



Red Cross Continues to Help in Puerto Rico

Molly Dalton

The American Red Cross remains on the ground in Puerto Rico, supporting people impacted by the recent series of earthquakes. Since late December, the island has been hit with more than 1,000 tremors.



Photo by Scott Dalton/ American Red Cross

Geramo is overcome with emotion when discussing current living conditions with a Red Cross volunteer. The Red Cross has deployed many mental health professionals to speak with residents and provide help in coping with the ongoing threat of earthquakes in the area.

Hundreds of people remain in the government-run shelters while many more continue to stay outdoors for fear of another quake destroying more buildings. The repeated quakes are traumatic for communities still recovering from Hurricanes Maria and Irma.

Red Cross disaster workers are on the scene, supporting the government shelters and helping to care for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and children. Red Cross workers are also going neighborhood by neighborhood to give out emergency supplies, including hygiene kits and comfort items, and sharing preparedness information. As part of the door to door outreach, these Red Cross teams are also checking on the health and well-being of residents including checking blood pressure, providing emotional support and sharing coping and safety information. All of these services are part of the help people need while they begin to plan their next steps. [Watch this video to learn more about the Red Cross response in Puerto Rico.](#)

FOCUS ON CHILDREN

In the aftermath of the earthquakes in Puerto Rico, Red Crossers are guiding children through The Pillowcase Project workshops, where they learn how to create their own emergency supply kits by packing essential items in a pillowcase for easy

transport during a disaster. The kids decorate their pillowcases and share what they've learned with their friends and families. The hope is to teach children about safety, emotional coping skills and personal preparedness.

Originally created in New Orleans, The Pillowcase Project is a free program inspired by the story of local university students carrying their belongings in pillowcases

during Hurricane Katrina evacuations. During the presentation, participants receive a pillowcase to decorate and then take home to use as a personal emergency supplies kit.

The curriculum is structured by a Learn, Practice, Share framework. Students learn about the science of a locally relevant hazard and how to best prepare for it. They practice what to do if a disaster occurs and how to cope with related fear and stress. Afterwards, they share the information and skills they have learned with their family and friends so everyone in the household knows what to do.

HOW YOU CAN HELP You can help people affected by earthquakes and countless other crises by making a donation to support Red Cross Disaster Relief. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for, respond to and help people recover from disasters big and small. Visit redcross.org, call



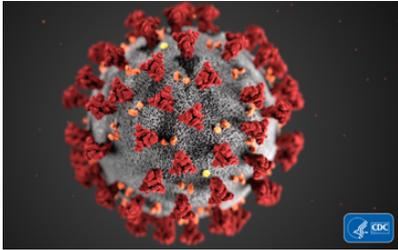
Photo by Isaac Leon/ American Red Cross

1-800-RED CROSS, or text the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation. Please click, text or call to donate to the Red Cross. Your gift is a commitment to helping people affected by disasters big and small. Every single donation will make a difference in someone's life.

During The Pillowcase Project workshop, children hold their pillowcases and have their photo taken with Lee Vanesa Feliciano, Regional Executive.

Coronavirus Statement from the Red Cross (as of 2/10/20)

The American Red Cross is closely monitoring the evolving outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19).



CDC/Alissa Eckert, MS; Dan Higgins, MAM

We are currently supporting government agencies and state officials to assist evacuees returning to the

U.S. from China. When requested, our role is to provide blankets, comfort kits, snacks, stuffed animals and other support items for those who have been quarantined at government facilities. The American Red Cross will continue to work with U.S. officials to determine what additional support may be needed in the coming days and weeks.

Overseas, the Red Cross of China is supporting its government to help meet the huge and sudden demand for ambulance services and medical items including masks and gowns. In China, thousands of volunteers have mobilized to distribute lifesaving health information to communities—many are visiting people at their homes and on the streets to check their temperatures to ensure they get the medical support needed in case they have the virus. Internationally, Red Cross societies are educating communities about how to mitigate the spread of this virus—such as delivering aid to families under quarantine—and informing people how to stay healthy.

It is important to note that there have been no reported blood transfusion transmissions of

respiratory viruses including coronaviruses and influenza-like viruses worldwide at this time. As always, the American Red Cross remains dedicated to providing the safest, most reliable blood products possible to patients in need in the U.S.

While the risk of contracting any coronavirus through a blood transfusion is extremely low, out of an abundance of caution, the Red Cross asks that all individuals who have traveled to China and its special administrative regions, Hong Kong and Macau, postpone their blood donation until 28 days following return to the U.S. The Red Cross also asks individuals who have been diagnosed with 2019 coronavirus or cared for, lived with or had direct contact with body fluids of a person diagnosed with or suspected of having this coronavirus to self-defer, or postpone donating blood or platelets for 28 days. We continue to evaluate all emerging risks in collaboration with AABB, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Donating blood is a safe process and people should not hesitate to give or receive blood. The need for blood is constant, and volunteer donors are the only source of blood for those in need of transfusions. We urge healthy individuals to schedule a blood or platelet donation appointment at redcrossblood.org to help avoid a shortage during the winter months when blood donations decrease.

For the latest information, including tips on how to stay healthy, please visit the CDC website at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov.

March is Red Cross Month. Be a Hero: Volunteer, Give Blood or Make a Donation

March is Red Cross Month and the American Red Cross is honoring its volunteers, who represent more than 90 percent of the Red Cross workforce and make it possible to achieve the lifesaving mission of helping people in need.

WHAT IS RED CROSS MONTH

For more than 75 years, the president of the United States has proclaimed March as Red Cross Month to recognize how the American Red Cross helps people across the country and around the

Molly Dalton

world through the work of its volunteers.

Every eight minutes, Red Cross volunteers help a family affected by a disaster in the U.S. From large disasters that ravage a community to a home fire that displaces one family, Red Cross volunteers address people's urgent needs like food and a safe place to stay, as well as support during the daunting aftermath of a disaster. We ask you to consider joining these heroes to answer the call to service in your community.

#HELP1FAMILY

On March 25, American Red Cross Giving Day, donate at [redcross.org/givingday](https://www.redcross.org/givingday) to #help1family who has lost nearly everything in a disaster. Your gift can provide hope and urgent relief like food, shelter and other essentials. Any donation makes a difference. For example, a gift of \$95 can provide a family of three with a day's worth of food, including breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus blankets and other essentials. The public's donations are key to saving lives because they fund nearly 100 percent of Red Cross disaster relief activities.

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Learn more about how you can help in your area by contacting [your local Red Cross chapter](#) or visiting [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org):

- **Become a volunteer:** Help families affected by disasters and install lifesaving smoke alarms to keep neighbors safe from home fires. In some areas, you can also provide emergency assistance for military members and veterans or

help reconnect families separated by international conflict.

- **Give blood:** Make an appointment to donate lifesaving blood or platelets.
- **Learn lifesaving skills:** Register for a class to learn first aid, CPR and other skills.

EVERY EIGHT MINUTES, SOMEONE NEEDS HELP

Each year on average, the American Red Cross:

- Responds to more than **60,000** disasters across the country.
- Trains more than **4.8 million** people in First Aid, water safety and other lifesaving skills.
- Collects more than **4.6 million** blood donations and nearly **1 million** platelet donations from more than **2.6 million** volunteer donors.
- Provides nearly **471,000** services to military members, veterans and their families.
- Helps **230 million** people outside the U.S. through American Red Cross disease prevention activities and disaster services.

Red Cross Nurse Leaders Present at the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Conference

Linda MacIntyre, PhD, RN, PHN and Susan B. Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN

On October 21, 2019, Susan B. Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN, Red Cross Senior Ambassador for Nursing and Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Senior Advisor for Nursing, and Linda MacIntyre, PhD, RN, PHN, Red Cross Chief Nurse, presented at the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing Academic Nursing Leadership Conference](#) and 50th Anniversary celebration. There were over 500 deans and associate deans of nursing present.

We discussed the rich history of American Red Cross, how the Red Cross keeps people and communities healthy, Academic Service Learning (ASL) opportunities, awards and how deans and associate deans can get involved.

Keeping Communities Healthy*Changes in disasters*

The Red Cross initiated 32 level 4 or higher Disaster Relief Operations between September 6, 2018 and September 17, 2019. A level 4 disaster has an estimated cost of between \$250,000 and \$2.5M. [The National Climate Assessment](#) notes,

“Over the last 50 years, much of the U.S. has seen increases in prolonged periods of excessively high temperatures, heavy downpours, and in some regions, severe floods and droughts...”

The Red Cross Focus on Health

The Red Cross focuses on meeting community health needs and addressing social determinants in partnership to support people where they work, live and play. The social determinants of health are responsible for an estimated 80-90 percent of all illnesses; only 10-20 percent can be attributed to biological causes alone ([Magnan, 2017](#)).

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is collaborating with the National Academy of Medicine on a second future of nursing report. The committee is tasked with charting a path for the nursing profession to help our nation create a culture of health, reduce health disparities, and improve the health and well-being of the U.S. population in the 21st century. The report, to be released at the end of 2020, will help guide nurses and institutions to work together on better

understanding the social determinants of health, the unmet needs of individuals and communities and their role in addressing them.

Hassmiller shared that the Chief Nurse recently provided testimony for the report and advised that we need to recognize the strengths of the individuals we serve. Although someone may be regarded as vulnerable, it is important to recognize and celebrate their strengths to foster resilience.

Red Cross and Healthy People 2020 Goals

We shared these five examples of how the Red Cross supports the Healthy People 2020 goals:

- The Red Cross helps ensure that the right blood is available when needed;
- The Restoring Family Links program helps reconnect families separated by war;
- The Measles & Rubella Initiative provides lifesaving immunizations;
- The Red Cross provides Disaster Mental Health and programs for members of the military and their families; and
- The Red Cross helps communities prepare for disasters and be more resilient.

HIPAA and the Red Cross

Nurses can help advocate for individuals and families by sharing information with the Red Cross in these two situations: 1) HIPAA provides for the release of information about “victims of disaster” to the Red Cross and 2) HIPAA provides for the release of information to the Red Cross for emergency communication for members of the military and their families.

Health and Mental Health Professional Volunteers and the Red Cross

The Chief Nurse’s vision is to have a flexible, nimble and diverse workforce ready to fulfill the Red Cross mission wherever needed. Red Cross health and mental health professional volunteers bring relief to

disaster victims, work in military hospitals, and collect lifesaving blood. They teach classes and serve in management, supervisory, and governing roles throughout our organization.

Academic Service Learning

The Red Cross partners with educators and institutions to provide real-world learning opportunities for college and graduate students. Academic Service Learning is open to students in many different disciplines. This presentation focused on nursing and faculty opportunities in the five Red Cross lines of service: Biomedical Services, Disaster Cycle Services, International Services, Service to the Armed Forces and Training Services. One of the most popular activities is the Home Fire Campaign/Sound the Alarm events. “Sound the Alarm” is a national campaign to raise awareness about the deadly dangers of home fires.

Awards

Hassmiller discussed Red Cross awards that recognize amazing nurses who really make a difference, go above and beyond to improve the lives and well-being of others and exemplify organizational excellence. Information was shared about the Jane Delano Student Nurse Scholarship, the Florence Nightingale Medal and the Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award.

Call to Action

The call to action included ways to get involved: volunteer, serve on boards and advisory councils, engage students, serve as an ASL Volunteer Coordinator, partner with Red Cross chapters to apply for the Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award and inform nurses about the Red Cross and HIPAA. Other ways to help include donating blood, hosting a blood drive and getting trained in disaster health and mental health. The presentation concluded with [The Red Cross Needs Health Professionals Video](#).

Board Game Developed to Advance Disaster Preparedness among Student Nurses

Judith Schnatz, BSN, RN, Marianne Urban, MS, RN, Ann Stalter, PhD, RN, MEd

In September 2019, Judith Schnatz and Marianne Urban, two Red Cross nurses from the Dayton, Ohio Chapter, partnered with Dr. Ann M. Stalter from Wright State University College of Nursing

and Health to develop an engaging board game aimed at teaching nursing students and volunteer nurse recruits about disaster shelters.

Funded by the Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award, six iterations of the game were developed using theory-driven approaches. Each iteration was trialed among Red Cross nurse leaders in Ohio as well as practicing nurses from the Dayton region, nurse educators from Columbus, Dayton and Indiana, and nursing students in Kentucky and Ohio. A pilot of the final version was appraised, refined and scrutinized by a team of nurse educators at Sinclair College in Dayton for functionality, assuring directions were clear and that it could be played within a one-hour class time period. The final version of the game entitled *Volunteer Nursing in a Red Cross Shelter* was approved by Disaster Health Services nursing

leadership and then implemented with the participation of seven Red Cross nurse leaders, 12 nurse educators, four actively practicing community health RNs, and 218 nursing students in two states, three public universities and one private liberal arts college.

Before the game is made available for use by Red Cross nurse volunteers or nurse educators across the country, studies are being conducted to verify learning outcomes as they relate to general shelter knowledge, systems thinking and teamwork. After the studies are completed, the board game will be released and an electronic version of the game, already in development, will be finalized.

Measles and Rubella Advocacy Project

Donna Dorsey, MS, RN, FAAN

The Measles & Rubella Initiative (M&RI) is a global partnership to lead and coordinate efforts to achieve a world without measles and rubella. Founded in 2001, the M&RI is led by the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), UNICEF and the World Health Organization. The M&RI aims to reach the measles and rubella elimination goals of the Global Vaccine Action Plan by supporting countries to raise coverage of measles, rubella and other vaccines; fund, plan, implement and monitor quality supplementary campaigns; investigate outbreaks and provide technical and financial support for effective outbreak response; propose and participate in solutions to strengthen immunization delivery; and support a global laboratory network for measles and rubella.

to the CDC, 383 children die every day around the world due to measles and 300 are born with disabilities due to rubella. In 2019, there were 1,282 cases of measles confirmed in the United States across 31 states.

In 2016, International Services asked the National Nursing Committee to partner with them to help advocate for continued funding from the federal government for the Measles & Rubella Initiative. Annually, as part of the federal budget, funds have been allocated to the Measles & Rubella Initiative but there is a continued need to remind legislators annually that measles and rubella continue to be serious and dangerous diseases throughout the world.

For the past three years, members of the National Nursing Committee and the Nursing Network have participated in the congressional visits.

International Services provides the education and training for the nurse advocates. Nurses then meet with selected legislators in their home offices to educate the legislators and staff about the vital need for continued funding for immunizations and community education regarding measles and rubella and to ask for their support of



In September 2018, Lydia Odinga's son Prince Osinachi received a measles vaccine administered by Red Cross volunteer, Felista Njenga in Nairobi, Kenya.

Photo by Juozas Cernius/American Red Cross

In 2018, a surge in measles and rubella was seen worldwide with more than 140,000 global deaths. The majority of deaths were infants and young children under five years old. Other impacts of

the disease included brain damage, blindness and hearing loss. [Mina](#) found that the measles virus can damage the immune system and increase survivors' risk of other serious illnesses. According



Three RN volunteers from Minnesota, Cossette Parriott, Kate Casserly and Linda Tally visited the office of their congressional representative Tina Smith as M&RI advocates in 2019.

the legislation. In 2019, health professional volunteers visited the legislative offices of nine states and provided the most current information about measles and rubella. Feedback has been very positive regarding the congressional visits. For the

past three years, Congress has allocated the funds for continued support of the M&RI. Red Cross nurses are making a difference in the campaign to reduce the number of measles cases and help save lives.

Hero Care Network Provides Critical Services to Military, Veterans, Families

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The American Red Cross **Hero Care Network** provides critical services to military members, veterans and their families all over the world. They can access these Red Cross services by downloading the FREE Red Cross Hero Care App on any Apple or Android device. The Hero Care Network offers confidential services to all veterans and their families by connecting them with local, state and national resources worldwide.

community across the country. This free, confidential program offers effective ways to work through challenges, improve well-being and build skills through small-group discussion and hands-on activities. As well, Reconnection Workshops help improve connections at home, at work and within communities.

[Find out more about Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces here.](#)

Red Cross chapters maintain relationships with key partners in their region and can connect veterans and their families with the help they need. These vital services include responding to emergency needs for food, clothing, and shelter, referrals to counseling services, and information on veterans' cemeteries and burial benefits.

WHAT YOU CAN DO Many Red Cross volunteers are veterans who continue to support their communities after their active duty service ends. Also, about 6% of Red Cross employees include transitioning military or veterans – from nurses to logisticians, emergency management experts, project managers and preparedness experts, as well as a number of veterans in leadership roles at local Red Cross chapters across the country.

The Red Cross Military Veteran Caregiver Network (MCVN) is also available for veterans and their caregivers to offer support for the country's approximately 5.5 million caregivers of military and veteran wounded, ill or injured.

Tens of thousands of Red Cross volunteers also serve in Veterans Administration (VA) and military hospitals across the nation and around the world. These volunteers support such areas as rehabilitation, recreation, administration, and personal services to the men and women who are now cared for each day in these facilities. To learn more about how you can give back in your community, visit redcross.org/volunteer.

RECONNECTION WORKSHOPS

Transitioning to home from military and veteran service can be hard, and Red Cross Reconnection Workshops aim to ease the stress that comes with these changes. In the last year alone, the Red Cross provided our resiliency program to some 30,000 heroes in the veteran and military family

Meet Dr. Runar Polluson, the Nursing Network's Newest Division Nurse Leader

Posie Carpenter, RN, MSN, MPH

Runar Polluson, DNP, RN, MBA was appointed Divisional Nurse Leader (DNL) for the Southeast and Caribbean Division in mid-November, 2019, and has hit the ground running. No sooner was he given his new title than Polluson began reaching out to the Regional Volunteer Service Officers (RVSOs) in each of the regions of his division to recruit Regional Nurse



Leaders (RNL) and to standardize how the role is going to work throughout the division.

What's an RNL you ask? RNLs are nurse volunteers who partner with Volunteer Services to recruit and engage nurses and other health professional volunteers into all lines of service of the Red Cross. Polluson,

as one of six DNLs across the country, helps to support and direct the work of RNLs. In fact, prior to stepping into the DNL role, Polluson served as the Regional Nurse Leader for South Florida for about eight months. His experience as an RNL is already proving invaluable in his new role as DNL, as he has first-hand insight into what it takes to perform the key responsibilities of the RNL position.

Now retired, Dr. Runar Polluson has a tremendous background of volunteer service, having spent several years of retirement volunteering for organizations such as Equality Florida, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Oakland Park Code Enforcement Board. Polluson is the Red Cross liaison for four Red Cross school clubs, three at high schools and one at a college. He started a Veterans Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders (SCI/D) Peer Support Group at the VA hospital in Miami that meets twice a month. This is an official clinic that veterans can make an appointment to attend.

Polluson is a big believer in peer support – a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful. It is a process dedicated to promoting empowerment and self-determination in the service of SCI/D recovery/rehabilitation. In veterans, peer-to-peer support has been found to improve social functioning and quality of life, lessen the sense of loneliness, rejection and discrimination, foster independence, improve the ability to deal with SCI/D issues, improve skills necessary for SCI/D recovery /rehabilitation and improve communication with SCI/D providers.

Equally fulfilling for him has been Polluson's work as an official of the State of Florida serving as a Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Child Advocate. A Guardian ad Litem (GAL) volunteer child advocate is a specially trained child advocate that stands up

YouthWire

[YouthWire](#) is a monthly e-newsletter that contains important Red Cross youth and young adult volunteer opportunities, stories, and resources for youth, young adults, and youth champions. The National Youth Council is always

for a child's safety, well-being, and best interests when that child has entered the court system through no fault of their own. These children are often victims of abuse and/or neglect. Polluson works with other GAL staff and attorneys, alongside community-based social workers and community service providers and serves as the "voice for the child" in judicial dependency proceedings and in helping the child navigate the child welfare system. It is very emotional and rewarding work. Over the course of his thirty-one year professional career, Polluson served as faculty for the Keiser University Online RN-BSN Program, Chief Nurse for Education, Research, Informatics and Recruitment for the Veterans Health Administration in Miami, Florida, staff nurse at a variety of organizations, clinical research nurse at Yale University, and a hospitalman second class (active duty and reserve) in the Navy for about nine years. Polluson holds a Doctorate of Nursing Practice, a Masters of Business Administration and a Master of Science in Nursing.

Clearly capable of stepping up to the challenge of his new position, Polluson's next step is to fill the vacant RNL positions in his division. He will be working closely with the RVSOs of each region to recruit nursing leaders interested in leading a team to reach out in their communities to hospitals, health related organizations, and health-related college, university and allied health organizations to recruit nurses and health professionals. Equally important, RNLs and their teams will be working to engage nurses and health professionals into the lines of service that most interest them and will also help with recognition. Polluson and the RVSOs will be working hard over the next few months to fill these positions with just the right volunteers. Congratulations to Dr. Runar Polluson on this new volunteer position and best of luck to him and the RVSOs as they put together an RNL team for the Southeast and Caribbean!

Larissa Hatch



Red Cross Youth volunteers in action.

looking to highlight great youth stories and hear what's happening in your region. If you have a story to share or would like to subscribe to YouthWire, please email youthinvolvement@redcross.org.

Answer the Call to Help Save Lives: Become a Red Cross Blood Drive Host

Aly Barraza

DID YOU KNOW: Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. Transfusions can be critical to the treatment of cancer patients, trauma victims, transplant recipients and those living with sickle cell disease. But in order to ensure blood is available when and where it's needed the most, generous blood and platelet donors – and volunteer blood drive hosts – are needed to help save lives.

You have the power to give the gift of life right on your own campus! The American Red Cross encourages college nursing students – as well as faculty and administration members – to host blood drives that give students and staff the chance to make a difference for hospital patients. Because more than 80% of blood donations are made at blood drives hosted by volunteers, blood drive partners play a vital role in helping the Red Cross ensure blood is available for patients at about 2,500 hospitals across the country.

In addition to the knowledge that you are directly helping patients nationwide, blood drive hosts can gain goodwill within their communities and build morale and team spirit by working together for a lifesaving cause. This is an opportunity to gain valuable leadership experience, volunteer hours and apply course knowledge in a very tangible way. Hosting a blood drive can also help nursing students earn a Red Cross nursing student pin, which recognizes the contributions of nursing students who are providing valuable Red Cross services to their communities.

Marion Hilda Brown Seymour, Red Cross Service in WWI and WWII

Editor's Note: this article was originally published in the Winter 2015 edition.

In July 1995, the Office of the Chief Nurse received a letter with questions about the Red Cross Nursing Service experiences of Marion Brown Seymour, one of the first eighteen African American nurses assigned to the Army Nurse Corps in World War I. I always remember this letter because our response never reached the gentleman who wrote it. Sadly, we learned that the man, Mrs. Seymour's nephew, had died shortly after he had written the letter, according to a note received from his brother later that summer. Her 1917 enrollment card provided very basic facts for the family. Marion Hilda Brown, born March 3, 1889, in Washington DC and

A nursing student's experience: Brittany Jones, a nursing student at the University of Wisconsin, has been hosting blood drives since 2014. "My sister is a pediatric oncology patient. As she received 30-plus units of blood during treatment, I understand how vital the gift of blood is," said Jones. "My favorite thing is knowing that each unit of blood that is recruited goes to saving lives like my sister's."



Brittany Jones, Blood Program Leader, donating blood at a blood drive she hosted.

Most recently, Jones hosted a blood drive on campus in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Student Nurses Association. Thanks to generous donors who were able to give at the drive, 30 units of lifesaving blood were collected. "Please host blood drives!" Jones said, "The American Red Cross staff is extremely helpful before, after and during the event. Hosting blood drives has supplemented my education with skills such as organization, time management, leadership, delegation and recruitment."

How to become a blood drive host: For more than fifty years, nursing students have helped the Red Cross deliver critical community services. Volunteering can lead to a lifelong opportunity for service. To learn more, and to sign up to host a blood drive, visit RedCrossBlood.org/HostADrive or contact your local Red Cross chapter to help save lives!

Jean Waldman Shulman, RN graduate of Freedmen's Hospital, Class of 1915, received American Red Cross Nursing Badge 9-A on July 17, 1918. An additional statement noted that she became the first African American nurse assigned to national headquarters staff in World War II. My interest in learning more about the life and career of this special Red Cross nurse started with the letter. Twenty years later, with the help of collected newspaper accounts and journal articles, this is a more complete account of a nurse with "firsts" in World War I and World War II.

After graduation, Marion Hilda Brown worked as a

private duty nurse for several months in Bluefield, West Virginia. She soon became the superintendent of nurses at Dr. B.A. Cricklow's Hospital in Charleston, WV. Two days after the Armistice, on November 13, 1918, Miss Brown received a letter from Clara Noyes, American Red Cross director of Bureau Field Nursing, stating, "The Surgeon General has called for a limited number of Negro nurses, enrolled in the Red Cross, to be available for service December 1, 1918. Your name has been selected as one who might be willing to consider an assignment, and if so, would you be good enough to notify us promptly..."

Miss Brown immediately accepted her Red Cross assignment to the Army Nurse Corps. Under the direction of Miss Clara Rollins, Badge 39-A, seven other Red Cross nurses joined Brown at Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio and served until



Marion Brown Seymour (second from left) with eight Red Cross nurses stationed at Camp Sherman in 1918.

August, 1919. Their next assignment, Camp Grant, Rockford, Illinois, ended in October,

1919 with honorable discharges from the Army Nurse Corps and praise from fellow staff members.

The 1920 US Census listed Marion Brown in New York City and married to Alexander Seymour. She accepted a position with the Health Department's Child Hygiene Department as a public health nurse. Later she moved to Howard Orphanage, King's Park, Long Island as the health nurse and camp supervisor. After postgraduate courses at Columbia in 1926, Mrs. Seymour returned to Washington and Freedmen's Hospital in 1928 as assistant director.

Despite a demanding schedule at Freedmen's, Mrs. Seymour volunteered for the Red Cross, teaching Home Nursing and First Aid classes. To reach as many people as possible, she offered courses at Howard University Department of Home Economics, the Lovejoy School Community Center, Shiloh Baptist Church, Phyllis Wheatley YWCA and the Elks Club. Many of her students continued with

Nurse's Aide and Surgical Dressings classes at Freedmen's. Her students provided hundreds of volunteer hours to the Red Cross.

In 1931, with gratitude from the War Department for her Army Nurse Corps service, Mrs. Seymour accompanied African American Gold Star Mothers to Paris. The women visited the cemeteries and gravesites where their sons and husbands were buried in WWI. Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, the highest ranking African American officer in the Army, made his fourth trip as official escort for the group. When a reporter asked Mrs. Seymour about nursing skills used on the trip, she laughed and said, "Plenty of mothers got seasick and I was among them on the trip over." There was another nurse and medical officer on the ship as well as several aides from the 369th Infantry to assist the women.

While president of Freedmen's Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association (FHSNAA), Mrs. Seymour helped remove racial barriers for African American nurses seeking graduate education for professional advancement. Catholic University did not accept Freedmen nurses and others into their graduate programs, which forced these nurses to leave the area for postgraduate studies. As a board member of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) and with the support of FHSNAA, she encouraged a group of nurses chaired by Miss Charlotte May to approach Father John LaFarge, founder of the Catholic Interracial Council of Catholic University. Father LaFarge worked with the University to ensure the first African American nurse from Freedmen's Hospital enrolled at the University in February, 1936. Eighteen more nurses were accepted by October, 1936. The 1943 Bolton Act covered scholarships for postgraduate nursing programs as well as the WWII Cadet Nursing Corps program. Mrs. Seymour continued her own studies under this program in 1945.

Mrs. Seymour's professional memberships and appointments were numerous.

- American Nurses' Association
- Freedmen's Hospital School of Nursing Alumni Association
- Advisory Committees of the NACGN
- American Red Cross Medical Board on Health

Services

- The Defense Program for the NACGN
- The Citizens' Committee on Problems of Negro Nurses
- Recruited nurses for migratory labor camps for the Farm Security Administration
- The first African American nurse on the Board of Directors of the National Nursing Council for War Service
- Appointed to the United States Public Health Service, July 1941
- In 1951, the government of Liberia invited Mrs. Seymour to attend the inauguration of William V. S. Tubman in Moravia

Mary Beard, Red Cross Nursing director, invited Mrs. Seymour to join the Washington office in May, 1944. Miss Beard told Freedmen's superintendent Dr. James Hall, "We greatly desire Mrs. Seymour's experience and wisdom." With reluctance, Hall agreed to a six-month leave of absence. He said, "Mrs. Seymour is a gem. However, I realize that the Red Cross should have priority on nurses at this time." Miss Beard praised Mrs. Seymour's pioneering role in WWI and her special interest in the need to increase enrollment of African American nurses for wartime service. Mrs. Seymour visited Red Cross area offices and large chapters across the country, including New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles and Portland. In addition to military recruitment plans, she stressed the need for African American nurses' involvement in disaster, public health, home nursing and instructor programs. She made one special stop in Fort Huachuca, Arizona to visit the sixty African American nurses assigned there in 1942. Susan E. Freeman, also a Freedmen's graduate, served as chief nurse of this unit. Mrs. Seymour's reports were well received by Miss Beard and Red Cross chapters. With her suggestions, over 2,700 African American nurses enrolled in the Red Cross Nursing Service in WWII.



Marion Brown Seymour
(date unknown)

At the end of her career, on February 19, 1955, the inaugural awards banquet for FHSNAA honored Mrs. Seymour for her years of service and outstanding contributions to Alumni and the profession of nursing. Dr. Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University, addressed the crowd. Ann Magnussen represented the Red Cross and said, "American Red Cross Nursing services wish to thank Mrs. Marion B. Seymour for the many years of faithful service given to Red Cross as a member of the National Nursing Advisory Committee, as a staff member in World War II, and for assistance to the Liberian Red Cross organization. We extend best wishes for continuation of her service to humanity."

Mrs. Seymour sent the following letter to Miss Magnussen.

"Now that I am retired from active duty at Freedmen's Hospital for two months, I am able to have the time to write to the many people who contributed so much toward making my Citation Banquet an occasion that I shall always remember and cherish.

"To you I am especially grateful; for the American Red Cross is very close to my heart, having given me the opportunity to broaden the sphere of my nursing service. Also, I appreciate the sacrifice that a person as busy as you made to attend. Thank you also for your kind remarks.

"Although I have retired from active hospital duty, I have no intention of retiring from service to mankind; therefore, please feel free to call upon me if I can be of service to you or the Red Cross."

Her words may have explained the importance of Mrs. Seymour's American Red Cross experiences to her nephews more than any long list of her many professional accomplishments.

Mrs. Seymour died December 1, 1967 in Washington D.C. and is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Candace Roosevelt, MAN, MBA

The Peace of Mind of Having an Estate Plan

Estate planning might rank with tax returns and cleaning the basement as a task we would prefer to avoid. But creating an estate plan need not be that complicated. Follow these basic steps and you'll have an estate plan – a gift for your family and peace of mind for yourself.

1) Make a list of your assets. Some assets will be distributed by your will (the process of passing property through probate), but many assets will not. It's important to know the difference. Make a list of your various assets and how they are owned. Assets owned in your name alone will generally be distributed by your will. However, if you own your

home or bank and investment accounts jointly with a spouse or another party, the surviving owner in most cases will own the entire asset when the first joint owner passes away. Retirement accounts, life insurance policies, and some commercial annuities will be distributed to beneficiaries named by you on forms provided by the account administrator. A revocable living trust will control the distribution of assets owned by the trust. The trust assets pass to heirs outside of the probate process.

2) Assess your family situation. Is there a family member with special needs or who is challenged managing money or who has an addiction? Do you have children of unequal financial circumstances? Or minor children? These situations should be addressed in your estate plan so that your assets are distributed according to your wishes.

3) Decision: attorney vs. on-line estate planning? You will need documents to put your estate plan in place, including a will, a financial power of attorney, a medical directive, a living will and possibly a revocable living trust. An estate planning attorney can guide you in structuring your estate plan to accomplish your objectives for distribution. A less costly alternative is using an estate planning website, where you will answer questions to generate documents you can print and have signed. The complexity of the plan you require will determine which option is wisest for you. At the completion of the process you should have a set of properly signed and witnessed documents that comply with the laws of your state of residence.

4) Discuss your estate plan with family

members. The time for family members to learn about your estate plan is not after you are no longer around. Perhaps you have left a generous gift to a charity or religious organization that had an impact on your life. It may be a difficult conversation, but it gives you the opportunity to explain why your assets are being distributed in a certain way.

5) Other considerations

Final documents - Keep your documents in a secure place known to a trusted family member or friend, or with your attorney.

Digital assets – Make a list of on-line accounts with logins and passwords and keep it in a secure location with access – including to any password manager site you use – by a trusted individual.

Estate Taxes – Federal estate taxes only affect multi-million-dollar estates. However, some states tax estates and/or inheritances. Consult an advisor if estate taxes apply.

Reviewing documents – Review your documents every three to five years. If a family situation changes, be sure to review your plan at that time. You can control how your assets will be distributed after your lifetime, but you must have a written plan.

For information on how you could include the American Red Cross in your estate plan, please contact Gift Planning Officer Candace Roosevelt at 617-306-3875 or Candace.roosevelt@redcross.org.

AMERICAN RED CROSS National Nursing Committee
Heritage Committee Members: Vivian Littlefield, Chair; Elizabeth Kazmier, Editor; Committee Members: Molly Dalton; Bill Darr; Donna Dorsey; Marie Etienne; Donna Jensen; Linda MacIntyre; Candace Roosevelt; Cheryl Schmidt



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Thank you!