Attention Student Nurse Leaders: You CAN Make a Difference!

Every day, the American Red Cross helps people in emergencies...whether it's half a million disaster victims or one sick child who needs blood. Everyone has something to offer, and as a nursing student you are learning special skills that are needed in the Red Cross. Now is the perfect time to get involved!

Volunteering with the American Red Cross provides a setting that is relevant to learning nursing skills and can lead to a lifelong opportunity for service. Follow in the footsteps of some of the most famous nursing leaders and find out how good it feels to wear the Red Cross emblem.

These materials will help you learn more about opportunities within the American Red Cross. Information about the Red Cross may also be found at redcross.org. The pages can be reproduced and sent to others in your school or community who may be interested in exploring the various available options.

There are several avenues for determining the types of activities offered in your geographic area. The first is to contact the Red Cross chapter closest to you; the following Web site will help you locate that chapter: www.redcross.org/where/chapts.html. Another option is to contact the State Nurse Liaison (SNL) for your state at the following Web sites: https://crossnet.redcross.org/everynurses/help.asp or http://www.redcross.org/where/files/Documents/pdf/Nursing/State_Nurse_Liaisons.pdf. If you need further information that you are unable to obtain from either the local organization or the SNL, please contact Cheryl Schmidt, Nurse Lead, at Schmidcherylk@uams.edu, or Vivian Littlefield, National Chair for Nursing, at Littlefieldv@usa.redcross.org.

Benefits of Volunteering for the Red Cross

- Experience meaningful and relevant opportunities to assess health risk, instruct “real courses” and encourage healthy behaviors
- Enhance and practice nursing knowledge and skills
- Interact with volunteers and clients from different cultures, socioeconomic groups and age groups
- Practice your communication, organizational, consensus building, time management, decision-making and delegating skills
- Learn what it’s like to serve in a disaster
- Experience a sense of accomplishment and autonomy
- Demonstrate the professional responsibility for volunteering, community service and knowledge of voluntary organizations
- Gain recognition (Red Cross and school awards, NSNA, publicity)

What Students Say About Their Red Cross Experience

- “I worked hard and enjoyed having to use my knowledge, skills and creativity.”
- “I liked being involved in ‘meaningful’ projects!”
- “It was fun and enlightening working with such diverse and dedicated people.”
- “...the commitment and enthusiasm were catching”
- “Prospective employers were impressed with my ‘real work’ experience.”

For additional information, contact:

- Nursing Volunteer Lead for Nursing Student Activities, Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN, State Nurse Liaison, Subject Matter Expert in Student Learning, Nurse Lead for Information, Schmidcherylk@uams.edu
- Chief Nurse and Director, Disaster Health and Mental Health Services, Sharon A. R. Stanley, PhD, RN, RS, StanleyS@usa.redcross.org
- National Chair of Nursing, Vivian Littlefield, PhD, RN, FAAN, LittlefieldV@usa.redcross.org
American Red Cross and Nursing Student Volunteers: 
Working Together to Change a Life

Every day, the American Red Cross helps people when they need it most...providing disaster relief, managing more than 40 percent of the nation’s blood supply, and teaching lifesaving skills and health education. Nursing students have been involved in helping the Red Cross deliver critical community services for more than half a century. By volunteering with your local Red Cross chapter, you will make an important contribution to the millions of people who rely on the Red Cross as you also gain opportunities to grow professionally and practice your skills.

Opportunities for Nursing Student Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take/Teach Courses</th>
<th>Provide Direct Services</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Basic First Aid</td>
<td>• Family Caregiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CPR and AED</td>
<td>• Disaster Action Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• First Aid for Children Today</td>
<td>• Disaster planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• HIV/AIDS Education</td>
<td>• Disaster preparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workplace Safety</td>
<td>• Blood drives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child Care</td>
<td>• Health education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• First aid station</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Immunizations</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Support Services</th>
<th>Participate in Leadership Activities</th>
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</thead>
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<td>• Public relations</td>
<td>• National Youth Leadership Council (<a href="http://redcrossyouth.org">http://redcrossyouth.org</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Administrative services</td>
<td>• Statewide community health initiatives in conjunction with the NSNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Computer/technical support</td>
<td>• Public speaking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Red Cross committees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Special projects</td>
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For information on how to become involved, contact the volunteer coordinator at your local Red Cross chapter. Locate the chapter by going to www.redcross.org/where/chapts.html.

Getting Involved

Because it is important that volunteer work is meaningful to you and the members of your group, please review your personal interests and the interests of the members of your student nurse association (SNA). Make a list of your areas of interest. Review the programs and services offered by the American Red Cross and select those activities that look interesting and may help you reach your personal and academic goals. For example, if you are involved in your pediatric nursing rotation, one of the child safety classes may be most appropriate. There may also be a particular health issue in your state or region you want to focus on, or you may want to contact your state student nurse association to see if there is a statewide community health initiative your chapter may become involved with along with other nursing programs in your area.

It should be noted that each Red Cross unit (i.e., chapter or Blood Services region) provides different services depending on the community needs and resources. If a program you are interested in is not offered in your area, you might try to find a way in which you can help organize and facilitate this program. Some units will be open to the idea of having a nursing student facilitate a program, especially if they can show a way to sustain this program over a period of time to make the services available on a continuing basis.

To find out which programs and services are available in your area, check the Web site of your local Red Cross unit, which you can find by visiting www.redcross.org/where/chapts.html.

When you call your local Red Cross, introduce yourself, explain your affiliation, and ask to speak with the volunteer coordinator. If the office does not have a volunteer coordinator, ask to speak to the director of Health and Safety Services, Emergency Services or Disaster Services. Introduce yourself and explain the reason for your call, then ask to set up an appointment at the chapter and discuss in person your goals and interests. This not only shows that you have a serious interest in volunteering, but it also allows better communications and will help you develop those interpersonal and interviewing skills that are vital to your development as a nurse.

If you and/or your SNA are working on a specific project, when you are finished, don’t forget that an evaluation is an important part of the volunteer process. Evaluating the entire project will help you make the necessary changes to continue the project or to revise your efforts. Share the evaluation with the Red Cross so they can make any changes and adjustments in the future. In particular, note whether the project was successful in meeting its goals, was meaningful to the participants, and what could have been done to make it even more meaningful.

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After 10 hours of service, you may be eligible to receive the American Red Cross Student Nurse Pin. Ask your contact at the Red Cross to order these pins for you and your classmates who have participated in Red Cross activities. You might also consider submitting the activity to NSNA for recognition.

Note: SNA officers may want to think about creating community health awards for your school association. This will give you the chance to recognize the individual efforts of your members. Also, check with your NSNA state association to see if your state offers any awards for community health and disaster preparedness activities.
Nursing Vision
American Red Cross Nursing...a presence throughout...uplifting lives with compassion and special skills...competent and prepared...strengthening the organization with innovation and support...enhancing communities.

Background: Nurses have always been a cornerstone for the provision of services by the American Red Cross. Historically, Red Cross nurses have provided their assistance during times of disaster and conflict beginning with the 1888 Yellow Fever Epidemic and the 1889 Johnstown Flood. The Red Cross Nursing Service was formally established by Jane Delano in 1909. Red Cross nursing has also had a major role in the historical evolution of nursing and nursing leadership in the United States, with many Red Cross nurses, including Jane Delano, Clara Noyes, Julia Stimson and others playing strategic roles in the development of American nursing.

Nurse Involvement Today: Today, thousands of nurses continue to be involved in both paid and volunteer capacities at all levels and in all service areas throughout the Red Cross. The information below provides examples of how nurses are involved in Red Cross activities:

• Provide direct services: e.g., locally and nationally on Disaster Action Teams (DAT), staff health activities, health fairs, volunteer service in military clinics and hospitals, and blood collections team
• Teach and develop courses: CPR/First Aid, Automatic Emergency Defibrillator (AED), Disaster Health, Disaster Mental Health, Family Caregiving, Nurse Assistant Training, Babysitting, and International Humanitarian Law
• Act in management and supervisory roles: including as chapter and Blood Services region executives
• Serve in support functions: committee members, public relations, fundraising and marketing
• Function in a governance role on both local boards and the national Board of Governors

Nursing Leadership
Chief Nurse: Sharon Stanley, PhD, RN, FAAN, serves as the Chief Nurse. She is responsible for supporting and strengthening paid and volunteer nurse involvement throughout the Red Cross, maintaining a liaison with all business lines. In addition, Dr. Stanley represents Red Cross nursing to external health-related professional organizations, educational institutions and regulatory groups.

National Nursing Committee (NNC): The National Nursing Committee is a working committee led by the National Chairman of Nursing, the volunteer partner of the Chief Nurse, and is composed of a representative group of paid and volunteer Red Cross nurses and other leaders selected to assist with effective nurse involvement within the Red Cross. The committee was originally established in 1910 and advises, advocates for and assists the Chief Nurse and National Chair of Nursing in their leadership roles for Red Cross nurses.

State Nurse Liaisons (SNLs): The State Nurse Liaison provides support to chapters to recruit and retain health professionals and to build health capacity across Red Cross business lines. The National Nursing Committee sets priorities for SNL activities based on the business lines goals of Disaster, Preparedness, Health, and Safety Services (PHSS), Service to the Armed Forces (SAF), Biomedical divisions, and specific divisional priorities. SNLs work closely with staff health consultants, health service advisors, and Disaster Mental Health leadership.