies and providing basic healthcare. As a part of this effort, the American Red Cross:

- Sent water containers and hygiene kits for 5,000 families from a regional warehouse in Panama.
- Deployed two regionally based American Red Cross staff to assess water and sanitation needs and help manage response activities.

In total, American Red Cross support during the three months of the response phase was valued at more than $1.3 million.

Improving Homes With the “Red Card” Program

After the earthquake destroyed thousands of homes, the Chilean government provided affected families with basic transitional homes, which still required improvements such as insulation, stoves or bathrooms. Many residents lacked the financial resources to make these changes or repair their damaged homes.

Through the innovative “Red Card” program, the Red Cross is now helping people make improvements or repairs by providing debit cards to assist up to 42,000 people. These cards allow families to purchase up to $350 in tools and materials at select hardware stores throughout Chile. To date, cards have been distributed to more than 5,000 families.

“The most important aspect of the Red Card is that it allows people to buy according to their needs,” explains Guillermo Garcia, regional director of Latin America and the Caribbean for the American Red Cross. “During the relief phase, our conversations with those affected demonstrated that even more could be done to assist family recovery. This card allows people to buy items that improve the basic safety and comfort of their homes.”

When one recipient, Carolina, received her card, she felt hope returning. “I had no money to repair my house, but now the card brings me closer to returning home.”
As the operation transitioned to the recovery phase by May 2010, the Red Cross identified shelter as a major need. In response:

- The Chilean Red Cross developed an innovative cash grant program using debit cards to help families improve their transitional shelters and repair homes.
- The American Red Cross supported this high-impact initiative with $1.5 million, enabling the Red Cross network to nearly double the amount of assistance provided per person.

The earthquake and tsunami highlighted the need for disaster preparedness, particularly in rural communities where roads are frequently cut off following a disaster. In February 2011, the American Red Cross and the Chilean Red Cross launched a disaster preparedness program to strengthen both the community and Red Cross capacity to prepare for and respond effectively to future disasters. With the knowledge and skills gained from a preparedness program, families and communities will be able to reduce the effects of future disasters while increasing their ability to effectively respond until external assistance arrives. This program builds on successful American Red Cross preparedness programming throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Preparing Chile’s Communities for Future Disasters

The American Red Cross is helping communities and the Chilean Red Cross prepare for the next big earthquake. Experts are training local Red Cross employees and volunteers on disaster preparedness best practices and implementing community-based education programs and disaster mitigation projects. Working hand-in-hand with local communities, the Red Cross helps residents identify and address major hazards, such as clogged ditches that frequently flood, train and equip community response teams and develop community action plans that identify evacuation routes and emergency shelters. In addition to efforts in Chile, similar programs are benefiting thousands of people in Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Lucia, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.
The American Red Cross is grateful for the continuing support of members of the Annual Disaster Giving Program whose financial donations mean the Red Cross is always there to help in times of disasters—internationally or domestically. These members include:

- Altria Group
- Cisco Foundation
- Costco Wholesale Corporation
- ConAgra Foods
- Darden Restaurants, Inc.
- Dr Pepper Snapple Group
- FedEx Corporation
- GE Foundation
- The Home Depot Foundation
- John Deere Foundation
- Kimberly-Clark Corporation
- Kraft Foods
- Lowe’s Companies, Inc.
- Merck
- Morgan Stanley
- Nationwide Insurance Foundation
- Northrop Grumman
- Ryder Charitable Foundation
- State Farm
- State Street Foundation
- Target
- The TJX Companies, Inc.
- UnitedHealthcare
- UPS

The American Red Cross is committed to using every dollar wisely to help the people of Chile recover. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the American Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. Thank you for joining us to help those in need.

You can help people affected by disasters like floods, fires, tornadoes and hurricanes, as well as countless crises at home and around the world, by making a donation to support American Red Cross Disaster Relief. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for and provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance in response to disasters. Visit redcross.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS. Contributions may also be sent to your local American Red Cross chapter or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013.

To learn more about the work of the American Red Cross around the world, please visit www.redcross.org/international.