



**American
Red Cross**

Nursing Matters Past and Present

American Red Cross National Nursing Committee

54th Edition
Spring 2024

Nurses

*Thank you nurses for blending art and science
with compassion and respect.*

*You promote wellness, provide comfort,
and connect individuals with resources
and their communities.*

You advocate for health equity for all.

*You remember that the trust given to nurses
is priceless.*

Trust opens doors to share expertise and care.

You may struggle, you may get tired.

You're grateful for other

*health and mental health professionals,
and all who contribute
to effective care.*

*You remind us that we're not alone
and that together we have enough
and are enough.*

*Happy Nurses Month! Thank you to all who work
together to promote health and well-being!*

--Linda MacIntyre



Happy Nurses Month!



Chief Nurse Linda
MacIntyre

Happy Nurses Month! Many thanks to nurses and *all* health and mental health professionals who collaborate to achieve health equity. I am deeply grateful for you and your compassionate expertise in promoting well-being.

I am delighted to share that the American Red Cross has collaborated with Relias to provide access to free continuing education resources for Red Cross health professionals. Relias developed separate bundles of continuing education for Red Cross EMTs, nurses, physicians and physician assistants and social workers/behavioral health professionals. Each bundle is available to Red Cross employees and volunteers at no charge and is valued at \$199 per bundle. Information is found on OneSource

Linda MacIntyre, PhD, RN, PHN, FAAN

under "[Health Professional Continuing Education Resource.](#)"

On April 22, Relias hosted a celebration of appreciation for Red Cross health and mental health professionals during National Volunteer Week. Relias staff members Felicia Sadler, MJ, BSN, RN, CPHQ, LSSBB, Vice President, Quality and Rola Amar, PhD, Partner, Behavioral Health Solutions provided a brief overview of the continuing education resources and shared tips to ensure that courses align with state requirements. They interviewed Red Cross employees and volunteers. We heard about the value of the free continuing education resources and learned about some of the many ways that Red Cross health and mental health professionals deliver the humanitarian mission.

Jeff Jesson shared his experience in leading a team

of apheresis nurses and Danel Lipparelli told participants how she supports individuals as a Disaster Mental Health worker. Carolyn Nganga-Good expressed her gratitude for the continuing education resources and spoke about her role as a nurse on the National Nursing Committee and as a Certified HeartMath Trainer who supports resilience and well-being. EMT Mitchell Aiken explained his role as a Disaster Health Services responder. Courtney Lawrence described her role as a physician in Biomedical Services who provides education and clinical guidance about apheresis

and sickle cell disease. Brittany Gray will record a message about how she leads a team of nurses who screen and prepare individuals to deploy overseas to support members of the military.

I appreciate the collaboration with Relias that supports Red Cross health and mental health professionals in lifelong learning and maintaining their licenses. Each day, Red Cross health professionals work behind the scenes, in direct care and in leadership roles to promote health and health equity. If you are not part of the Red Cross, consider applying to become a [volunteer](#).

Sickle Cell: Elevating Awareness, Driving Impact

Tiffany Taylor, Biomedical Communications

April was National Minority Health Month. The American Red Cross honored this year's theme, "be the source for better health," by raising awareness about health disparities that disproportionately affect racially and ethnically diverse populations and how it's working with partners to improve health outcomes of diverse communities through blood donation.

More than 100,000 people in the U.S. have sickle cell disease, an inherited blood disorder that has a 1 in 4 chance of being passed down from parents who each carry sickle cell trait. Patients with sickle cell disease, the majority who are of African, Latin and Mediterranean descent, can experience severe anemia, reoccurring pain crisis and life-threatening complications that can require blood transfusions.

According to the American Society of Hematology, 1 to 3 million Americans have sickle cell trait. However, since universal newborn screening for sickle cell disease was not implemented in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands until 2006, many individuals remain unaware of their sickle cell trait status. Factoring in that most people with sickle cell trait do not experience symptoms of sickle cell disease, this can contribute to them unknowingly passing the sickle cell gene on to their children.

In 2012, pharmacist Dr. Lametra Scott discovered her sickle cell trait positive status during a prenatal exam visit. She was informed that because she and her husband both carried the

sickle cell trait, their son had a 25% chance of being born with sickle cell disease. After multiple tests following his birth, she and her husband learned their son indeed had sickle cell disease.

"Advocacy for sickle cell trait testing is important for me because my lack of knowledge regarding my own sickle cell trait status robbed me of the opportunity to take advantage of technological advances offered by way of IVF and PGD that could have been used to break the cycle of sickle cell disease in my family," says Dr. Lametra Scott, founder of Breaking the SSickle Cell Cycle Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to promoting sickle cell disease and sickle cell trait awareness within diverse communities.



Dr. Lametra Scott. After her son was born with sickle cell disease SS, she founded the Breaking the SSickle Cell Cycle Foundation.

"Because sickle cell disease impacts people who represent all ethnic groups and has many faces, it is important for all individuals to not only be sickle cell trait tested but also educated on how the results can impact their lives."

With the help of community partners like Dr. Scott and the Breaking the SSickle Cell Cycle Foundation, the Red Cross launched its national Sickle Cell Initiative in 2021 with the goal of increasing blood donations in Black communities, as 1 in 3 African American blood donors are a

match for those living with sickle cell disease.

In an effort to provide presenting donors who self-identified as African American with an additional health insight regarding their sickle cell trait status, the Red Cross set out to provide free sickle cell trait screenings and expanded screening to include donors who self-identify as multiracial in 2023.

Since the launch of the Sickle Cell Initiative, the



Kristin Ogilvie discovered her sickle cell trait positive status after donating blood with the Red Cross.

Red Cross has provided more than 138,000 sickle cell trait screenings to donors – many who were unaware of their trait status, like Red Crosser Kristina Ogilvie.

As a military child who grew up living on bases in Germany and the U.S., Kristina became eligible to donate blood with the Red Cross in October 2022 after the

FDA lifted its deferral related to the risk of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) or mad cow disease for those who spent time in certain European countries between 1980 and 2001.

“My father is Afro-Panamanian, and my mother is German,” says Kristina, an administrative business analyst for the Red Cross. “I found out that I have the sickle cell trait [after donating blood and

receiving my results] in the Red Cross Blood Donor App. I [shared my trait status with my family] and they were surprised because as far as we know, no one in my family has sickle cell disease.”

While Kristina has not experienced any symptoms similar to sickle cell disease, it is important for those who are sickle cell trait positive to discuss their results with a doctor to find out what it means for them.

“People with sickle cell trait may experience pain similar to that of persons with sickle cell disease when they participate in or are exposed to conditions that cause blood oxygen concentration to decrease, similar to that observed with highly aerobic physical activity, dehydration, or in areas of high altitudes,” says Dr. Scott. “De-oxygenation of red blood cells can trigger the sickling process – even in people with sickle cell trait.”

Since discovering her sickle cell trait positive status, Kristin has been inspired to donate more blood. She has also donated platelets, tiny cells in blood that form clots, stop bleeding and help support expectant mothers, trauma, burn and cancer patients.

“If you have it and you can donate, you should,” she encouraged.

National Volunteer Week: Long-time Volunteers Tell Their Red Cross Stories

Molly Dalton

This April saw the 50th observance of National Volunteer Week, honoring those who give their time and talent to help others. Volunteers represent 90% of the American Red Cross workforce and we recognize and thank them for their support.

During this 50th National Volunteer Week, we highlight several volunteers who have been with the Red Cross for many years:

COMBINED 100+ YEARS OF SERVICE

Narce and Leslie Caliva of the Central Appalachia Red Cross Region have more than 100 years combined service with the Red Cross. Narce began a 65-year relationship working on military bases in the U.S. and around the world. As a

retiree, he continues to serve as a leadership volunteer and instructor-trainer.

Leslie’s Red Cross journey began in 1969 in Darmstadt, Germany. More than 50 years later, she still volunteers and has served in various capacities around the globe supporting our services for the armed forces and international programs.



Narce and Leslie Caliva have more than 100 years combined service with the Red Cross.

A [Restoring Family Links](#) case from more than 20 years ago remains close to her heart. “A Vietnamese family had fled Vietnam and become separated during the Saigon evacuations in 1975. They had found all but one family member — a nephew. Could we help? We filled in all of the forms, and I sent the request to National Headquarters. Three weeks later, success! It was so little, simply filling out forms, making sure we had everything needed for the search, but to know that our Red Cross was able to reunite that family, 25 years later, has never left me.”

When asked what it means to be a Red Cross volunteer, Leslie remarked, “Being part of a team that makes a difference, knowing that the work we do is part of something so much bigger, serving millions around the globe, it really is inspiring and humbling. Our Red Cross family fuels my heart.”

For her husband, Narce, being a Red Cross volunteer means he’s part of a family whose members everywhere share the desire to help those in need. “As an employee and a volunteer, my loyalty to the Red Cross has endured for 65 years and I aim to keep at it until I reach age 100,” he said. “I’m not sure whether we’ll ever retire.”

65 YEARS OF SERVICE **BJ Slovacek** of the Red Cross North Carolina Region became a Red Cross volunteer at age 15 when she joined the



BJ Slovacek became a volunteer at age 15 when she joined the Junior Gray Ladies Program at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Junior Gray Ladies Program in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Today she serves as a Casework Team Leader for the [SAF Hero Care Network](#) in

North Carolina. BJ also helps at blood drives as a [Blood Donor Ambassador](#), and hosts 18 blood drives a year.

BJ met her husband at Fort Campbell. During his military career they moved many times. “The Red Cross was always that touchstone for me to meet

new people, introduce us to the community, and renew old friendships,” BJ said. “Every base had a Red Cross office so that helped make moves easier as I could always make new friends there.”

When her husband retired, BJ reconnected with the Red Cross in Henderson County, North Carolina, serving as Blood Services Director from 2002-2005. “When my husband was diagnosed with leukemia, he needed more than 100 units of blood over the final five months of his life so helping with our blood mission has always been very personal for me,” BJ said.

“My favorite experience was in 1975,” BJ recalled. “I was involved with a project we called Benning Babies. As troops withdrew from Vietnam there was concern about the Amerasian babies being left in orphanages there and a project developed to rescue as many as we could. Three aircraft filled with babies and caretakers were to arrive at Benning. We were provided a hangar at the airfield and volunteers cleaned the building and filled it with the baby needs — we did not know how many or their condition, but we were ready when many beautiful, healthy, happy babies showed up to be loved for several days before they moved on to shelters, foster care and eventually, adoption. I played a small part over those few days but I can only imagine how many lives were changed.”

“Being a Red Cross volunteer has always meant community to me,” she said. “I was, and continue to be, inspired by the others who have been long time volunteers. It feels like being a part of a team.”

65 YEARS OF SERVICE **T. Arnold Ferguson** of the Red Cross Tennessee Region began his Red Cross service as a member of his high school’s Youth Council. Since then, he’s supported Red Cross chapters throughout New England, Ohio and Tennessee. He’s also touched each Red Cross line of service.



T. Arnold Ferguson began his Red Cross service as a member of his high school’s Youth Council.

To Arnold, being a Red Cross volunteer means giving service to his local, national and international community. “The primary thing that

has inspired me to continue all these years is that in my many varied roles with the Red Cross — from stuffing envelopes to board member — I have witnessed the real impact we have on the lives and well-being of people,” he said.

“Perhaps the one experience that stands out most is when a young man who had been one of my first aid students let me know that, because of what I had taught him, he had been able to save his father’s life,” he recalled. “He thought I had empowered him to do that, but it was the Red Cross that had empowered me. It not only taught me the first aid skills, but it taught me how to teach those skills to others. “

64 YEARS OF SERVICE Larry Strauss, of the Red Cross Virginia Region, began as a volunteer instructor more than 64 years ago and has



When Strauss joined the Red Cross in 1960, President Eisenhower was in office, the median cost of a home was \$11,900, and the median income was \$5,600.

and professionally rewarding,” he said.

Larry is certified to teach various Red Cross classes and has held the roles of SAF Facilitator and Military-Red Cross Liaison. As a social worker and counselor, he has responded to numerous disasters

New Red Cross Nurse Story Map

See the new [American Red Cross Nurse Story Map](#). Samantha Taylor, senior program manager, Red Cross Disaster Public Affairs, creatively put together this story map about Red Cross nurses. Do you have a Red Cross nurse story you would like share? Please send it to RedCrossNurse@redcross.org and we can

over the years as part of Red Cross Disaster Mental Health teams. The experience that stands out for him was the 9/11 attack on the U.S. “The assignment to my hometown was a challenge. Viewing the destroyed buildings where, as a young college student, I used to make deliveries, was emotionally upsetting. I interviewed people who were caught in the towers, and a first responder. These were especially tragic cases, and a difficult time for me personally. Hopefully, I was able to provide some assistance and support to them.”

An Army retiree, Larry appreciates the needs and concerns of his fellow service members and veterans. “Being in the service is both an honor and a privilege, but often involves personal and family sacrifices,” he said. “The Red Cross recognizes these challenges and provides supportive programs for active-duty members, reservists, veterans and their families.”

“I have been afforded the opportunity to serve as a Red Cross volunteer in many situations — floods, tornadoes, plane crashes, burst dams, hurricanes, man-made violent incidents and others,” he stated. “I plan to continue to respond, although as an octogenarian, my response may be limited. I am comforted by the fact that there are many well-trained, highly motivated, competent responders and support personnel working to maintain the very positive and enduring image of the American Red Cross.”

[JOIN US, VOLUNTEER](#) According to these volunteers, their work is part of something bigger, serving millions around the globe. Volunteers have a real impact on the lives and well-being of people. Consider putting on a red vest and joining them. Visit redcross.org/volunteer to find out how you can make a difference in someone’s life.

continue the story.



Strengthening Communities: The Collaborative Journey of NAHN and the Red Cross



Dr. Grace Grau.

In the heart of every collaboration lies the desire to make a difference, to weave together strengths and resources toward a common purpose. This rings true in the partnership between the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) and the American Red Cross, where a shared commitment to service has fostered impactful collaborations over the years.

To date, two NAHN chapters have paved the way for what lies ahead. In Illinois, a beacon of community engagement, NAHN IL joined forces with the Red Cross to oversee blood donation efforts at six pivotal blood drives. Together, they mobilized support and made a tangible difference to ensure donor safety and advance saving lives through the invaluable gift of blood donation.

Yet, it's the NAHN Phoenix chapter that has exemplified steadfast dedication, forging a robust partnership with the Red Cross since 2017. Their journey began amidst the chaos of Hurricane Harvey, where the Red Cross and NAHN PHX joined forces with the Department of Homeland Security to provide critical aid and support to the affected communities in Texas.

In the years that followed, the Phoenix chapter's collaboration with the Red Cross blossomed into a tapestry of impactful endeavors. From participating in readiness drills at nuclear power plants to engaging in National Mass Care Exercises and Sound the Alarm campaigns, NAHN PHX consistently demonstrated their unwavering commitment to community resilience and preparedness.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic only intensified their collaborative efforts. In 2023, amidst the uncertainties and challenges brought forth by the pandemic, NAHN PHX and the Red Cross united once again, conducting readiness drills, organizing blood drives, and even preparing for potential deployments to aid in disaster relief efforts.

As we stride into 2024, the spirit of collaboration continues to thrive. Sound the Alarm campaigns echo through the streets of AZ, as NAHN and the Red Cross stand shoulder to shoulder, amplifying their impact and fortifying communities against the threat of home fires.

But the journey doesn't end here. Discussions are underway with NAHN chapters in Dallas and New York, laying the groundwork for future collaborations and expanding the reach of their shared mission.

Trisha Mims Named New DHS Senior Program Manager

Mark Tannenbaum

Trisha L. Mims, PhD(c), MBA, RN, HCM, is the new Red Cross Disaster Health Services Senior Program Manager at National Headquarters.

Prior to coming to the Red Cross, Mims served as the Director of Program and Education for the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA). In that role she worked directly with student volunteers to oversee the delivery of educational programs including conferences, and the development and implementation of related policies for students and faculty. Furthermore, she



Trisha Mims.

lent her guidance to the student committee of the Alliance of Nurses for Health Environment and represented NSNA on influential bodies such as the American Red Cross Nursing and Education Subcommittee, the Nursing Collaborative on Climate Change & Health Advisory Committee and the Climate for Health Leadership Circle Executive Committee.

Mims has held a variety of administrative leadership and clinical positions to include director, Community Health Centers at the J. C. Community

Health Center; RN manager at Kingsport Day Surgery; and charge nurse at the Ambulatory Surgery Center of the Naval Medical Center's Charette Health Center. She has a passion for community health and understands the effects that social determinants of health have on an individual's ability to adapt in the face of disaster. Mims is a veteran of the United States Navy. She has been involved academically at several local universities, including currently serving as a lecturer at East Tennessee State University.

Mims earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Texas A&M University and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Building on her solid foundation, she pursued higher education achievements, attaining both a Master of Business Administration in Health Care Management and a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Phoenix. Currently, she is enrolled at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, actively pursuing her PhD in Nursing Education/Research.

Her passion is grounded in education, growth,



Trisha Mims (fourth from left) at the Client Care Program Summit in April 2024 with volunteers from across Client Care services.

advocacy, program management, volunteer

Advocacy Works! Red Cross Nurses Participate in Global Vaccine Advocacy Summit in Washington D.C.

Carolyn Nganga-Good, DrPH, RN, CPH

On Feb 26-28, five Red Cross nurses joined hundreds of other Champions to attend the United Nations Foundation's 13th annual Shot@Life Advocate to Vaccinate Champions Summit in Washington, D.C. The goal of the summit was to

recruitment, workforce capacity and research. Mims remains committed to supporting both students and faculty members by providing invaluable education and resources, and fostering ongoing collaborations throughout the healthcare, disaster and community arenas. Her involvement on two local boards of directors, directing of a Health Resources and Services Administration-funded, nurse-led clinic and the many community activities she is involved in highlight her desire to continue to lead and serve with others.

Mims' goals for her new role at the Red Cross focus



Trisha Mims (back row, second from left) with the Disaster Health Services team who is serving in Maui.

on building capacity of the Disaster Health Services (DHS) volunteers, establishing strong networks with communities and stakeholders, providing education and volunteer empowerment, which all support the being ready stance of the Red Cross. Her strong involvement in her community and understanding of the volunteer workforce have allowed her to surround herself with volunteers across services lines and within DHS who share their insight of the history, the current work being done, and the needs of the future. Overall, she truly believes that we are one Red Cross and together we are stronger, which allows us to be ready and to respond at a moment's notice.

mobilize advocates from around the nation to meet with congressional offices to provide education and advocacy for global immunization programs, including the Red Cross Measles & Rubella Partnership. This was the second year Red Cross

nurses were invited to attend the event. The Red Cross nurses included Dr. Trinidad de Jesus Arguello, Susan Denavit, Deb Smith, Dr. Carol Weingarten and Dr. Carolyn Nganga-Good.

On the first day of the summit, the attendees heard



Red Cross Nurses (from left) Dr. Carol Weingarten, Dr. Trinidad de Jesus Arguello, Susan Denavit, Dr. Carolyn Nganga-Good and Deb Smith, with the Red Cross Measles and Rubella Partnership Program Manager, James Noe (center).

speakers from UNICEF, CDC, WHO, USAID, GAVI and others on the importance of vaccines and the need to secure ongoing support for global activities. Dr. Peter Hotez, an outspoken opponent of vaccine misinformation as well as a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, gave the keynote address. He discussed his experiences combating vaccine misinformation/ disinformation and developing more accessible vaccines to increase global equity.

On the second day, the attendees, who represented 37 states, visited over 160 congressional offices in both the House and Senate, followed by a half-day of debriefing and close-out sessions on the third

How Red Cross Apheresis Nurses Support the Humanitarian Mission

The American Red Cross has many service lines doing amazing community, disaster and volunteer work. These efforts are well known, as are our blood services providing critically needed blood products in a network reaching far and wide. But did you know the Red Cross also has a research and medical presence? In that vein, I am delighted to share about a lesser-known part of Red Cross Biomedical Services — its Therapeutic and Cellular Service (TCS).

TCS is a division of the American Red Cross that provides critical services in the healthcare and research industry across the nation. It is comprised

half-day.

Nurses are well-positioned to advocate for issues that affect their communities. Despite the historic achievements and promise of child vaccines, the COVID-19 pandemic has stalled the progress in global immunization, and immunization coverage rates have not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, 20.5 million children missed at least one vaccine; 14.3 million of those kids are “zero-dose” children.

These advocacy efforts are aimed at garnering adequate funds to support global childhood immunization programs, broader and stronger health systems, and pandemic preparedness and response. The funds also ensure every child has access to routine immunizations, no matter where they live, and America’s global health security is strengthened.



Shot@Life Advocates from Maryland, including Red Cross Nurse Dr. Carolyn Nganga-Good (right), outside the U.S. Capitol building.

Jeff Jesson, BSN, RN

of three departments. The first is Manufacturing Science and Technology, providing laboratory services dealing in cellular processing and cryopreservation of crucial blood and tissue



From left: Dawn Winnett, Jeff Jesson and Dr. Walter Kelley after a first CAR-T collection.

components. The second, Cell and Gene Therapy Solutions, involves products for further manufacturing such as leukopaks, which are raw materials for creating lifesaving treatments. The third is Clinical Apheresis Services (CAS), which is comprised of over 200 nurses, physicians and other healthcare workers who are involved in the latest research and healthcare practices. This article will focus on the CAS department of TCS and its nurses.



CAS nurses Amy D'Alessandro and Amanda Martinez.

The CAS department is primarily made up of dedicated nurses who provide services around the clock. CAS nurses are specially trained to perform a variety of procedures centered around apheresis technology. The skills and equipment utilized are

extremely versatile and have a plethora of applications. One service we provide, for example, is red blood cell exchange, where we remove red



Care of patients requiring these blood products is often complex and lifesaving.

blood cells and replace them with fresh red cells. This procedure is often utilized for our sickle cell patient population and has the effect of lowering the sickle cell load. The result is a reduction of pain and ongoing internal damage. Patients often feel relief before we have completed

the first procedure. It is phenomenal to see someone improve right before your eyes! Another procedure is plasma exchange, which has a multitude of applications. For example, it is used to remove antibodies from the blood, since plasma is where antibodies tend to linger. This helps reduce the antibody load in patients experiencing antibody-mediated organ transplant rejection. Reducing these antibodies is crucial in improving outcomes for this population and increasing the likelihood of the organ being maintained. We also perform this procedure in the operating room while the organ is actively being transplanted. If you want to feel like a superhero, scrub in and perform a procedure while standing next to a perfusionist as a heart is being placed in an organ recipient. The feeling of being a part of the team that is giving someone a new lease on life is indescribable! A final procedure I want to mention is our ability to separate and collect white blood cells from blood. This has many applications; we can collect chimeric antigen receptor t-cells (CAR-T) cells for further manipulation allowing for tailored cancer treatments, and we can collect leukopaks. Leukopaks are utilized by many clients for research and/or the creation of tailored treatments for patients, largely in the cancer and chronic disease population. We secure the necessary products from our apheresis process and provide them to innovative companies working on the future of patient treatment, which is very exciting!

Our nurses are not just skilled, they are not only dedicated, but they are also some of the brightest and most caring folks you will ever meet. Like so many Red Cross nurses, they are real-life heroes. Working for the American Red Cross is not a job for us, it isn't a career, it is a lifestyle.

Academic Service-Learning in the North Texas Region: Empowering Communities to Serve

Sandi Grupe, Senior Volunteer Services Specialist

The American Red Cross-North Texas Region is at work across 121 counties empowering strong and resilient communities through the Red Cross mission. The region boasts a rich landscape of academic colleges and universities through which mission delivery is growing as communities become equipped to serve one another in the face

of emergency. The North Texas Region is committed to channeling the power of passionate students—across a variety of disciplines—into the mission as we grow together.

For the past three years, the region has celebrated significant growth with institutional relationships

in the Academic Service-Learning (AS-L) space. Partnering with over two dozen schools in various capacities we celebrate the benefits which include:

- Exposure and growth for students as they apply their academic learning within their discipline to the Red Cross mission.
- The compassion, creativity, and tenacity that students bring as they analyze, apply and present approaches that propel the Red Cross mission forward in new ways.
- The student and faculty experience that not only leads to a lifetime of learning and application in their field, but also an awareness and relationship with the Red Cross mission.
- An ongoing commitment to, and with, the Red Cross beyond the academic journey.
- The response of the academic community in support of a critical need.

AS-L relationships are broad, encompassing a variety of academic disciplines at all levels of education. The most prevalent lie within the medical field.

Recently receiving the National Red Cross Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award for their innovative work, North Texas volunteers Carol Miller, RN, MA, Ann L. Smith, PhD, CPNP-PC, CNE, Cynthia Jones-Weidman, PhD, RN and Kathy Davis, MSN, RN have developed relevant and interactive approaches to education as they train faculty and implement Disaster Health Services curriculum within nursing schools. These approaches, while meeting academic accreditation requirements, are drawing the community together while inviting students to enter the Red Cross Disaster Health Services space through both simulation and clinical experiences. Nursing Professor and co-developer Kathy Davis reflects on the student experience sharing, *“The AS-L program has bridged the gap between the students and the North Texas community. This program has empowered the students with practical tools and the confidence to serve the community through volunteering during disasters and emergencies.”*

Similarly, exploration is currently underway within Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs and others as the Red Cross works from undergraduate through post-grad

levels to integrate education and clinical experience. In addition, nursing students are actively present in their communities delivering Disaster Preparedness training, supporting Blood Drives, strengthening vulnerable communities through home fire safety preparedness, engaging in doctoral level projects to enhance Red Cross processes and mission delivery and more.

In a recent partnership with the University of Texas at Arlington, the North Texas Disaster Disability Integration Team had the opportunity to partner with pre-med students within their Medical Humanities course. Students engaged in a service-learning project that enhanced the ability of the Red Cross to serve those with disabilities in a Mass Care response. Students were sent into the community to research and strengthen partnerships with organizations that specialize in disabilities, and presented their findings and recommendations. *“It was transformative,”* said one student of his experience. *“We hear stories from classes and lectures but to be in the field—that is a whole different experience. Being around the people we are training to serve in our future profession made it real.”* Another student offered, *“We thought we were going to receive clear cut answers to our questions, but instead we learned how to meet people where they are in their story. It really removed the negative stigmas our society puts on people and taught me how to see the individual.”* The work of these students has already strengthened Red Cross awareness and partnerships within the Region and will continue to strengthen the ability of our Disaster workers to care for those with disabilities.

Academic Service-Learning relationships extend beyond medical disciplines as the North Texas Region actively engages a myriad of partnerships and projects with Business students, Communications students, IT, Emergency Management, Social Work and Public Health. These partnerships begin at an even younger age as the Region recognizes the importance of engaging in learning and leadership development through a robust youth program. Through creative approaches, a passion for the Red Cross mission is birthed at a young age and travels with students as they transition to their next stages in life.

We celebrate these growing academic service-learning relationships as they continue to empower

our community, drawing us together to serve one another through the Red Cross mission.

National Nursing Awards

Laurie Willshire, MPH, BSN, RN

Two American Red Cross nursing awards were presented by president and CEO Gail McGovern and chief nurse Linda MacIntyre at the Leadership Awards ceremony held at National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on April 11, 2024.

Susanne Lennon Newswanger received the 2023 Ann Magnussen Award, the highest nursing honor



Newswanger, center, with Linda MacIntyre (left) and Gail McGovern (right). Photo by Dermot Tatlow/American Red Cross.

in the American Red Cross. This award is presented to a volunteer or employee registered nurse who has made an outstanding contribution to strengthening or improving American Red Cross programs and services.

Newswanger is currently the Regional and Divisional Staff Services lead and Disaster Health Services advisor for the Northern California Coastal Region/Pacific Division. During her more than fourteen years as a Red Cross volunteer nurse, she has provided health services on 25 disaster relief operations, including several with mass casualties. In addition to her disaster health activities, she has served on the Disaster Workforce Engagement Team, provided disaster instruction, and acted as a mentor and role model to new disaster health workers.

Johnathan Bernier, the Regional Volunteer Services officer who endorsed her nomination wrote: "In her many roles throughout the years,

Susanne's commitment and focus on the mission of health services have made her a beloved and respected leader. [...] Susanne is an outstanding volunteer even amongst a crowd of amazing volunteers, and the organization is infinitely enriched by her daily contributions to our programs."

The North Texas Region received the 2023 Susan Hassmiller Award, which includes a \$5,000 grant to support a Red Cross proposal that promotes nursing and/or nursing student involvement across Red Cross lines of business, and/or in policy and leadership roles. The award was presented to Disaster Health Services nurses Ann L. Smith, PhD, CPNP-PC, CNE and Cynthia Jones-Weidman, PhD, RN. Carol Miller, RN, MA



Left to right: Susan Hassmiller, Ann Smith, Cynthia Jones-Weidman, Red Cross North Texas Region CEO Linda Braddy and American Red Cross president and CEO Gail McGovern. Photo by Dermot Tatlow/American Red Cross.

and Kathy Davis, MSN, RN were part of this team and were not able to attend the event in Washington, D.C.

The 2023 award will support the development of an Academic Service-Learning disaster simulation and training resource for nursing students and faculty as well as the region's plan to expand Academic Service-Learning to other Red Cross regions. As American Red Cross chief nurse Linda MacIntyre explained, "The planned expansion of

Academic Service-Learning is an effective response to a recent National Academy of Medicine Future of Nursing Report finding that our nation's nurses are not prepared to respond to public health emergencies, including pandemics

and natural disasters.”

Additional information about these and other national award recipients can be found on [OneSource](#).

SAF Medical Team Helps Ensure the Best Support for Service Members

Brittany Gray, RN, BSN

The Service to Armed Forces service line (SAF) of the American Red Cross has been supporting our U.S. Armed Forces since 1896. One of SAF's functions is to actively deploy teams that provide mission-critical resources to forward-deployed service members. These services include morale and welfare initiatives, emergency communication and logistical support. The number of individuals deploying on these support teams has significantly increased. We are now actively deploying three times more support personnel than in prior years.

diverse backgrounds including infectious disease, emergency medicine, education, law and military.

The SAF Medical Team performs a variety of functions and is solely responsible for maintaining the medical readiness of our mobile workforce. Some of our duties include:

- Managing the initial medical clearance process for mobile workforce candidates.
- Preparing teams for deployments by assisting the deployers with their DoD pre-deployment medical updates.
- Briefing deployers on and assisting with the medical clearance process upon arrival at the mobilization site.
- Advocating for deployers by determining the need for, composing, and collaborating on medical waivers.
- Creating, reviewing and editing new policies and procedures.

As part of the mobilization process to deploy, our mobile workforce must adhere to the Department of Defense's strict medical readiness standards. The Red Cross SAF Medical Team directly supports each member of the mobile workforce, or “deployer,” in navigating the stringent medical clearance process. Historically, only 35% of applying candidates will meet these rigorous standards to go on to deploy. This is significant as the need for deployers continues to increase.

Most importantly, we aim to ensure our deployers will be well, strong, capable and prepared to thrive in their mission in the austere deployed environment.

I joined the Red Cross SAF Medical Team in March of 2023, serving as the Employee Wellness Nurse Lead. Preceding my arrival, the medical process was solely managed by a single part-time registered nurse. It was apparent that the process demanded more time and attention. Since then, the SAF Medical Team has grown and is now comprised of one full-time staff nurse and seven volunteers. Of these selfless and dedicated volunteers, we are privileged to have five registered nurses, one advanced practice registered nurse, and one physician. The SAF Medical Team comes from

Our desire as a team of medical professionals is to empower, educate, advocate and support in any arena. It is profoundly special to uphold these goals as a Red Cross SAF Medical Team member. We are honored to carry out the SAF mission through our deployers. Through them, we can support our service members and bring comfort and care to those who are serving.

Red Cross Centennial Campaign Addresses Drowning Disparities

Marie Manning, APR

It may come as a surprise to many that drowning is the number one cause of death for children between 1 and 4 years old. It is the second cause of injury death for children under the age of 14.

There are disparities in drowning rates and swimming skills:

- Research shows 64% of African American, 45% of Hispanic/Latino, and 40% of Caucasian

children have little to no swimming ability.

- Drowning death rates for Black people are 1.5 times higher than the rates for White people.
- Drowning death rates for American Indian or Alaska Native people ages 29 and younger are 2 times higher than the rates for White people.
- Finances are also a factor: 79% of children in households with incomes less than \$50,000 have little-to-no swimming skills.



Children who participated in swim lessons as part of the Centennial program proudly hold their certificates. Photo by Connie Harvey/American Red Cross.

training providers such as local park and recreation departments, the Red Cross is building an ‘ecosystem’ of water safety including water safety education and CPR training for parents. The campaign is also helping these communities build capacity by offering Lifeguarding and Water Safety Instructor® courses through our training

providers - which helps sustain the campaign programs and provides job opportunities.

With this in mind, the American Red Cross launched its Aquatics Centennial Campaign in 2014 to commemorate the 100-year milestone of including drowning prevention as part of its mission. This mission investment aims to reduce



A mother encourages her child to learn to swim as part of the Centennial water safety program. Photo by Eliza Shaw/American Red Cross.

drowning rates in locations with high numbers of drownings and those where drowning rates are above the national average.

The campaign has been extremely successful. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s data, when looking at campaign programs as a whole, counties with Red Cross Centennial programs saw an overall 10% decrease in drowning rates versus a 6% decrease nationally.

Since its launch, the Centennial Campaign has provided resources to help deliver more than 131,000 sets of swim lessons and certify more than 5,400 junior lifeguards, lifeguards and Water Safety Instructors. The campaign has also helped educate nearly 19,000 parents and caregivers with critical water safety information.

National data shows that drowning continues to be a problem in underserved communities, so the campaign goes beyond just offering swimming lessons. With the help of partners and aquatic

Due to this success and impact, the Red Cross is doubling the number of sites impacted by the Campaign by expanding from 50 to 100 locations across the country. For more information, visit redcross.org/CentennialSwim.

Free Red Cross WHALE Tales Program Available for Children to Prepare Them for Swim Season

Marie Manning, APR

Ahead of the summer swim season, Red Cross Training Services has revamped and relaunched its Longfellow’s WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program. The free program is designed to help children from all backgrounds in

Longfellow’s WHALE Tales
Water Safety for Children



kindergarten through 5th grade learn vital water safety behaviors without having to be at a swimming pool.

"Spring is a great time to get ready for the summer swim season by learning and reviewing critical

water safety skills,” said Angela Beale-Tawfeeq, PhD, member of the Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council and associate professor at Rowan University. “As an aquatic expert, I recognize the concern many families face near the water, and I can assure you that taking the time over the next several weeks to ensure your kids know these fundamental Red Cross water safety skills will help you feel more prepared for everyday scenarios and fun outings. We can all play a role in preventing unintentional drownings.”

PRACTICE WATER SAFETY With no special certification required, educators, swim instructors, parents, caregivers and others can teach these nine critical water safety lessons to children before the swim season kicks off. WHALE Tales are short, engaging and age-appropriate lessons that cover important water safety topics in different environments such as pools, waterparks, oceans, lakes and rivers. Each lesson centers on a memorable rhyming phrase to help children retain what they've learned.

- Lesson 1: Do Your Part, Be Water Smart
- Lesson 2: Swim as a Pair with a Lifeguard There
- Lesson 3: First Look Around: Is the Scene Safe and Sound?
- Lesson 4: Don't Just Pack It, Wear Your Life Jacket
- Lesson 5: Play It Smart at Your Home, Pool or Park
- Lesson 6: Wave, River or Tide, Water Smarts Are Your Guide
- Lesson 7: Think So You Don't Sink
- Lesson 8: Reach or Throw, Don't Go
- Lesson 9: Stay Calm, Think It Through and You Can Know What To Do

DELIVERING THE WHALE TALES PROGRAM Anyone can use the WHALE Tales

The Value and Impact of the Chief Nurse: Part Two in a Series

This is part two in a series of articles about Red Cross chief nurses. With this series we are recognizing our past and present nurse leaders within Red Cross Nursing, and trying to do justice to Vivian Littlefield's final contribution to this newsletter and perhaps her last great idea to help support Nursing and nurses within the Red

program.

- If you're an educator or youth leader teaching a group, the easy-access, free downloadable resources include lesson plans, course presentations and engaging materials such as videos and activity sheets. Visit redcross.org/WHALEtales.
- If you're a parent or caregiver teaching your own children, visit redcross.org/watersafetyforkids. In addition to videos and activity sheets, resources also include a helpful discussion guide for water safety conversations.

“This program helps teach children how to be water smart – making good choices on, in and around the water. This knowledge will help keep water activities safer and enjoyable this summer,” said Connie Harvey, director of Aquatics Centennial and Survival Programs for the Red Cross.

The Red Cross WHALE Tales program – which stands for **Water Habits Are Learned Early** – is named in honor of Commodore Wilbert E. Longfellow who started the Red Cross Lifesaving Corps in 1914. The Red Cross created the first national water safety program in the U.S., helping millions of kids, teens and adults learn how to swim so the water can be a safer place for everyone. Today it's still the gold standard for aquatics training. In the last century, the Red Cross has helped to reduce accidental drownings by nearly 90% nationwide.



If you missed part one of the series, you can read it in the [Winter edition](#) of this newsletter.

Red Cross Chief Nurse Through the Turn of the Millenium Nancy McKelvey MSN, RN



Nancy McKelvey.

My tenure at Red Cross national headquarters began in 1987 when I was hired to work with a multi-disciplinary team to help develop and pilot a new health insurance plan for Red Cross employees. After almost a year, when management determined

that an independent plan would be cost prohibitive, I accepted a human resources associate position offered by the HR director, who noted the transferable skills of my nursing background.

As it turned out, the experiences I had in supporting various service line and support departments/units, as well as my varied “special projects” provided invaluable background and networks when I later became chief nurse. I served as the personnel specialist for International and Biomedical Services business lines in addition to departments such as Finance, Government Relations and Development. Special projects included working with Service to the Armed Forces to provide training and evaluate the suitability of contract employees to support the military during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. In addition, I led a partnership between the American Hospital Association and the Red Cross to provide medications and diagnostic equipment to former Soviet republics after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

In late 1995, I began working as a senior associate for inspirational nursing leader Cynthia Vlasich in the Office of the Chief Nurse. As the 20th century was drawing to an end, Cynthia retired from the Red Cross and I was appointed chief nurse.

To set the scene for the decade while I was chief nurse, I borrow from Portia Kernodle. In the preface to her book, *The Red Cross Nurse in Action 1882-1948*, she says, “The story of Red Cross nursing is not simple. It is part of the social history of America ... the entire Red Cross organization and the American nursing profession.” Some

examples help tell the societal story of the time. First, it’s good to recall that at least in the first half of my tenure, we still relied mainly on “snail mail,” fax machines and telephones for communication with those outside our buildings, and used in-person meetings for networking, training and internal communication. Many members of the Nursing Network (as well as other volunteers) only had access to computers and/or the internet at their workplaces or at their local chapters where there could be stiff competition for use by volunteers. Only some people carried early personal cellphones (think “Blackberries”). And, although at national headquarters we used email extensively, it was not a reliable choice for communicating with the field. Further, it is estimated that early social media only had a 5% penetration in the U.S. in 2005 so connecting on Facebook or the like was not an option to reach a broader audience. Other societal influences include disasters, notably the 9/11 incidents in 2001 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

A few statistics demonstrate potential organizational influences on Red Cross nursing. During my 10 years as chief nurse, the Red Cross was led by five presidents or interim presidents. Nursing reported to seven vice presidents in four different national headquarters departments: Volunteers, Health & Safety, Government Relations and Humanitarian Services. During the first half of those years, in addition to the chief nurse we were fortunate to have two professional staff, a nurse enrollment clerk and budget for the volunteer nursing chair’s travel plus National Nursing Committee meetings, a relative “heyday” for nursing that permitted some activities that could facilitate re-building a network.

A few of the accomplishments that had impact during that period included:

1. Large expansion of the Nursing Network through the “State Nurse Liaison” initiative. By providing guidance, tools and reinforcement, we were able to establish goals and metrics that aligned with national and local priorities. Attention to this alignment was necessary to help both nurses and Red Cross management understand that the purpose and value of nurse involvement was to help achieve organizational

- goals, NOT goals intended to simply benefit nurses or nursing. At one point, 38 states had an active State Nurse Liaison. Laurie Willshire led this initiative until 2006.
2. Student Nurse initiatives. In addition to developing the Student Nurse Manual, guidance and tools, we created the student nurse pin and established an annual scholarship to be awarded to a student nurse who had volunteered with Red Cross. We launched the National Student Nurse Association (NSNA) partnership with help of Red Cross volunteers Debbie Kennedy and Cheryl Schmidt, who were also faculty members.
 3. We increased diversity at the local level through establishing Red Cross Clubs at 12 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) across the country. We engaged an HBCU nursing student intern who led this initiative.
 4. We enhanced and/or developed partnerships with many national nursing organizations. For example, after 9/11, the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses recruited and trained nurses to volunteer with the Red Cross, providing staff health in New York and in their home localities. After Hurricane Katrina, multiple national nursing organizations recruited and helped with the logistics of training and deploying new Red Cross volunteers. Multiple nursing and other healthcare organizations assisted with international assignments as well as national disaster events. Partnering with the NSNA and its faculty division, we conducted blood drives and provided Disaster, First Aid/CPR and International Humanitarian Law training for students and/or faculty at NSNA national and state meetings. A relationship with the *American Journal of Nursing* led to a monthly Red Cross column.
 5. We obtained grant funds and donations (financial and in-kind) to support the Student Nurse initiative and to host State Nurse Liaison in-person meetings.
 6. We increased awareness of Red Cross nurses and nursing to internal and external audiences. Volunteer historian, Jean Shulman, organized Nurse Enrollment files and answered hundreds of requests about specific Red Cross nurses. Also, after providing detailed information to the “In Love & War” movie, she served as on-site technical advisor resulting in a Red Cross movie credit and a donation that provided seed money to help establish the Red Cross Museum Nursing Room (1997-2005). Red Cross partnered with Nursing Spectrum magazine to select Nurse Heroes and to host publicized recognition events. Those heroes, the Nursing Spectrum editor and I were greeted and congratulated by President Bush at the White House. In 2007 I served as the Washington, D.C. St Patrick’s Day Parade Grand Marshal during their “Year of the Volunteer” event.
 7. We promoted recognition for volunteer and paid nurses with the Ann Magnussen Award and Jane Delano Student Nurse Scholarship. During my tenure, the number of U.S. Florence Nightingale Medal recipients tripled over the previous decade.
 8. I served as the Red Cross representative in the U.S. Health and Human Services secretary’s Operations Center during all major disasters, including 9/11, Hurricane Katrina and others. The Red Cross still had primary responsibility for the Sheltering Emergency Support Function and had a designated reporting seat in the center.
- I believe these and other accomplishments helped to restore an internal and external awareness of nurse involvement in the American Red Cross. Frameworks for engaging and supporting nurses had been established and a mindset of nurses being involved across service lines was better



Nancy McKelvey (right) with Jean Shulman and the Jane Delano Memorial at national headquarters.

understood. No longer were there reports of nurses trying to volunteer and being told, “We have nothing for nurses,” as was commonplace in the 1980’s and 90’s.

The Chief Nurse position was eliminated in May 2008 during layoffs related to budget issues. Vivian Littlefield was then the volunteer chair of Nursing; with the support of the National Nursing Committee, she maintained a Nursing leadership presence until the position was reinstated in 2009. The frameworks, the continued dedication of long-term volunteers and the enthusiastic involvement of recently recruited nurses helped sustain active participation of nurses in delivering humanitarian services to communities. Volunteer nurses continued to serve with decreased staffing and the hiatus between the elimination of the chief nurse position and its reinstatement when Sharon Stanley was hired.

I think the following are the most important factors in how the Red Cross Chief Nurse position creates impact for the organization:

- Provides awareness, credibility and support to active and potential Red Cross volunteer nurses and other health and mental health professionals and organizations.
- Elevates the organization with professional healthcare stakeholders/audiences.
- Identifies and engages individuals, groups and organizations that can operationalize the volunteer Health Network.
- Advises Red Cross leadership on why to engage health professionals.
- Effectively and graciously supports volunteer leader involvement.

Two other topics are critical to mention when speaking of the chief nurse role and its impact during my tenure. First, being a member of the Federal Nursing Service Council provided me with great professional and personal support. The group, comprised of the Chief Nurse Officers of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Public Health Service, the Veterans Administration and the Red Cross, afforded mutual opportunities for networking and sharing subject matter expertise as well as modeling approaches for planning for success and for dealing with problems. This membership was a major support system for me.

Finally, we could not have accomplished nearly as much without the leadership, mentoring and hard



Nancy McKelvey, center, with Nancylee Siebenmann (left) and Vivian Littlefield (right), possibly in spring 2004.

work of the three volunteer partners I was fortunate to work with: National Nursing Chairs Donna Dorsey, Lydia Marien and Vivian Littlefield. Each of them brought leadership experience and special, but different talents and expertise to their position. All of them may have been frustrated at times, but all seemed simply undaunted by the challenges we sometimes faced. Their humanitarian spirit, belief in the power of nurse involvement and dedication to the Red Cross mission seemed to provide a guiding light that maintained the momentum for providing service to our communities. I am grateful for and inspired by the time I spent with each of them as well as to all the National Nursing Committee members, the state nurse liaisons, other leadership volunteers and the nurses “in the trenches.” Thank you for your service to our communities!

I have remained involved as a volunteer, serving on various committees for the National Nursing Committee over time, including the International Services Committee Workgroup and the Awards and Recognition selection committee.

Linda MacIntyre recalled her interactions with Chief Nurse Nancy McKelvey:

“As a BSN prepared nurse, I worked for the Red Cross Greater Kansas City Chapter. I sought Nancy’s guidance on several occasions. For example, I oversaw Disaster Health Services during the 2002 Ice Storm which was one of the most severe in history.

Because many Red Cross nurses remained deployed after the events of 9/11, there weren't many volunteers available to support this disaster response. At that time, few organizations had developed disaster plans and the loss of power impacted over 350,000 people for up to two weeks. Nancy provided guidance and support with grace as I worked to address infection control in the shelter and meet a wide range of requests from members of the community.

Beneficiary Designations

A "charitable beneficiary designation" allows you to direct a portion of your bank, investment or retirement account to the American Red Cross upon your passing. It's a simple and flexible way to extend your support for the Red Cross mission.

Key advantages of charitable beneficiary designations:

- **Easy to set up:** Often, you only need to fill out a form provided by your financial institution.
- **Flexible:** You can designate the Red Cross to receive a specific amount, a percentage, or even your entire account.
- **Revocable:** You can change your beneficiary designation at any time if necessary.
- **Potential tax benefits:** In some cases, your charitable beneficiary designation can reduce taxes for your estate and your heirs.

Charitable beneficiary designations are usually one of two types: Transfer on Death (TOD) or Payable

I served on the National Nursing Committee and we met in Washington D.C. in 2005 as the Red Cross received communication about impending Hurricane Katrina. Nancy supported preparation at the Red Cross Disaster Operation Center. She shared many heartbreaking stories with me and I was impressed by her advocacy to support individuals in need, despite challenging circumstances. When I applied for a doctoral program, Nancy graciously wrote a letter of support. I am deeply grateful to Nancy for her mentorship, leadership and support since 1998."

Corie Story

on Death (POD). As the names suggest, a TOD directs that the assets in your account (for example securities) will be transferred to the Red Cross, whereas a POD directs that the account will be liquidated, and the proceeds sent to the Red Cross. The choice of TOD or POD depends upon your unique circumstances and the details of your account. In either case, you can rest assured that when the Red Cross receives your generous contribution, we will put it to work helping people in need.

For information, please contact Sr. Gift Planning Officer Corie Story at 314-239-2524 or at corie.story@redcross.org.

AMERICAN RED CROSS National Nursing Committee Heritage Sub-Committee Members: Elizabeth Kazmier, Editor; Molly Dalton; Bill Darr; Donna Dorsey; Linda MacIntyre; Cheryl Schmidt; Corie Story; Mark Tannenbaum



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

Please send the email, phone, and address of your friends and colleagues to us at RedCrossNurse@redcross.org. Share this newsletter via email and/or your preferred social media. Go to <http://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/nursing-health/nursing-network> and select a link under "View Previous Issues."

Thank you!