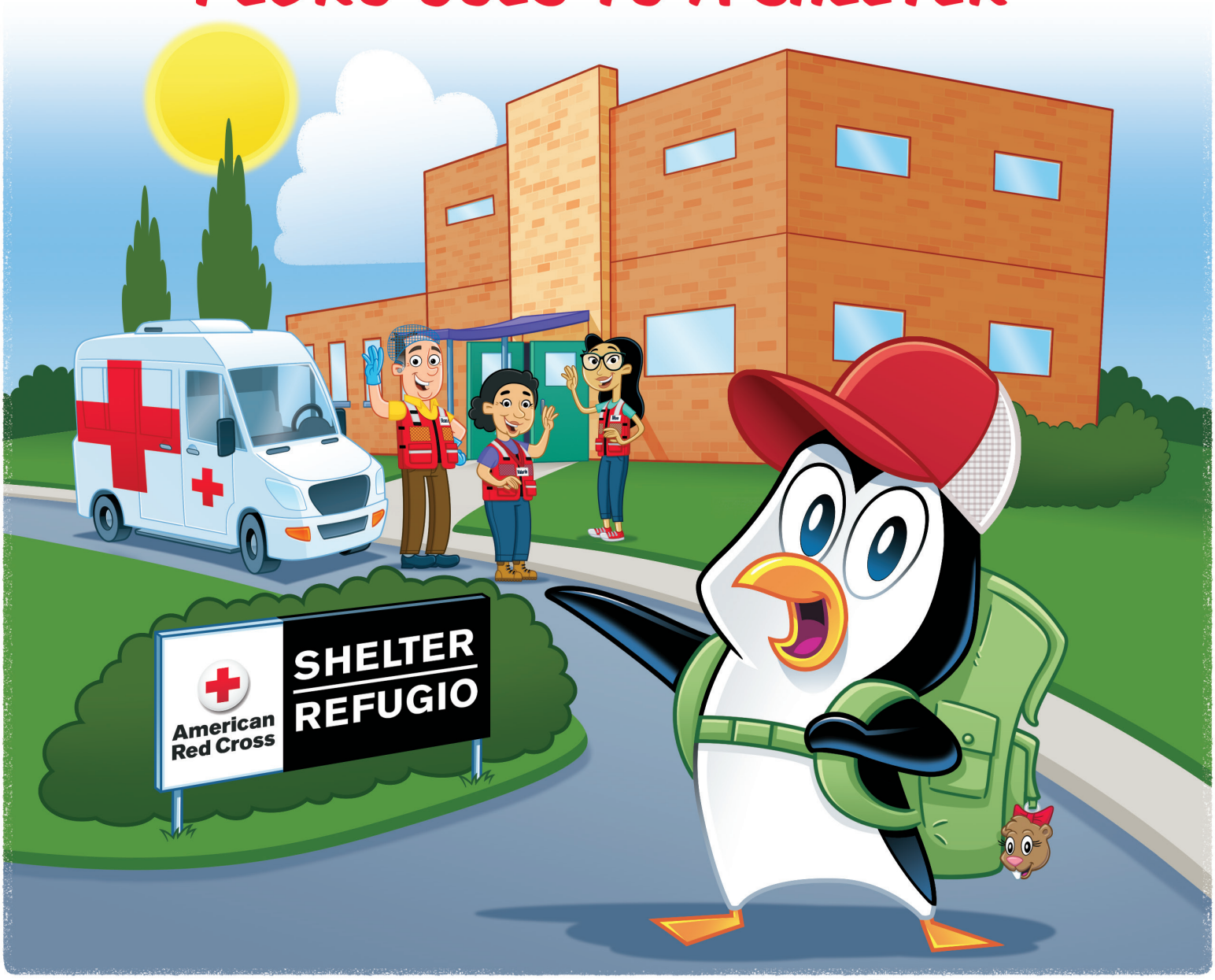
Prepare with Pedro!

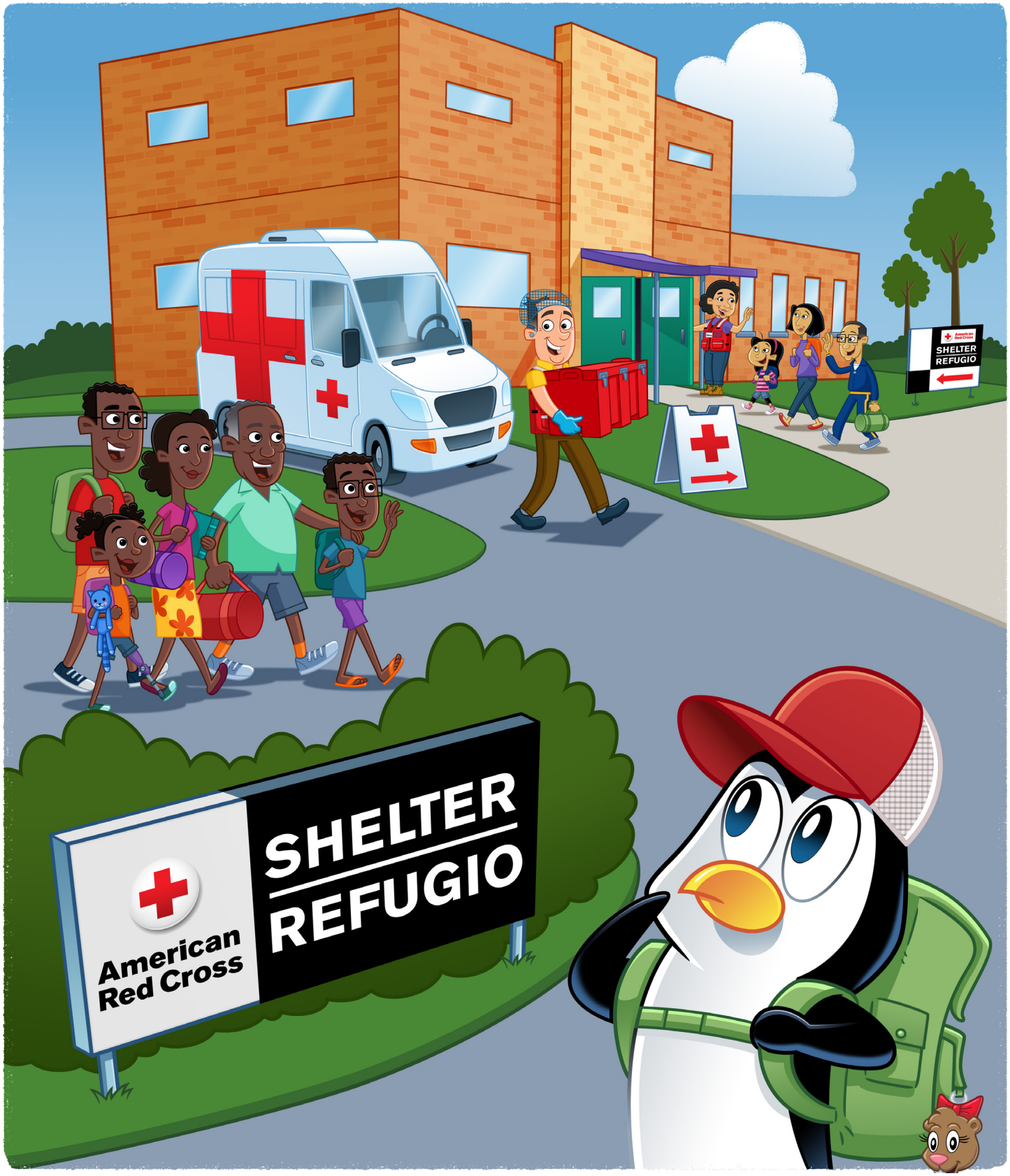
PEDRO GOES TO A SHELTER



American Red Cross

Sometimes, when an emergency happens, the American Red Cross opens a shelter so people can stay somewhere that is safe. While staying at a shelter, people make sure you have food to eat, clothes to wear and a safe place to sleep!

There was a big emergency in Pedro's neighborhood, and he had to leave his home and go somewhere safe. He went to a shelter the Red Cross had opened because he knew it was a safe place to be.



Once inside, Pedro registered at the front desk. He was nervous about being at a new place where he didn't know anybody. Just then, a Red Cross shelter volunteer came up to him.

"Hi there! I'm Mae. I'm so glad you're here! You're going to be safe and taken care of at this shelter. Would you like something to eat? We have a snack table right over here."

Mae gave Pedro a tour of the shelter, including where he would sleep. Pedro saw a few kids around and wondered if he would make friends. When they got to his cot, Mae handed him a teddy bear that he could keep!

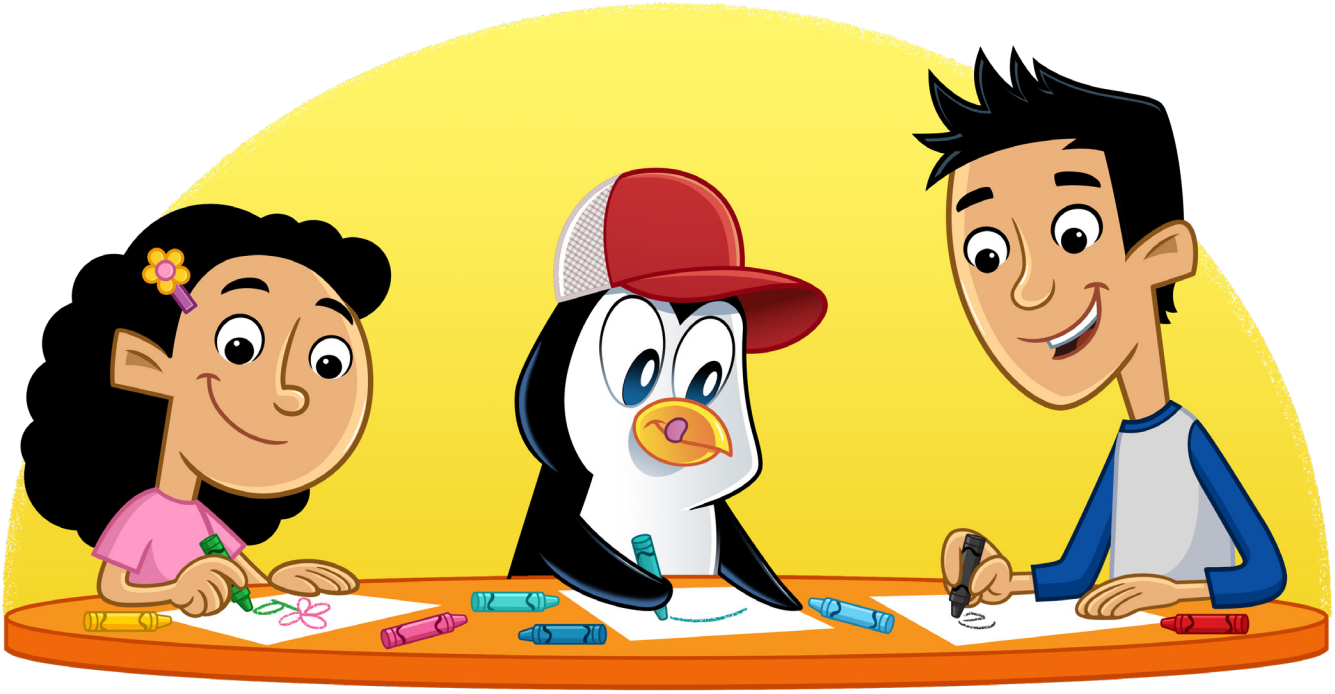
Soon, it was dinner time. Pedro had quickly become friends with Sofia, who had joined him in the food line.

“This is just like my school cafeteria!” Sofia said. “Want to sit with me and my big brother, Gabe?”

“Sure!” Pedro replied.

Before he knew it, it was time for lights out. As Pedro got into bed, he felt a little weird sleeping next to strangers in a new place. Pedro looked over and saw Sofia and her family were right next to him! Holding on to his bear tight, he felt relieved and safe knowing he was near his new friend.

Pedro fell fast asleep.



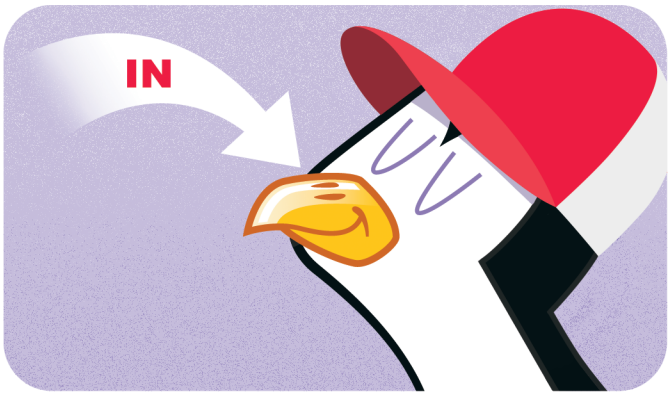
The next morning, after breakfast, Pedro and his new friends sat together and colored.

"My friend Martin has a dog that looks just like this, named Red!" Gabe said. "Red couldn't go with them to the shelter, but he is in a safe place until Martin and his family can get him."

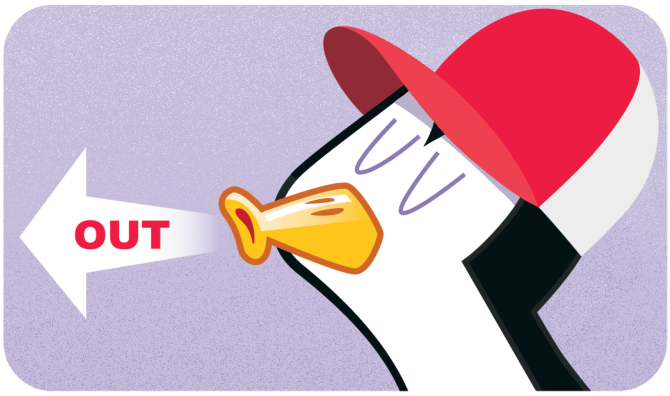
A few days later, Pedro learned that he would be able to return to his home. It was time to say goodbye to all the people who helped him feel safe and taken care of while at the shelter.

“Thank you for helping me feel safe during my stay at the shelter!” said Pedro. “I’m glad I made some new friends.”

Wow, staying in a shelter can make me feel nervous. So I take big slow breaths to calm down.



Breathe in slowly through your nose, like me.



Then breathe out slowly through your mouth.

After just 5 or 6 breaths, I feel better and start to relax. Try it yourself and see!

Grown-ups -

This storybook explains what it's like staying at a Red Cross emergency shelter and what to expect. While this book aims to provide some comfort to your child after experiencing an emergency, it is your support and love that will help them feel secure and safe again.

After experiencing an emergency, certain behaviors are common in children, such as anxiety, sleep issues, fear the emergency will happen again, a regression from certain developmental milestones, and clinginess or separation anxiety with loved ones. Children may also express their feelings through play, sometimes by replaying the emergency they experienced. Know that these behaviors and feelings are common after a stressful event, and that your reassurance, love and extra affection can help soothe their anxiety.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- ☐ Keep track of your children and do not leave them alone at the shelter.
- ☐ Explore and identify feelings your child may be having and openly discuss what happened in an age appropriate way.
- ☐ Provide extra affection and comfort.
- ☐ Provide extra patience and understanding with executing common tasks; forgetfulness and difficulty focusing are common.
- ☐ Try to keep at least one routine in your day the same as before the emergency.
- ☐ Assure your child that you will do everything you can to protect them and keep them safe.
- ☐ Stay positive with words and actions.
- ☐ Monitor the media and your child's exposure to the news or other information regarding the emergency.
- ☐ Remember to care for yourself so you can be there for your children.

For more information, go to redcross.org/YouthPrep.

American Red Cross

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