



Red Cross Month: Volunteers Provide Assistance Because Help Can't Wait

Molly Dalton

March is Red Cross Month, a time when the American Red Cross honors our volunteers, the people who deliver support to those in need. Their everyday actions advance our lifesaving mission – which has been at the heart of communities for more than half of our country's 250-year history.



American Red Cross volunteer and Registered Nurse, Adama Tall, checks on people in a Red Cross shelter in Pike County, Kentucky after devastating floods hit the community. "I comfort people and I tell them, 'the fact that you're safe – that's the most important thing. The Red Cross is here to help you,'" Adama said. "They're so appreciative." 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, calling on Americans to address growing humanitarian needs. Ever since, this annual March tradition has honored neighbors who help during emergencies. Today – 145 years since our founding – our mission endures because compassion continues to unite communities everywhere.

During Red Cross Month, we are proud to honor the people in communities across the country who step up during emergencies when help can't wait. They make relief and hope a reality. 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. Every contribution matters – and Red Cross Month is a great time to get involved.

If joining our volunteers is of interest, [you can start here](#), researching the different volunteer roles available. Right now, it is critical that we find people interested in these roles:

DISASTER ACTION TEAM

Every year, the Red Cross responds to over 60,000 emergencies and the vast majority of these are local, personal crises like home fires. These events shatter lives. For more than 60 years, our Disaster

Action Team volunteers have been ready 24/7, 365 days a year – to deliver immediate relief, emotional support and long-term recovery resources. When disaster strikes, we make sure families never face it alone.

BLOOD DONOR AMBASSADOR If you enjoy connecting with people, consider becoming a Blood Donor Ambassador. Ambassadors help ensure every blood donor has a positive experience from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave. You'll greet donors, assist with registration, answer questions, share helpful information and offer refreshments after their donation. Whether you volunteer regularly or occasionally is up to you.

BLOOD TRANSPORTATION SPECIALISTS

Our Blood Transportation Specialists bring lifesaving blood and blood products to local hospitals within their region. They choose when they want to help with either scheduled shifts or our on-demand opportunities. As an on-demand volunteer you can choose shifts that fit your schedule. You will receive real-time alerts when

hospitals have a critical request for urgently needed blood and be on your way to the distribution site within 30-120 minutes. Your time driving could be the difference in helping save a patient's life.

DISASTER HEALTH SERVICES (DHS)

RESPONDER Our Health Services volunteers work during a disaster, providing assistance and healthcare to shelter residents as needed. They provide health assessments to determine if a higher level of care is needed, as well as hands-on care to include assistance with activities of daily living,

wound care, incontinence care and assistance with functional needs. DHS responders help clients replace medications, durable medical equipment or consumable medical supplies and support maternal and child needs as necessary.

JOIN US During [Red Cross Month](#), we honor how people today deliver support when help can't wait. Every contribution matters — visit redcross.org to get involved by volunteering, making a financial donation, giving blood or taking a class in lifesaving skills.

Thousands of Blood Donations Uncollected Due to Severe Winter Weather

Molly Dalton

The American Red Cross urges people to take action now to help offset the severe impact of recent winter storms on the blood supply. Donors of all blood types are asked to make a blood or platelet donation appointment as soon as possible.



Celebrating Veterans Day with action: Alexander Moreno and blood services team member Eddie Herrera join forces at the Los Donantes event in Las Vegas to make a life-saving impact. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Where it is safe to do so, book an appointment to give blood or platelets now by using the [Red Cross Blood Donor App](#), visiting RedCrossBlood.org, or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Hundreds of blood drives have been canceled since the beginning of the year, resulting in thousands of uncollected blood and platelet donations. In addition to the disruption of blood drives, snow and ice have also made it tougher to transport vital blood products, which could potentially affect deliveries to hospitals in some locations.

The severe blood shortage is especially serious for platelets and types O, A negative and B negative blood. Donors with these blood types are encouraged to make a Power Red donation, where available. A Power Red donation allows donors to safely donate two units of red blood cells during one donation.

Type O blood is routinely in short supply and in high demand by hospitals. Type O positive blood is

the most common blood type and is needed for everyday transfusions. Type O negative blood is the universal blood type often used for emergency transfusions. Type A negative and B negative blood are less common blood types but are still in high demand for patients in need.

Platelets, a key clotting component of blood, are often needed by many

trauma patients as well as cancer patients. Platelets only have a shelf life of five days, so there is a constant need for platelets to keep up with hospital demand.

Without immediate action, patients who rely on transfusions — including trauma victims, mothers in childbirth, and people with sickle cell disease or cancer — face serious risk. There's no time to wait.

HOW TO DONATE BLOOD Simply download the American Red Cross [Blood Donor App](#), visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information.

A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state

law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, use the Blood Donor App or follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.redcrossblood.org/rapidpass).

BLOOD FACTS Here are some facts about the importance of an adequate blood supply:

1. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood.
2. Blood donations to the Red Cross help ensure new parents, premature babies, cancer patients and accident victims have access to safe, lifesaving blood nation's blood supply.
3. Every day, volunteer blood and platelet donors are needed across the country to help save lives.
4. Each day, the Red Cross hosts about 500

blood drives to help ensure blood products are available whenever and wherever they are needed

5. A single blood donation can help save more than one life.
6. You can give blood every 56 days, up to six times a year, and Power Reds can be donated every 112 days. Platelets can be given every seven days, up to 24 times a year.
7. We need donors from all backgrounds to help ensure the right blood products are available at the right time.
8. Platelets must be transfused within just five days after a donation is made. That's why there's a constant — and often critical — need for new and current donors to give to keep up with hospital demand.
9. Platelets are a key clotting component of blood often needed by cancer patients.
10. By giving platelets regularly, donors can help patients fight cancer and recover from other life-threatening illnesses and injuries.

If you're eligible, consider scheduling an appointment or visiting a blood drive and rolling up a sleeve to donate today.

The Heartbeat of Hope: Celebrating 100 Years of Heritage and Humanitarianism

Tiffany Taylor

As America celebrates 100 years of Black history, the American Red Cross honors the dream builders and culture shifters whose innovation, courage, and service continue to power our mission and inspire us to reimagine humanitarianism.

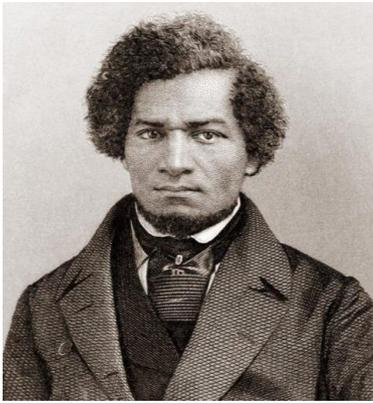
Since the organization's founding in 1881, African American changemakers have forged new paths in mission delivery, innovation and community care. From iconic to unsung Red Crossers, whose unwavering commitment revolutionized how we serve, we celebrate their remarkable stories and essential impact on society. Their legacy lives on in every life we touch, every community we serve and every barrier we continue to break.



Susie King Taylor, the first African American army nurse during the Civil War, served alongside Clara Barton and later became the first Black woman to publish a Civil War memoir. Image courtesy of Stephen Restelli.

Susie King Taylor overcame enslavement to pioneer change as the first Black army nurse during the Civil War, and later as an educator and author. She served alongside future American Red Cross founder Clara Barton, caring for sick and wounded soldiers as a volunteer with the Union military. After the war, she opened schools for African Americans in Savannah and Midway, Georgia, and became the first Black woman to publish a memoir of her Civil War experiences.

Frederick Douglass, the prominent abolitionist and author who escaped slavery, supported Clara Barton's efforts to establish the American Red Cross. Impressed by Barton's aid to Black soldiers during the Civil War and her desire to improve protection of the



Frederick Douglass signed the original Articles of Incorporation for the American Red Cross in 1881, supporting Clara Barton's vision to provide humanitarian service for all. Image courtesy of Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*.

wounded during wartime, Douglass signed the original Articles of Incorporation for the Red Cross in 1881. February was later designated as Black History Month by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in honor of Douglass' birthday, February 14, and Abraham Lincoln's birthday, February 12.



Dr. Charles R. Drew, pioneer of modern blood banking and first medical director of the Red Cross National Blood Collection Program, revolutionized blood collection and preservation. Image courtesy of Howard University, Charles R. Drew Papers.

Dr. Charles R. Drew, a surgeon and pioneer of modern blood banking, was named the first medical director of the Red Cross National Blood Collection Program in 1941. His work with the Red Cross helped save the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians during World War II. Dr. Drew's efforts to increase the blood supply led to the use of bloodmobiles and other collection, preservation, and distribution processes still used today. A champion for equality, Dr. Drew challenged the U.S. military's policy of segregating blood plasma products by race.

Through the collaborative support of civil rights organizations and the Red Cross, the government later discontinued this practice.

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, an educator and civil rights leader, helped usher in a sustained presence of Black Americans in the mission of the Red Cross. She advocated for the



Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune served as director of the Florida Chapter of the Red Cross during World War II, advocating for desegregation and diverse representation. Image courtesy of The New York Public Library collection.

desegregation of blood collection practices, hosted blood drives, and encouraged African American women to staff canteens. During World War II, Dr. Bethune served as director of the Florida Chapter of the Red Cross, helping to build bridges with the Black community while advocating for employment opportunities, disaster relief, and diverse representation on Red Cross regional and national boards.

Major Della Hayden Raney, a nurse and military trailblazer, became the first Black nurse accepted into the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in 1941 after securing

endorsement from the American Red Cross, a requirement for all military nurses at the time. She served as Chief Nurse at the Tuskegee Army Air Field station hospital during World War II, managing the first Black nurses assigned to care for the Tuskegee Airmen. Her service helped pave the way for the integration of Black nurses at military hospitals throughout the United States. Nurse Raney rose to the rank of Major in 1946, the highest rank achieved by any African American nurse who served in World War II.



Major Della Hayden Raney became the first African American nurse accepted into the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in 1941 after securing American Red Cross endorsement and served as Chief Nurse at Tuskegee Army Air Field. Image courtesy of U.S. Army Women's Foundation.

Peter S. Ridley, a psychology professor and humanitarian, championed African American representation in the Red Cross mission. As a Red Cross First Aid instructor in 1941, he trained over 300 students, faculty, and employees at Bowie State University, an HBCU in Maryland. During World War II, he served as a Red Cross club director in England, earning a Certificate of Merit for his exceptional service.



Peter S. Ridley championed African American engagement in the Red Cross mission as a First Aid instructor, club director, and public relations consultant. Image courtesy of the American National Red Cross, 1946.

During the Korean War, Ridley facilitated prisoner of war releases as part of a Red Cross delegation, and in 1951, the Red Cross appointed him as public relations consultant.

Black History Is Made Fresh Daily

At the Red Cross, Black history isn't just remembered—it's made fresh daily and is saving lives. Through the Sickle Cell Initiative, Black communities are reversing declining blood donation trends and strengthening community health. Since launching the Sickle Cell Initiative in 2021, more than 170,000 first-time African American blood donors have rolled up a sleeve, helping to strengthen our blood supply. More than 350,000 sickle cell trait screenings have been provided to donors who self-identified as African American, Black, or multiracial. These screenings give communities disproportionately impacted by sickle cell disease access to critical health information

about their trait status.

The Heartbeat of Hope

During Black History Month, the Red Cross partnered with community organizations to host over 460 blood drives supporting people living with sickle cell disease. This support is especially critical in winter months, when patients with sickle cell disease tend to experience more pain crises resulting in hospitalizations and requiring blood transfusions. When our communities give together, we heal together, creating a legacy of health, hope, and healing.

Commemorate 100 years of Black history by rolling up a sleeve to give blood. Make an appointment on the [Red Cross Blood Donor App](#), visit RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood, or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

CAP Partners Stepped Up to Help During Winter Storms

Molly Dalton

From late January through mid-February, a series of devastating winter storms and extreme cold grabbed hold of much of the country, the West Coast the only region to escape the wintry attack. The American Red Cross responded across multiple states, opening and supporting warming centers and shelters where people could escape the deadly cold.

During these storms, dozens of Red Cross Community Adaptation (CAP) partners mobilized quickly to provide critical support to their communities impacted by the snow and extreme cold.

Under the CAP program, Red Cross partners with local nonprofits that specialize in health, hunger and housing to build more resilient communities in disaster-prone areas where families already struggle with existing societal inequities. In turn, our CAP partners commit to working with the Red Cross during disasters to help mitigate disaster-caused displacement and ultimately reduce the need for Red Cross resources.



In Tennessee, dangerous travel conditions and widespread power outages left many without a safe way to get groceries or prepare meals. Second Harvest Food Bank supported sheltering operations by delivering truckloads of snacks, ready-made meals, water, etc.

As the storms moved across the country, CAP partners sprang into action. In **Madison County, Tennessee**, the Hope Center of Jackson donated blankets and meals. Community Café supported feeding in city shelters. Browns Creek District Association distributed blankets and toiletry kits, transported residents to dialysis and prepared debris removal teams. Madison Chester and Crockett Baptist Associations donated additional blankets and heavy equipment. Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church opened a warming center and coordinated transportation with EMS and law enforcement.

In **Yazoo County, Mississippi**, the Tulane Missionary Baptist Church assisted with tree and debris removal, stabilized damaged roofs and doors and distributed generators. G.A. Carmichael supplied community members with generators and helped the Red Cross transport cots, blankets and other supplies to the warming center.

CAP partners in **New Hanover County, North Carolina**, responded in a region unfamiliar with

the extreme cold. Rise Up Community Farm protected crops and distributed food. Mother Hubbard's Cupboard provided shelf-stable meals and snack packs for shelters as needed.

Moving to **Cameron County, Texas**, in Harlingen, Loaves & Fishes operated a 24-hour warming center and coordinated emergency transportation through a 24-hour contact line. In Brownsville, Ozanam operated a 24-hour warming center, with Good Neighbor Settlement House providing daytime warming services and coordinating transportation to Ozanam for overnight sheltering. All thirteen CAP food pantry partners across Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties operated community-based soup kitchens serving hot meals, and H.E.L.P. RGV offered its warehouse facility as an emergency pet shelter.

In **Hays County, Texas**, nearly every element of the county's nonprofit response was led by CAP partners. Several operated or supported warming centers, including the Southside Community Center, VFW Post 3413 and the Kyle VFW. The Barnabas Connection supported the community help line, ensuring residents had access to timely information and assistance. The HOME Center provided transportation throughout Hays County to help people reach warming centers safely. Central Texas Food Bank and Hays County Food Bank supplied warming centers with snacks and water. First Baptist provided meals at Southside Community Center.

In **Mississippi County, Arkansas**, CAP partners Blytheville Community Samaritans and Mississippi County Union Mission operated warming centers. The Osceola Community Center, supported by Main Street Osceola, opened as an overnight

Around the Clock, Around the Globe – Red Cross Help Available for Military, Veterans and Their Families

The American Red Cross has supported those in uniform since the founding of our organization in 1898. Today, we serve our nation's military, veterans and their families through our "[Hero Care Network](#)," enabling us to provide critical services to this community across the country and around the world.

The Hero Care Network is available 24/7, 365 days

shelter. When severe road conditions halted Red Cross field operations, CAP teams coordinated with local partners to deliver food and essential supplies to a Joiner shelter that was assisting stranded motorists along Interstate 55.

In **Lake County, Indiana**, Faith Community Center North and Faith CDC prepared warming centers and stocked their community refrigerator with food. In Hammond, Health Visions Midwest offered transportation for clients with essential medical appointments. The Ophelia Steen Center opened its generator powered community space for daytime warming.

In **Atlantic County, New Jersey**, CAP partners provided outreach and shelter support throughout the storm. Angels In Motion distributed food bags, operated warming hours and helped connect people experiencing homelessness to shelters. Beacon of Hope opened additional shelter beds. Friends of Jean Webster provided warming space during daytime hours. Jewish Family Services and AtlantiCare conducted outreach, shelter navigation and medical assistance. Hope Exists maintained regular street outreach.

Partners also responded in **Warren County, Kentucky**. HOTEL INC helped organize countywide warming centers. The Warren County Public Library provided free shuttle transportation to help residents reach shelters safely.

All these examples of actions taken by Red Cross CAP partners reflect a reality of modern disaster assistance, that to identify and respond to people in need in our communities, it truly takes a village. Red Cross supports villages and communities in need across the country all day, every day.

a year. One of the services we provide is [emergency communications messages](#), a process which enables us to help military families communicate with their loved ones and help facilitate their return home. We can help connect families after an illness or death of an immediate family member or a significant life event such as the birth of a child. When a service member or their family member initiates an emergency message, Red Cross staff

Molly Dalton

work with the family and appropriate professionals, such as doctors and nurses, to verify the emergency. Once initiated, this verified message is provided to the command, enabling the service member's commander to make an informed decision regarding emergency leave.

Each year, the Red Cross supports active-duty service members and their families through more than 60,000 emergency communications cases. To access the Hero Care Network, visit redcross.org/saf, download the [Red Cross Hero Care App](#), or call a Hero Care specialist at 1-877-272-7337. To best prepare for an emergency, please review the



Andrea Rasia G Brandt, a representative in the American Red Cross Hero Care Center at Fort Sill, takes a call. Photos by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross



The Lawton, Oklahoma, call center is part of the Hero Care Network, providing emergency communications and critical services to military members, veterans and families all over the world 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

eligibility requirements and keep on hand your service member's information needed for reporting an emergency message with the Hero Care Network. [You can find more information here on how to initiate an emergency communication message.](#)

Emergency communications is just a part of the support the Red Cross provides to our nation's military, veterans and their families. Through our Service to the Armed Forces programs, we maintain a presence on over 380 military installations and deployment sites worldwide. [Visit here to learn more.](#)

Learn About International Humanitarian Law Through Dissemination Program

Mark Tannenbaum, EdD

The American Red Cross [International Humanitarian Law \(IHL\)](#) Dissemination Program educates and informs the American public on the tenets of IHL, also known as the law of armed conflict or the law of war. The Program focuses on:

- educating about IHL and how IHL preserves humanity during wartime
- meeting the U.S. obligation under the Geneva Conventions to disseminate IHL to the public, and
- executing the program through direct public engagement.

Volunteer IHL instructors and the National Headquarters IHL team host a wide variety of [IHL classes](#), outreach events, and other similar offerings to connect with and educate the public, both virtually and in-person. Through these events, IHL reaches the American public, primarily those 22 years old or older, with the [IHL Youth Action Campaign](#) focused on younger clients.

IHL is a set of rules that seeks, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It

protects persons who are not, or are no longer, directly or actively participating in hostilities, and imposes limits on the means and methods of warfare. IHL is also known as "the law of war" or "the law of armed conflict." IHL is part of public international law, which is made up primarily of treaties, customary international law and general principles of law. A distinction must be made between IHL, which regulates the conduct of parties engaged in an armed conflict, and public international law, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations, which regulates whether a state may lawfully resort to armed force against another state. The Charter prohibits such use of force with two exceptions: cases of self-defense against an armed attack and when the United Nations Security Council authorizes the use of armed force. IHL does not stipulate whether the commencement of an armed conflict was legitimate or not, but rather seeks to regulate the behavior of parties once the warfare has started.

IHL has its roots in the rules of ancient civilizations and religions. The codification of IHL began in the

nineteenth century, notably through the adoption of the 1864 Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field and the 1868 Declaration of Saint Petersburg, which prohibited the use of certain projectiles in wartime. Since then, states have laid down a series of practical rules to keep pace with evolving means and methods of warfare and the related humanitarian consequences. The rules of IHL strike a careful balance between humanitarian concerns and the military requirements of states and non-state parties to armed conflict. They address a broad range of issues, including:

- protection for wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces;
- treatment of prisoners of war and other persons detained in connection with an armed conflict;
- protection for the civilian population and civilian objects; and
- restrictions on the use of certain weapons and methods of warfare.

IHL distinguishes between international and non-international armed conflict. International armed conflicts are those in which one or more states resort to the use of armed force against one or more other states. Situations of occupation are also covered by the law of international armed conflict, even if they meet with no armed resistance. International armed conflicts are governed by the four Geneva Conventions which regulate the use of weapons and conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination. Non-international armed conflicts involve either governmental armed forces fighting one or more non-state armed groups, or such groups fighting each other. To be governed by IHL, it must reach a certain level of intensity and the non-state parties involved must show a certain level of organization.

The Geneva Conventions regulate the protection

American Red Cross and National Association of Hispanic Nurses Renew Partnership, Strengthening a 32-Year Commitment to Community Health and Emergency Response

The American Red Cross and the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) have renewed their long-standing partnership —

and treatment of four categories of persons who are not, or are no longer, directly participating in hostilities, during an international armed conflict:

- the wounded and sick in armed forces in the field
- wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of the armed forces at sea
- prisoners of war and
- civilians, especially those who find themselves in the hands of a party to the conflict or an occupying power of which they are not nationals, often known as “protected persons”.

In non-international armed conflict, protection like that provided in international armed conflict applies to persons who are not, or are no longer, directly taking part in hostilities. Persons protected by IHL are entitled to respect for their lives, their dignity, and their physical and mental integrity. They are also afforded various legal guarantees. They must be treated humanely in all circumstances, with no adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion, faith, sex, birth, wealth, or any other similar criteria.

Three emblems are used in IHL to identify and protect medical services and protected persons, places and objects during armed conflict. These include the [red cross](#), the [red crescent](#) and the [red crystal](#). They may also be used, either during armed conflict or in peacetime, for the purpose of identifying persons or objects linked to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Restrictions apply to the type of weapons used, the way they are used and the general conduct of all those engaged in the armed conflict. IHL regulates the conduct of hostilities based on three core principles: distinction, proportionality and precaution.

You can find more information on IHL and IHL courses being offered locally through your [local Red Cross chapter](#), or through the [IHL website](#). You can register to attend an IHL course online or discover how to become an IHL instructor. You can also access webinars about [IHL on YouTube](#).

Linda L. Fahey, DNP, RN, CENP

originally formalized in 1993 — to continue advancing health equity, strengthening the volunteer workforce, and expanding lifesaving

services within Hispanic and Latino communities across the United States.

NAHN promotes high-quality health care and supports the professional advancement of bilingual and bicultural nurses, with members continuing to have a significant impact supporting the mission of the Red Cross. Significant achievements over the last year included:

- NAHN organized 10 Red Cross–supported blood drives, resulting in 264 presenting donors, 238 red blood cell units collected, 39% first-time donors, 47% Latino donors and 42% Type O products.
- NAHN chapters contributed through bilingual education, Sound the Alarm events and donor recruitment.
- Youth preparedness expanded, including Babysitter, CPR and First Aid training with additional certifications planned for 2026.

As we look forward to our continuing partnership, priorities for the next five years include:

- Expanding health-professional volunteer

pathways: Plans include a dedicated onboarding link, monthly sessions, training, mentorship, deployment support and conference participation.

- Deepening resource sharing and joint mission work: via quarterly reporting, stronger chapter partnerships, joint education, publicizing NAHN achievements and expanding diverse blood donor recruitment.

"For more than 30 years, the Red Cross and NAHN have demonstrated the power of collaboration between national organizations committed to community health and emergency preparedness," said Linda Fahey, DNP, RN, CENP, Chief Nurse of the American Red Cross.

The renewed partnership strengthens the organizations' shared commitment to support communities disproportionately impacted by disasters, ensure equitable access to health resources and grow a diverse cadre of volunteer nurses and health professionals.

Call for Jane Delano Nursing Student Scholarship Applications

Laurie Willshire, MPH, BSN, RN

Are you an American Red Cross volunteer or employee who is a graduate or undergraduate nursing student? Do you know someone who is? Applications for the Jane Delano Nursing Student Scholarship, which was established to promote nursing as a career and to encourage the involvement of new nurses in the American Red Cross, can be submitted via National Awards from March 2 – May 29, 2026. To be considered for this scholarship, applicants must:

- Have served as an American Red Cross registered volunteer or employee within the

past five years.

- Have completed the equivalent of at least one year of college/university credits.
- Be currently enrolled in an accredited United States undergraduate or graduate nursing program.

At least one \$3,000 scholarship will be awarded in 2026. Additional information, including application forms and submission directions, will be posted on [OneSource](#). Questions may be directed to RedCrossNurse@redcross.org.

Updated Resuscitation Suite™ Programs Advance Lifesaving Education

Marie Manning, APR

In February, the Red Cross released three updated Resuscitation Suite™ education programs: Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS). These updated programs join the Neonatal Advanced Life Support (NALS) program, newly released in 2025. Designed for in-hospital and out-of-hospital clinicians, the suite of programs delivers science-based training that elevates

patient care and supports safety.

"Clinicians need training that fits the way they work rather than training that meets minimum requirements," said Dom Tolli, senior vice president of Product Management and Platform Development for the Red Cross. "These updated Resuscitation Suite programs do exactly that. They're faster, more relevant to real patient care

and supported by tools that make learning and practice easier — we built this program to give clinicians the confidence and skills they need when every second counts.”

The updated Resuscitation Suite programs are designed to reduce time away from the bedside, helping clinicians stay focused on caring for patients while gaining the skills and confidence necessary for time-critical situations. The value of these programs is grounded in a distinct educational approach that informs every part of the program:

- **Practice As You Perform™ training model:** This approach, unique to the Red Cross, allows learners to train in the same manner that they work, using familiar equipment and, under their organization’s medical direction/oversight, adhering to local protocols. This ensures learners train once, not twice.
- **Learner-specific education tracks:** Tailored education for in-hospital and out-of-hospital (EMS) clinicians features real-life case delivery that immerses learners in scenarios that mirror their real-world clinical challenges. Learners can customize their learning experience by selecting either the healthcare or EMS path.
- **Adaptive learning and computer adaptive testing:** Computer adaptive exams reduce testing time by up to 50% while ensuring fairness and security. Adaptive, personalized learning reduces seat time, increasing staff availability.
- **Mobile cognitive aid:** The Resuscitation Suite™ app, powered by [Redivus Health](#), provides real-time protocol guidance and documentation during both training and clinical events. It combines BLS, ALS, PALS and NALS in one app without the need to download separate tools. Plus, it includes free digital code cards and reference materials, ensuring

clinicians have instant access to critical information when it matters most.

- **Free digital materials:** Digital resources, including participant and instructor manuals, videos, presentations and reference materials, are free to Red Cross learners and instructors — an exclusive benefit available only through the Red Cross.
- **Multiple learning modalities:** Most Resuscitation Suite programs can be taught in different modalities — instructor-led, blended learning, self-directed — with recertification and challenge options that accommodate diverse schedules and learning styles.

These programs go beyond traditional training, offering immersive, evidence-based education that builds confidence, sharpens critical thinking and strengthens teamwork. Together with NALS, which addresses newborn care in and beyond the delivery room or neonatal intensive care unit, these updated programs form the complete, high-quality Resuscitation Suite™ portfolio. Following the launch of these updates, the Red Cross plans to introduce an innovative virtual reality simulation tool that allows learners to act as team leaders in high-stakes, advanced resuscitation scenarios.

Red Cross programs are guided by the latest evidence-based science from the Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council and are aligned with the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation’s Consensus on Science with Treatment Recommendations, the Red Cross Healthcare Guidelines and current research from the global scientific community, including the American Heart Association and its guidelines. Red Cross curriculum includes additional resuscitation and patient care topics for unmatched depth.

Additional details about the Resuscitation Suite programs are available at redcross.org/resuscitation and redcross.org/healthcareinnovation.

A Final Request Reflecting a Lifetime of Red Cross Pride: Remembering Gwendolyn Esters

Saida Pagain

As our nation marks the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, the life and legacy of [Gwendolyn Esters](#) stand as a powerful example of how African American nurses and volunteers have shaped

healthier, more resilient communities for generations.

When Esters, a pioneering African American nurse,

health educator and multi-award-winning American Red Cross volunteer, passed away in January at age 94, she left behind an extraordinary legacy of service to her family, community and the Red Cross she loved.

As family members spoke about Esters, they proudly displayed her numerous awards and letters of appreciation from the Red Cross Los Angeles Region. A professional obstetrics and gynecology nurse, Esters volunteered with the Red Cross as an instructor and trainer in parenting, family planning, infant feeding and instructor preparation — touching the lives of countless families in Los Angeles’ inner city.



Gwendolyn Esters, an American Red Cross volunteer and accomplished obstetrics and gynecology nurse, devoted more than two decades to improving family health across Los Angeles as a Red Cross instructor. Her nursing expertise and compassionate leadership helped strengthen countless families and earned her some of the organization’s highest volunteer honors. (Photos courtesy of Frederick Esters).

Gynecology Clinic, she taught family planning and prenatal care to community members, eventually becoming a professional facilitator, trainer and workshop speaker, work that reflected a long tradition of Black health care leaders addressing inequities through education and service.

“She was very serious and deeply dedicated to her calling, especially in working with young women who were pregnant or who had recently delivered,” Frederick Esters said. “That was [her] passion.”

Her children describe their mother as a loving wife and parent who was diligent and hard-working. A Louisiana native, Esters worked full

time as a licensed vocational nurse while also pursuing her registered nurse degree as a full-time student.

Among Esters’ many honors were the prestigious Clara Barton Medallion, awarded in the mid-1970s, the American Red Cross Spotlight Award in the early 1980s and Outstanding Volunteer recognition in 1976-77.

“Gwen’s contribution to the community through her efforts to improve the quality of life for infants and children is



Esters’ collection of Red Cross instructor certifications emphasizes her decades-long commitment to health education and family wellness throughout South Los Angeles communities.

commendable,” wrote the late Marie Fuess, former director of Nursing and Health Programs, in a 1977 letter to Esters’ supervisor at what was then Martin Luther King Hospital. “Her generosity and commitment are the making of a strong Red Cross, and we are proud and pleased to be associated with her.”

Esters’ volunteer service with the Red Cross closely aligned with her professional role as a registered nurse at the former King/Drew Medical Center in South Los Angeles. Assigned to the Obstetrics and

time as a licensed vocational nurse while also pursuing her registered nurse degree as a full-time student.

They also note the pride she took in being among the first groups of predominantly African American nursing students at Los Angeles Southwest College in the early 1970s — a milestone that reflected both her determination and the expanding opportunities for Black professionals during that era.

“When my mother earned her RN degree, that wasn’t enough,” Esters said. “She decided she wanted to become a health educator, then a trainer, and then a trainer of trainers. She never stopped growing professionally.”

Esters’ work to improve the lives of low-income families through health education earned her the



Gwendolyn Esters is remembered for a lifetime devoted to nursing, teaching and service, leaving a lasting impact on families within underserved neighborhoods.

respect of countless community members, as well as local and national leaders, many of whom sent letters of appreciation when she retired in the early 1990s. Yet as her life came to a close, her children say it was the recognition she received through the Red Cross that remained most meaningful to her.

“She was emphatic about being laid to rest with

that Red Cross pin, specifically on her left lapel,” said Dorian Esters, another of her sons. “That lets you know how important her service and the work she did with the Red Cross were to her.”

Frederick Esters said his mother expressed the same wish to him. “One of her last requests was, ‘Bury me with my Red Cross pin.’”

Rail Car Became Traveling Blood Drive During Korean War; One of Many Services Provided by Red Cross SAF&V Programs Molly Dalton and Susan Watson

The Korean War began when North Korea invaded the south on June 25, 1950. This brought about an increased need for whole blood and plasma to treat shock in wounded soldiers and civilians and the American Red Cross became the agency to coordinate the new blood donor program. Thanks to the Western Pacific Railroad, a rail car became part of that program.



The “Charles O. Sweetwood” rail car is considered to have helped save the lives of thousands of soldiers during the Korean War. The Sweetwood spent nearly 3 years travelling over 28,000 miles between California and Colorado bringing blood donation opportunities to towns where previously there were no blood collections.

whole blood and plasma, [similar to what it had done during World War II](#).

Because this program sometimes fell short of meeting the military’s needs, President Harry Truman issued a directive on December 10, 1951, calling on the Office of Defense Mobilization to provide “a mechanism for the

authoritative coordination of an integrated and effective program to meet the nation’s requirements for blood, blood derivatives and related substances.”

In response, the Department of Defense created a National Blood Program in early 1952, with the Red Cross as the “coordinating agency for the collection of blood primarily from the civilian population, through its existing facilities and cooperating blood banks.”

BLOOD SAVING LIVES Just prior to World War II, research focused on the nature of shock, a dangerous medical condition that occurs with major injury. About the year 1940, experts realized that the most effective treatment was to quickly administer fluids, particularly blood. This led the U.S. military to emphasize new methods of treatment, including rapid infusion of blood.

In 1948, Dr. Carl W. Walter developed a stronger and more portable container using plastic which revolutionized blood collection, opening the door to

A LITTLE HISTORY In response to the invasion, the United Nations Security Council voted to come to the defense of South Korea. Leadership of the military forces, eventually comprised of troops from 16 member states, plus the Republic of Korea, fell to the United States.

The American Red Cross immediately mobilized a paid and volunteer work force under its Service to the Armed Forces and Veterans (SAF&V), providing services through these branches — Service at Military Installations, Service in Military Hospitals, Home Service, Service in Veterans Hospitals and Services at Veterans Administration Offices. [Visit here to learn more about the role of the American Red Cross during the Korean War.](#)

BLOOD PROGRAM NEEDED At the request of the Department of Defense, the American Red Cross also participated in a blood donor program beginning in 1950 to meet the military’s needs for

larger collections networks and the ability to transport blood products longer distances.

The science learned during WWII was expanded on during the Korean War. Treatment of soldiers near the front lines, MASH units and battlefield medics are credited with saving thousands of soldiers who may have died under earlier practices.

BLOOD DRIVES BY RAIL Enter a unique railroad passenger car. As the war escalated, the Western Pacific Railroad considered ideas to support the troops overseas. The railroad proposed to work with the Red Cross to equip a passenger car as a rolling blood collection center.

Built to be a traveling office for business executives in 1917, Western Pacific outfitted the rail car to undertake the mission of gathering life-saving blood for those troops engaged in the conflict in Korea.

While railcars had been used to support military medical needs before, their usage had been limited to transporting supplies or wounded troops who had been stabilized. The concept of a large travelling blood collection center that could cover longer distances, let alone one that was a railroad car — had never been tried.

At the time, blood collection centers were all in urban areas and the bloodmobiles attached to them stayed close by, going less than 75 miles from the blood centers. The Western Pacific proposed something on a much larger scale. The Blood Procurement Car would collect in small towns between California and Colorado, opening up the opportunity to become a blood donor to people far from the urban areas where blood centers were located.

To create its blood procurement car, the Western Pacific chose Eastern Division Superintendent's Car 106, a Pullman executive observation car. On January 10, 1951, Western Pacific presented the newly christened "Charles O. Sweetwood" to the American Red Cross.

THE CHARLES O. SWEETWOOD The car was named for a former Western Pacific carman and young Army medic. Sgt. Charles O. Sweetwood

joined the Army in 1947 at the age of 18. His time was up in December 1949 and he went home to Elko, Nevada, and got married. In the spring of 1950, he reenlisted and went to Korea as a field medic, treating wounded soldiers in the field.

On September 8, 1950, just after his 21st birthday, Charles Sweetwood was killed in action while helping wounded comrades under fire. He was the first resident of the state of Nevada, and the first member of the Western Pacific Railroad family to be killed in Korea. The Red Cross car was named in his honor.

HOW IT WORKED Donations were handled in one of four bedrooms set aside for collecting blood. A fifth bedroom was set up as an office and exam room. Donors waited in the observation lounge at the rear of the car. After donating blood, donors rested in the Pullman beds, then they were taken to the car's dining room for post-donation orange juice and sugar cookies. Everyone also received a donor pin.

Blood collected on the car was transported for processing to the Cutter Laboratory in Richmond, California via the Western Pacific's flagship passenger train, the California Zephyr. The Zephyr would rendezvous with the "Sweetwood" and the blood was stored in the freezers of the Zephyr's dining and lounge cars. Blood collected on the car was sped to the lab via the California Zephyr, then processed to be sent overseas. The work done using this car is considered to have helped save the lives of thousands of soldiers.

The Sweetwood spent nearly 3 years travelling over 28,000 miles between California and Colorado.

LIVES SAVED The National Program continued until the end of the war. All told, the Red Cross collected nearly five million units of blood for military use. As a result of achieving an adequate blood supply, coupled with the introduction of helicopters to rapidly transport the wounded from the field and M.A.S.H units located just behind the lines, only 2 out of every 100 wounded soldiers reaching aid stations died in the Korean War, as compared with 5 in World War II and 8 to 11 in World War I.

A Gift That Pays You Back—Now With Higher Rates

Corie Story

Over the years, donors have found that charitable gift annuities (CGA) can be a great way to support the American Red Cross and receive a lifetime of fixed amount payments in return. In fact, CGA rates are at their highest in over a decade thanks to increases in the last few years.

Inflation continues to rise, and you may be disappointed with the interest rate paid by your certificate of deposit. Perhaps you are concerned about bond prices and continuing volatility in the stock market. A gift annuity with the Red Cross can provide you with a regular stream of fixed-amount payments, perhaps higher than your certificate of deposit is paying, while you make a generous charitable contribution to support the future of humanitarian aid.

A charitable gift annuity is a simple agreement between you and the Red Cross promising to make payments of a fixed amount to you for life in exchange for your contribution today. Gift annuities are easy to set up and the payments you receive are backed by the general resources of the American Red Cross. You can reserve lifetime

payments for yourself or someone else, and you can name one or two recipients. Even better, you receive an income tax deduction for the value of your charitable contribution.

Best of all, you will support the Red Cross: sheltering, feeding and providing comfort to people affected by disasters; supplying about 40% of the nation's blood; teaching skills that save lives; distributing international humanitarian aid; and supporting veterans, military members and their families. It's a win-win!

Just a few years ago, if a 79-year-old donor transferred \$25,000 in exchange for a charitable gift annuity, they would have received annual payments of \$1,700. However, with the new rates, a 79-year-old making a \$25,000 gift today would receive \$1,950 annually. That's an increase of more than 11%.

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

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Help us connect with and recognize other current and former Red Cross Nurses!

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Thank you!