



**American
Red Cross**

Nursing Matters Past and Present

American Red Cross National Nursing Committee

59th Edition
Summer 2025

Meet Dr. Linda Fahey, Chief Nurse

Effective March 2025, Dr. Linda L. Fahey, DNP, RN, CENP, has assumed the role of the Chief Nurse of the American Red Cross, bringing more than forty years of leadership, innovation and service into this critical position. With a career spanning executive hospital leadership, academic instruction and disaster response, Dr. Fahey is uniquely positioned to guide the American Red Cross Nursing and Health strategy into its future state.



Chief Nurse Linda Fahey

Since joining the Red Cross in 2022 as a Senior Nurse Consultant and Executive Assistant to the Chief Nurse, Dr. Fahey has led impactful initiatives in Academic Service-Learning (AS-L) and volunteer engagement. Her distinguished career includes serving as Chief Operating Officer and Chief Nursing Officer, as well as adjunct faculty at the University of Illinois Chicago.

“Nurses and other health professionals play key roles in achieving the Red Cross mission,” said Dr. Fahey. “I am honored to serve in this role and to work alongside such dedicated professionals who bring compassion, expertise and resilience to every community we touch.”

Looking ahead to fiscal year 2026, Dr. Fahey has set forth a bold and collaborative vision to strengthen and advance the work of Red Cross nurses and other health professionals:

- **Strengthen professional connections:** Foster meaningful opportunities for nurses and

other health professionals across the organization to connect, grow and be recognized for their contributions.

- **Expand continuing education:** Partner with Training Services to provide high-impact continuing education that is relevant, mission-driven and responsive to the unique needs of Red Cross health professionals.

- **Enhance Disaster Health Services:** Engage academic

institutions and nursing associations to expand disaster response capabilities and strengthen service delivery to affected communities.

- **Support volunteerism:** Integrate nurses and other health professionals into the Reimagining Volunteerism initiative, re-engaging and re-energizing the workforce to meet the challenges ahead.

Recognizing the efforts of prior chief nurses and other nurse leaders, Dr. Fahey reflected, *“I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me—leaders who shaped our nursing legacy with courage, compassion and vision. My goal is to honor their work by continuing to elevate nurses’ and other health professionals’ roles in advancing the Red Cross mission.”*

With her deep commitment to service, a proven track record of leadership, and unwavering dedication to the profession, Dr. Fahey is poised to lead our next chapter of nursing excellence at the American Red Cross.

Help Can’t Wait — Become a Red Cross Volunteer

Molly Dalton

You have the power to make a real difference, put on a red vest and join us

When hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters strike, communities are often left with critical needs for basics like food and shelter. You can be

the one to help address these needs — as you provide comfort and help those impacted begin to recover.

Whatever your skills or passions, there's a volunteer opportunity that's just right for you. Whether you're delivering health services, supporting a shelter, or distributing relief supplies, your presence brings comfort to people in need.

The Red Cross has many opportunities for volunteers who wish to support disaster relief operations, whether it be close to home or across the country.

Are you willing to travel to where help is needed? The first step to becoming a Red Cross Disaster Responder is to apply using our volunteer management system [Volunteer Connection](#). Your local chapter will contact you once your application has been processed to discuss next steps. Free online training will be provided.

Does helping closer to home interest you? As a [Disaster Action Team](#) (DAT) member, you would be trained to help families in your community after a home fire or other disaster. DAT team members provide emotional support, emergency financial



American Red Cross Disaster Health Services volunteer Julin Wood, RN, visited Kay Bailey in a shelter in Pasadena, California, after Bailey had been evacuated from her home during the wildfires that swept Los Angeles County early this year. Red Cross nurses provide critical basic medical support for those affected by disaster, including initial examinations, and often replace prescriptions and durable medical equipment left behind in the rush to safety. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

assistance and information to help families begin to recover.

BLOOD SERVICES

SUPPORT There is also a need for volunteers willing to support hospital patients who need blood and blood products as they fight to regain their health. If supporting our blood program interests you, there is a need for these volunteers:

- [Blood donor ambassadors](#): Engage with blood donors by greeting them at blood drives, helping them register, answering questions, providing

information and assisting them at the refreshments table.

- [Blood transportation specialists](#): Volunteer transportation specialists support hospital patients by delivering blood from our facilities to local hospitals. If you have a little free time, love driving and enjoy meeting new people, the Red Cross has a great volunteer spot waiting for you.

You have the power to make a real difference and support those in greatest need. Put on a red vest and join the team. Visit redcross.org/volunteertoday to get started today.

Summer's Extreme Heat Can Be Very Dangerous — Follow these Safety Steps

Molly Dalton

It's been a long, hot summer, blanketing much of the country week after week with overwhelmingly high temperatures and thick humidity.

Such extreme heat can be dangerous — even deadly. Extreme heat is a leading cause of weather-related deaths in the U.S., and a 2024 study found that heat-related deaths are on the rise. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, more than 14,000 Americans have died from causes directly related to heat since 1979.

[WHAT YOU SHOULD DO](#) The American Red Cross urges everyone to take care of themselves, their loved ones and neighbors during extreme heat waves by following these three critical steps:

1. **Stay hydrated.** If you are out in the heat,

drink a cup of water every 20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid sugary, caffeinated and alcoholic drinks. Check your urine color — dark yellow means to drink more water. But don't overdo it - don't drink more than 48 oz. per hour - and do seek and follow the advice of your healthcare provider for guidance related to your specific medical diagnoses.

2. **Stay cool.** Spend time in air-conditioned places. If your home is too hot, go to a mall, library or cooling center. Considering sitting in the shade outside, as it may be cooler than a home without air conditioning. Take cool showers or baths to help cool off.
3. **Stay connected.** Check in twice a day on those who are older, have health problems or live alone by texting, calling or knocking on their

door. Encourage outdoor workers and athletes to use the buddy system and check in on each other often. Never leave a child or pet alone inside a parked car, and make sure pets have access to fresh water and shade.

HEAT ILLNESS It's critical to act fast if someone has become ill because of the heat.

Heat cramps are signaled by heavy sweating and muscle pain. Have the person stop what they're doing, rest in a cool place and drink a cup of water — or a sports drink — every 20 minutes. If they feel sick, pause drinking. Get medical help if cramps last more than two hours or if they have heart problems.

Heat exhaustion is signaled by heavy sweating, weakness, cool and clammy skin, muscle cramps, dizziness, fainting, nausea or vomiting. Have the person stop what they're doing, rest in a cool place and drink a cup of water — or a sports drink — every 20 minutes. Loosen their clothes and place a cool, wet cloth on their body. Get medical help if they are vomiting, don't feel better in an hour, or if they have

heart or kidney problems.

Heat stroke is a deadly condition signaled by high body temperature, rapid heartbeat, confusion, headache, dizziness, fainting, nausea or vomiting. Call 911. Move the person to a cooler place, remove extra clothing and use a wet cloth or a cool bath to cool them down. If possible, have them sip a sports drink or water.

IF THE POWER GOES OUT When a heat wave and a power outage happen at the same time, it can be even more dangerous. Stay in air conditioning either at home or at a mall, library or cooling center. If you need to keep medicine cold or use medical devices that need power, talk to your doctor about a backup plan. Keep an ice-filled cooler stocked with food, water and medicine so that they don't spoil.

[More information is available here.](#)

Download the free Red Cross Emergency app for real-time weather alerts and heat safety information in both English and Spanish. Find it in smartphone app stores by searching for the American Red Cross or going to redcross.org/apps.

Immediate Disaster Relief Just the Beginning; Long-Term Recovery Programs Provide Additional Assistance

Molly Dalton

When a disaster occurs, people look to the American Red Cross for help. Almost immediately, the Red Cross mobilizes relief workers and supplies to meet the immediate needs of individuals, families and communities. During these early days, we focus on providing safe shelter, food, emotional support, first aid and health services, spiritual care, financial assistance and emergency relief supplies.



Members of Hope for Coffee, Coffee County, Georgia. Through a partnership with the Red Cross, the organization was recently awarded two long-term recovery grants - a \$150K capacity-building grant and a \$1 million individual household needs grant to help 58 families impacted by Hurricane Helene. This funding is helping build 8 homes and repair 50 more.

our donors, when resources allow, the Red Cross may provide additional long-term recovery efforts to support individual and community recovery needs.

Our Long-Term Recovery efforts may include direct financial assistance to individuals and households, grants for non-profits and community organizations which are supporting a community's recovery, technical support,

information sharing and more.

But did you know this immediate response is not the end of our support? Thanks to the generosity of

HAWAII FIRES It's been two years since

devastating wildfires swept through Lahaina and Kula, Hawaii, and the Red Cross is still there, helping people rebuild their lives through its Long-Term Recovery program.

Our Kupuna, a Red Cross grantee and community recovery partner, focuses on weekly food deliveries to home-bound elders, or kupuna, who were displaced by the wildfires. The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) co-created two grant funded programs with the Red Cross to support families displaced by the wildfires — the Host Family and Direct Lease programs. The Host Family Program provides financial assistance to families who open their homes to friends and neighbors displaced by the fires, providing a stipend for them to cover increased food costs, utilities and other expenses associated with taking in a person, or in some cases, a whole family. Under the Direct Lease Program, CNHA operates like a supportive landlord, holding master leases and providing 12 months of free housing for families with the fewest recovery resources.

There is also a therapy program for first responders run by Catholic Charities Hawaii, and grants to the Maui Food Bank for mobile food distribution trucks to support fire survivors who are physically unable to visit the Food Bank's market in Lahaina.



Christine received both Immediate Assistance and Bridge Assistance from the Red Cross after losing her home in the Pacific Palisades during the 2025 California Wildfires. The financial assistance she received will help her and her son begin to rebuild their lives. She is shown here picking through the ashes of her home. The direct assistance gave her the autonomy to determine what she needed, for which she was grateful. "It's like the Red Cross was saying to me, 'We know a bad thing happened to you, here's some cash so you can take a breath.'" Previously a Red Cross donor herself, she said it was humbling to be on the other side and affirming to see that her trust in the organization was validated. "This is why you guys are so special."

JANUARY WILDFIRES Months after the devastating January wildfires that burned across the greater Los Angeles area, the Red Cross is still there, supporting people impacted by the deadly fires. More than \$36.6 million in financial assistance has been provided to more than 11,400 households affected by the Eaton and Palisades Fires.

This is in addition to an earlier Immediate Financial Assistance program which provided approximately \$12.8 million to over 11,000 households. We have also disbursed \$6.4 million in grants to support community recovery and resilience, including Response Impact Grants to community partners like the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, 211LA, Radio Bilingue and the Hope Crisis Response Network.

HELENE AND MILTON 2024 brought the double whammy of the back-to-back Hurricanes Helene and Milton and their heartbreaking destruction affecting communities from the Gulf Coast to the Appalachians. Hundreds of Red Cross volunteers and employees delivered immediate care and comfort to storm-weary residents who were picking up the pieces from the two storms.

All these months later, Long-Term Recovery operations are ongoing, supporting those impacted



The new headquarters of the Dawson Springs Head Start Program in Hopkins County, Kentucky. After being damaged during the December 2021 tornadoes, this vital service was restored to Dawson Springs through a Red Cross long-term recovery grant for \$100,000 and additional funding from the Kentucky Funder's Table, along with United Way of Kentucky and other partners. The funding supported purchasing building materials and the installation of two storm shelters at the facility.

with financial assistance and more. In addition to Immediate Assistance provided in the early weeks of our response, we also delivered Bridge Assistance — additional funds to help the most severely affected households. So far, the Red Cross has distributed more than \$17 million in direct financial assistance to help survivors with their most pressing needs.

Grants are also being awarded to organizations for long-term recovery groups, debris removal, the creation of disaster relief hubs and more, across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Hope for Coffee, in Coffee County, Georgia was recently awarded two long-term recovery grants - a \$150K capacity-building grant and a \$1 million individual household needs grant to help 58 families impacted by Hurricane Helene.

You can find more information about our Long-Term Recovery programs in reports on our

Measles & Rubella Country Platform

Due to recent events in the global public health and immunization ecosystem resulting in financial instability and uncertainty, the Measles and Rubella Partnership (M&RP) must consider different mechanisms to continue the support of the program, avoiding the real threat of undermining the progress of the past decades.

Hence, a “Measles & Rubella Country Platform” (M&R Country Platform) is being established with the strong support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The platform serves to advance the goals of the Immunization Agenda 2030 and is committed to reducing measles and rubella morbidity and mortality by supporting countries to implement high quality vaccination campaigns.

The M&R Country Platform is an integrated partnership between the American Red Cross and the IFRC, with close coordination with the M&RP partners and other relevant stakeholders. With initial funding from the American Red Cross, the IFRC has established the platform based on lessons learned from their work in malaria prevention and will support areas including preparedness/readiness, prevention, response and evaluation.

Through the platform the IFRC will be more

[Publications page](#) about the different disasters which have occurred over the last few years.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP Help people affected by disasters like home fires, hurricanes, tornadoes and countless other crises by making a [donation](#) to American Red Cross Disaster Relief. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for, respond to and help people recover from disasters big and small, whenever and wherever they occur across the country.

Become a volunteer. Your time and talent can make a real difference in people's lives. [Learn more here.](#)

Mark Tannenbaum, EdD and James Noe, MA



The American Red Cross has played a pivotal role in supporting vaccination campaigns and strengthening routine immunization systems worldwide via the Measles & Rubella Partnership (M&RP). Measles is one of the most contagious and severe childhood diseases. Every day, hundreds of children's lives are lost around the globe from this preventable disease. Photo by Brad Zerivitz/ American Red Cross

involved than ever before--mobilizing the technical experts to work with countries planning and implementing measles and rubella vaccination campaigns. The IFRC will coordinate with members of the M&RP to identify and establish a roster of expert consultants. Roster members will be deployed initially to priority countries in the Africa region. They will be seated in the IFRC country offices and engage in dialogue and physically work with the Ministries of Health to coordinate activities at the national or subnational levels as needed.

The overall goal of the M&R Country Platform is to provide an alternative means for providing critical technical assistance to countries conducting vaccination campaigns. In addition to the funds provided by the American Red Cross, other donors such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) are being engaged and have already committed funds to support platform work. Currently, the platform is expected to function through fiscal year 2027 but may continue thereafter, depending on ongoing needs and the availability of additional funding.

The IFRC M&R Country Platform will provide feedback to the M&RP and relevant partners to ensure strong coordination of activities. While headed by the American Red Cross, the M&RP is

also supported by the Gates Foundation, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the CDC, the United Nations Foundation, UNICEF and WHO. Thanks to the partners and their combined commitment, they have supported the vaccination of over 4 billion children, resulting in a reduction in measles mortality by 83% globally since 2001, and helping

to save an estimated 61 million lives between 2000 and 2023.

For additional information please reach out to James Noe, Senior Program Manager, Measles & Rubella Partnership at james.noe@redcross.org.

Jane Delano Nursing Student Scholarship Recipients Laurie Willshire, MPH, BSN, RN

American Red Cross volunteers Christine Elliott and Carole Pearsall have been selected as recipients of the 2025 Jane Delano Nursing Student Scholarship, established to promote nursing as a career and the involvement of new nurses in the American Red Cross. Each recipient receives \$3,000 toward their tuition.

Christine Elliott is a full-time BSN student at



Christine Elliott and her mother volunteered at an all-day Red Cross preparedness event, running multiple sessions, including "Be Red Cross Ready" and "Prepare with Pedro."

Carroll College in Helena, Montana. She plans to graduate in May 2028.

Elliott was first introduced to the Red Cross when she was in elementary school and accompanied her mother on volunteer activities. When she turned 13, she became an official

volunteer, and since then she has volunteered in a variety of activities across lines of service in both the Cascades and Northwest regions. For the past six years she has been actively involved with the Home Fire Campaign and Sound the Alarm, spending time canvassing neighborhoods, installing smoke alarms and educating families. She has also done fundraising, served as a blood donor ambassador, and participated in Service to the Armed Forces activities. During her senior year in high school, she served as president of her school's Red Cross club. Most recently she has been taking disaster training to prepare for deployment during breaks from college.

Elliott first became interested in nursing in fourth grade, when she dressed up as a World War II Red Cross Nurse for a Memorial Day event. She believes her experience as a Red Cross volunteer has helped

prepare her for a career in nursing. "My experience with the Red Cross has not only inspired my passion for nursing but also equipped me with the skills and values needed to make a meaningful impact in the profession," Elliott said. "I plan to bring the knowledge and leadership I've gained through disaster response training, leading clubs, presentations and watching volunteers hard at work to nursing."

Her future plans include staying involved with the Red Cross. Elliott stated, "I plan to uphold and continue to foster a long-term dedication, leadership and clear vision for integrating my nursing career with humanitarian efforts through the American Red Cross. The opportunity to continue to do this will help me focus on my education and professional development so I can become a nurse who not only treats patients but also leads, educates and inspires others. Becoming a nurse means I get to make a positive difference in healthcare and in communities."

Carole M. Pearsall is a post-graduate nursing student at Purdue Global and plans to complete the program in May 2026, when she will earn a post-graduate Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) certificate.



Carole M. Pearsall

Pearsall volunteers with the Metro New York North chapter as a Disaster Mental Health (DMH) supervisor for both local and national disaster relief operations. She has traveled to floods in Kentucky and wildfires in Maui, spending weeks providing assistance to those in need. Locally she responds as a member of the Disaster Action Team, provides DMH in shelters/Reception Centers, and

mentors new DMH volunteers. Earlier this year she received a chapter award in recognition of her services.

When not volunteering with Red Cross, she does outreach to the homeless population of New York City, including coordinating recreational activities in homeless shelters.

Pearsall describes her work with the Red Cross as life changing. “In 2023, I had the privilege of being deployed to Maui twice for a total of over ten weeks to support the westside community devastated by the wildfires. I sat with survivors in community hotels, community centers, beaches and parking lots – anywhere people stayed or gathered after losing everything. I listened to stories of loss and survival, helping people find moments of calm amid chaos. We offered psychological first aid, emotional grounding, and practical resources. It was one of the most humbling and meaningful experiences of my life.”

After completing this program, Pearsall plans to

Florence Nightingale Medal 2025 U.S. Recipients, American Red Cross Nurses

Debby Dailey, BSN, RN, PHN and Rebecca Harris-Smith, EdD, MSN, BA, RN, FADLN, were selected by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as recipients of this year’s prestigious [Florence Nightingale Medal](#).



Debby Dailey

According to the ICRC, this international award honoring nurses and nursing aides “recognizes exceptional courage and devotion to victims of armed conflict or natural disaster. It also recognizes exemplary service or a pioneering spirit in the areas of public health or nursing education.” It is presented every two years to no more than 50 nurses and 2025 was the 50th award. This year 35 nurses from 17 countries were selected.

Both Dailey and Harris-Smith are American Red Cross nurses. Dailey is a long-time volunteer with the Central California Region (Central Valley

work with those impacted by trauma, especially disasters, homelessness and mental illness. She stated, “I envision a career where I can merge clinical expertise with humanitarian service, continuing my work with organizations like the Red Cross while building sustainable mental health programs in underserved communities.”

The Jane Delano Nursing Student Scholarship is named after [Jane A. Delano](#), founder of the American Red Cross Nursing Service. Undergraduate or graduate nursing students who have contributed volunteer service to or are employees of an American Red Cross unit are eligible to apply, and at least one scholarship is awarded each year. The Nursing Awards Subcommittee reviews the applications and makes the final decision on who will receive a scholarship. Information regarding the 2026 Jane Delano Scholarship will be available in February 2026 on OneSource, the American Red Cross intranet. Inquiries may be directed to RedCrossNurse@redcross.org.

Laurie Willshire, MPH, BSN, RN



Dr. Rebecca Harris-Smith

Chapter) who has deployed on multiple disaster relief operations. Harris-Smith is affiliated with the Louisiana Region (American Red Cross of SE Louisiana Chapter) and serves on the American Red Cross National Nursing Committee as a

representative from the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA).

Their medals will be presented at a Tiffany Circle Women in Leadership luncheon to be held at American Red Cross National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The luncheon will be followed by a reception hosted by the Red Cross National Nursing Committee and the Chief Nurse.

Look for an in-depth article about Debby Dailey and Rebecca Harris-Smith in the next edition of *Nursing Matters – Past and Present*.

It's Almost Time to Nominate a Nurse for a National Award

Laurie Willshire, MPH, BSN, RN

The 2025 National Awards cycle will be open for nominations beginning in early September and lasting for six weeks. Specific information will be communicated by National Awards at the end of August, after which detailed application forms and information will be posted on OneSource. There is typically a formal six-week nomination window from early September to mid-October for the Presidential and Leadership Awards, including the Ann Magnussen Award and Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award.

The Ann Magnussen Award is presented annually to a volunteer or employed registered nurse with three or more years of Red Cross service who has made an outstanding contribution to strengthening or improving American Red Cross programs and services. It is the highest honor of nursing achievement in the American Red Cross.

The Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award provides \$5,000 in grant support for a Red Cross proposal that promotes nurse and nursing student

involvement across Red Cross lines of business, and/or in policy and leadership roles. Submissions are invited from chapters, regions and stations, and *external collaboration is encouraged*. The proposal must be replicable and sustainable.

Please seriously consider nominating qualified individuals for the Ann Magnussen Award and/or submitting a proposal for the Susan Hassmiller Nursing Award, to help recognize and disseminate the work of nurses in your area. While previous winners cannot be nominated again, non-recipients can certainly be submitted again for consideration.

Effective nominations and proposals take some time to write, so planning ahead will be very helpful in getting a quick start. Additionally, the Awards Subcommittee of the National Nursing Committee will be providing some additional guidance that will support this process.

For any questions, please contact RedCrossNurse@redcross.org.

Red Cross and Armed Services Blood Program Launch Partnership to Strengthen Military and Civilian Blood Supply

Rodney Wilson

In a powerful show of unity and commitment to saving lives, the American Red Cross and the Defense Health Agency's Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) have joined forces in a new partnership to fortify the nation's blood supply and support America's heroes.

This collaboration enables the Military Health System to receive life-saving blood products from the Red Cross, while expanding Red Cross blood drives on military installations and even aboard ships. The result: more opportunities for generous donors to give blood and a stronger, more resilient blood supply for both military and civilian communities.

"This partnership is a game-changer," said Dr. Mary Ann Spott, acting director of the Armed Services Blood Program. "Together, we're ensuring that our service members—whether in combat operations, in military hospitals, or on domestic bases—have access to the blood they need, while also reinforcing the civilian healthcare system."

"The Red Cross has a long history of supporting our service members and we are honored to expand our support to help those in need of vital blood transfusions," said Micah Holliman, director of national partnerships for American Red Cross Blood Services. "We are at our strongest when we come together. Blood donation is a simple yet powerful act of patriotism and compassion."

The Red Cross, ASBP, and the Department of Defense share a unified mission: to meet the blood needs of active-duty service members in times of peace and conflict. Now more than ever, this partnership enhances that mission by ensuring our nation is always prepared with a reliable, responsive blood supply that supports military operations and saves lives.

Every two seconds someone needs a blood transfusion. All blood types are needed on an ongoing basis, but of greatest immediate need is Type O blood which doctors reach for in emergency situations. Type O negative is the universal type and

Type O positive can be safely transfused to approximately 80 percent of the population. Individuals of all types, especially those with type O blood, are urged to make an appointment to donate in the coming weeks to help ensure a strong supply. **To find a blood drive or schedule a donation, use the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).**

More Ways to Give, More Lives to Save

“Working in a hospital setting in patient administration, I see firsthand how critical blood donations are,” said Captain Bryan Wallace who donated blood for the first time at a Red Cross blood drive at Maxwell Air Force Base in May. “When I saw this awesome opportunity, I thought, what better time to give than now?”

Military spouses, retirees, and government civilians with base access can now donate blood at either ASBP or Red Cross drives without leaving the installation. Service members at sea will also have more chances to donate while deployed. And civilians who give blood at public Red Cross drives may support military personnel by helping maintain a robust community blood supply which will be shared with the military when needed.

“Every donation is a lifeline,” said Holliman. “Whether it’s a soldier overseas, a veteran at home, or a patient in a local hospital, your blood donation makes a difference.”

A Legacy of Service

This partnership builds on the long-standing Red

Cross Services to the Armed Forces program, which helps members of the military, veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors prepare for, cope with and respond to the challenges of military service, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Maintaining a global presence on more than 100 military installations and deployment sites worldwide, the Red Cross provides communication between service members and their families during times of emergency. The Red Cross also aims to improve the health and wellness of people in the military community through behavioral health and wellness workshops, hospital, clinic and peer support programs and the provision of care, comfort and therapy items.

About Blood Donation

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, follow the instructions at

[RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.redcrossblood.org/RapidPass) or use the [Blood Donor App](#).

From Trauma to Triumph: Ellen Rucker Sellers Champions Change for Black Maternal Health

Tiffany Taylor

The birth of healthy twins should have been a crowning moment for Ellen Rucker Sellers. Hours after delivering her son and daughter via C-section, as she cradled the newborns in her hospital bed, her joy turned to panic.

“I told my husband I was getting hot,” recalls Ellen, CEO and co-founder of haircare brand Rucker Roots. “Then I passed out while nursing the babies.”

What followed was a fight for her life that would

later transform her into a powerful voice for Black maternal health. Her husband, CNN contributor and civil rights attorney Bakari Sellers, frantically called for help.

“The next thing I remember was him outside my room screaming, ‘Will someone come help my wife?!’” she recalls.

Ellen was hemorrhaging severely. Due to complications including a fibroid, blood was pooling inside her uterus instead of being expelled.

"I had lost so much blood that a transfusion was necessary to save my life," she explains.

Seven units of blood and six units of platelets from donors ultimately made the difference between life and death. In that critical moment, the mother of three could only think about her family.

"I told my doctors that I must live for my twins, my 13-year-old daughter Kai, my husband and myself – I have so much more work to do!"

Ellen survived, but many mothers do not. And her harrowing incident is far from isolated.

The Maternal Health Gap

Ellen's experience highlights a major crisis in American healthcare. While maternal mortality has declined for women who are white, Latina, and Asian American, women who are Black face a maternal mortality rate over three times that of their white counterparts – with approximately 50 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023, according to the CDC.

While over 80% of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. are preventable, postpartum hemorrhaging—which Ellen experienced—remains the leading cause of death following the birth of a baby and occurs more often with cesarean births.

"My life was saved because my doctors took my circumstances seriously," says Ellen. "I feel it is important for existing health care systems to care for all patients the same, no matter what their differences are."

It's Giving Life

While multiple factors — such as bias in health care settings, lack of convenient access, and underlying chronic health conditions — can contribute to disparities in maternal health, blood and platelet donations play a crucial role in emergency response. By ensuring these critical resources are readily available, donors can help save the lives of



"I hope that we can better our healthcare systems so that no life is lost bringing life into our world," says Ellen Rucker Sellers, CEO of Rucker Roots, blood recipient and maternal health advocate.

women experiencing complications, particularly in communities affected the most.

Type O blood – which can be given to almost any patient in an emergency – is especially vital. Notably, 57% of Latinos and 51% of African Americans have type O blood (positive or negative), making these communities essential for helping mothers experiencing complications like Ellen's.

Many lifesaving medical treatments for patients require platelet transfusions, tiny cells in blood that form clots and stop internal bleeding.

Reclaiming Health and Wellness

Ellen's medical emergency is not the only health crisis the Sellers family has faced. Shortly after birth, her daughter Sadie was diagnosed with a rare liver disease called biliary atresia and received a liver transplant.

"I approach motherhood with flexibility," says Ellen, who balances her CEO responsibilities with being a wife and mother to twins Sadie and Stokely, now 6, and Kai, 19.

"For Sadie [I admire] her strength and resilience. As a liver transplant recipient, she has to do blood draws several times a year and handles it like a champ! For Stokely, I admire his kindness and empathy. He sees what his sister goes through, and he holds her hand and always tells her she is so strong and beautiful. For Kai, I admire her ability to thrive even when circumstances aren't perfect...She is a straight-A pre-med student at Howard University."

Ellen also carves out time for self-care through yoga, spa visits, and by simply enjoying "a great cup of tea in complete silence in the mornings." Music also helps her unwind, with Beyoncé and Frank Ocean topping her playlist.

Rooted in Advocacy

Ellen continues to channel her experiences into advocacy for Black maternal health and blood

donations with the Red Cross, while also serving as a board member for the American Liver Foundation and Planned Parenthood, focusing on health equity initiatives.

"These health disparities affect women across all social and economic backgrounds," she shares. "We need more healthcare providers who represent the communities most affected."

Her advice to other women is simple: "Advocate for yourself. Whether it is the doctor you choose when you become pregnant, or the tribe you have around

you when you go through labor and delivery, all of these choices can be lifesaving decisions."

A Lifesaving Tribe

A blood or platelet donation can be the difference between life and death for a mother in crisis. Use the [Red Cross Blood Donor App](#), visit [RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood](https://www.redcrossblood.org/OurBlood) or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to schedule an appointment to give blood, platelets or plasma. In the words of Ellen, when you donate "you will be someone's hero".

Revitalized Babysitter's Training Course Boosts Confidence, Safety and Skills

New, free Child Care app delivers essential tools and information for all caregivers

The American Red Cross has released its revitalized, in-person Babysitter's Training course to empower the next generation of babysitters. This comprehensive course, from the top leader in lifesaving education, is designed to provide youth ages 11-16 who are planning to babysit with the knowledge and skills necessary to give care safely and responsibly to children and infants.



The babysitter's training course is designed to help equip tweens and teens with the real-life readiness and emergency skills they need for childcare. Photo by Michael Del Polito

course prepares tweens and teens for success through in-person training with modern instructional elements to boost learning, engagement and retention.

"Many parents are on the lookout for dependable babysitters to care for their children. It's crucial for young caregivers to be equipped with the skills and confidence to provide quality care and handle emergencies," said Dom Tolli, senior vice president of Product Management and Platform Development. The new, in-person Red Cross Babysitter's Training course offers hands-on learning that prepares participants for real-world scenarios, ensuring the safety and well-being of the children they care for."

Encourage youth in your area to [register for a Red Cross Babysitter's Training course today](#). Courses will also be offered by park and recreation departments, community and youth organizations that are Red Cross training providers.

MODERN TRAINING The Babysitter's Training

- The content, images and videos have been updated and provide modern and relatable perspectives to youth, including touches of a "gaming" theme that have been added throughout the course materials.
- The science-backed curriculum covers a range of knowledge areas: practical guidance for basic childcare, positive behavior skills, essential leadership skills, building a babysitting business, safety-related issues and solutions, basic first aid (including choking and life-threatening bleeding) and emergency action steps.
- The course uses skills videos, video-based guided discussions and hands-on practice to simulate real-life scenarios including picking up and holding, feeding and diapering.
- Participants also have the option to add on Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED training and certification, valid for two years, that covers cardiac arrest, sudden illnesses and environmental injuries.
- Exclusively designed for instructor-led training, which is strongly preferred by both course

takers and their parents, to maximize learner retention.

“When students leave a Red Cross Babysitter’s Training classroom, they will emerge as confident and capable caregivers ready to handle a wide range of childcare challenges,” said Tolli. “This comprehensive course offers long-lasting value and equips participants with essential caregiving skills and the ability to effectively handle first aid emergencies. In less than a day, students will learn skills for life, and they will be prepared for success both in their babysitting roles and beyond.”

Additional details about Babysitter’s Training are available at redcross.org/babysitting.

CHILD CARE APP The newly updated course is complemented by access to the Child Care mobile app, which provides valuable childcare information for individuals who care for children and infants.

The app also serves as an easy refresher of the course content, something 9 out of 10 babysitting course takers found appealing.

The knowledge and skills learned in the course – necessary to give care safely and responsibly – are supplemented in the app with tools such as interactive quizzes, achievement tracking and a child’s record tab to keep important information on each child for whom the babysitter cares. To download the Child Care app, search “American Red Cross Child Care” in app stores, go to redcross.org/apps or text CHILDCARE to 90999.

Take advantage of our free “[Babysitting 101: Skills, Roles, and Responsibilities Explained](#)” presentation with Scientific Advisory Council member Elizabeth Hewett-Brumberg, MD on the Red Cross YouTube channel.

Dr. Cheryl Schmidt: Dedicated Red Cross Nurse and Dedicated Collector

Elizabeth Kazmier, MN, RN, CRRN and Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN

How do you feel about stuff? Some people are very committed to minimalism, Marie Kondo-style living and/or “5s”-ing their space at work and at home, while many of us are perfectly happy keeping unnecessary things, like our collections. Among those of us in the latter camp is Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN, LTC (Ret.), AN-USAR. Dr. Schmidt’s years of dedicated service to the Red Cross have been decorated, both by awards recognizing her service (including the Florence Nightingale Medal and the Anne Magnussen Award) and through collecting nursing and Red Cross nurse-related dolls.

Dr. Schmidt explained that her doll collection was inspired by her mother, Helen Schnauber Klouzal, who was a nurse during the 1940s and who taught nurses for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II. After completing a diploma program to become a nurse, Schmidt’s mother spent a year in



Dr. Cheryl Schmidt wearing her Florence Nightingale Medal and her Red Cross Nurse pin, with a few of her favorites from her doll collection behind her, including Florence Nightingale. Image from University of Arkansas Medical Sciences [news article](#) dated 11/18/2011.

New York City learning to teach nursing. During that time she made Ivory soap carvings, some in nurse-related shapes, and sold them at Radio City Music Hall in NYC to earn money for food. A collection of her soap carvings was on display for over 40 years at the hospital in Watertown, NY where she earned her diploma, and now is in Schmidt’s possession.

Schmidt’s collection

of nursing and Red Cross nurse-related dolls is extensive. She currently has almost 100 nurse dolls and statues on display in her office at the Arizona State University Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation (ASU) in Phoenix. Some of them belonged to her mother and



Dr. Schmidt’s collection of her mother’s soap carvings.

sisters, all of whom were also nurses, but most she collected herself. One doll represents Clara Barton,



Clara Barton and Florence Nightingale dolls decorate Dr. Schmidt's desk, accompanied in this photo by her Florence Nightingale Medal and an official photo from her service in the U.S. Army.

wearing a purple dress that is somewhat reminiscent of Barton's [dress that was preserved](#) and is displayed at the Red Cross National Headquarters building. Another one is Florence Nightingale, wearing a brown dress with lace and carrying her iconic lamp. Historical Red Cross



Some of Dr. Schmidt's dolls wear variations of the Red Cross Nurse uniform from the early 20th century, complete with cap and blue cape. The Florence Nightingale Barbie doll rests in her box wearing a 'Scutari Hospital' sash and carrying her iconic lamp, while Santa appears ready to respond to a disaster, wearing a red vest and carrying a blanket and yellow flashlight.

nurses are represented among the collection, as evidenced by their white uniform, cap and red and blue cape – elements of the nationally-required attire that during a bygone era visually

communicated the wearer was a trained Red Cross Nurse. A ceramic bust of a nurse and a statue of a nurse by the porcelain company Lladro are also among Schmidt's collection. A Florence Nightingale Barbie doll was sold by Mattel to commemorate Nightingale's 200th birthday; Schmidt obtained one and has left it in the box for safekeeping. Schmidt's Red Cross collection diverges from nursing occasionally: she said she displays a Red Cross Santa Claus during the Christmas season.

ASU nursing students and faculty who visit Dr. Schmidt in her office are met by the Nightingale and Clara Barton dolls, standing proudly on Schmidt's desk. Schmidt reported that she bought each of them when they were sold as a fundraiser for the Foundation of the National Student Nurses' Association. She said these are the rarest and her favorites of her collection.

Many of Schmidt's dolls have a red cross on their cap or uniform. Doll companies have long used that symbol to represent a nurse, presumably not recognizing that it is an emblem of the Red Cross that has been protected by the Geneva Conventions since 1864, and that its protection is enforceable.

Schmidt's collection also is not limited to dolls or figurines: hanging in a corner of her office is an actual Nightingale lamp carried by nurses during the Crimean War. It came from Turkey, and allowed nurses to carry a lit candle without it being blown out on the windy battlefield.



Dr. Schmidt's Nightingale lamp.

Schmidt's Nightingale lamp is put to use during ceremonies welcoming new nursing students to the program at ASU.

Showing one's appreciation of and enthusiasm for the Red Cross, nursing and nurses can manifest itself in many ways. Dr. Cheryl Schmidt's collection seems unique and magnificent, populating her office with representations of nurses, including Red Cross nurses and historical nurse leaders.

Do you have a Red Cross-related collection you enjoy and would like to share about? Let us know! Or better yet, write a story and send it to us with your photos, at redcrossnurse@redcross.org.

Secure Your Legacy and Continue Saving Lives Beyond the Bedside Corie Story

As a nurse or other health professional, you dedicate your life to caring for others—often putting their needs before your own. August is **National Make-A-Will Month**, a good reminder to take a moment to care for your future and the causes close to your heart by creating or updating your will.

Why Estate Planning Matters for Health Professionals

Whether you're early in your career or nearing retirement, having a will is a vital step in protecting your loved ones and ensuring your wishes are honored. Estate planning allows you to:

- **Provide for your family** with clarity and compassion.
- **Avoid unnecessary legal complications** during already difficult times.
- **Extend your impact** by supporting the values and missions you believe in.

Despite the critical role nurses and other health professionals play in society, many haven't taken this important step. National Make-A-Will Month is the perfect time to change that.

Leave a Legacy of Compassion: Support the American Red Cross

As a healthcare professional, you understand the importance of emergency response, blood donations and community resilience. By including the **American Red Cross** in your will, you can continue to save lives long after your shift ends.

A legacy gift to the Red Cross helps:

- **Provide disaster relief** to families in crisis.

- **Support blood services** that save patients every day.
- **Aid military families** and veterans in times of need.
- **Train communities** in lifesaving skills like CPR and first aid.

It's Simple to Start

1. **Reflect** on your values and the legacy you want to leave.
2. **Create or update your will**—either with an attorney or through a trusted online platform.
3. **Include a charitable bequest** to the American Red Cross.
4. **Let your loved ones know** about your wishes and the causes you support.

Honor your commitment to care by planning for the future. Creating a will is not just a legal task—it's a continuation of your life's mission to help others.

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

August is National Make-A-Will Month

Make-A-Will

CREATE YOUR WILL FOR FREE TODAY



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



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

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