

RED ALERTS!

Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed

ON THE HORIZON

■ Dec. 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities

■ Dec. 7 – Hanukkah begins

■ Dec. 25 – Christmas

■ Dec. 25 – Clara Barton’s birthday

■ Dec. 26 – Kwanzaa begins

■ Dec. 31 – New Year’s Eve

85
Disaster responses in November. Clients helped: 84

MILESTONES

BEVERLY BEEM,
20 years

JAMES BOTTGGER,
5 years

VOLUNTEER SURVEY

Celebrating your Red Cross anniversary this month? If so, watch for a Volunteer Satisfaction Survey. You will receive an email with the subject line “We need your feedback.” Completing this survey helps us understand where we can improve. You can share additional feedback anytime by emailing IDMTE-OR.teamwork@redcross.org.

FOLLOW US

Thanks to everyone who follows us on Instagram. And if you don’t, please come check us out. Visit www.instagram.com/ida-mt-montana.redcross/

Volunteer Randy Warburton, of Belgrade, is a regional caseworker for the Red Cross Hero Care network and provides support and assistance to military members, veterans and their families.

HELPING OUR HEROES

Service to the Armed Forces volunteer finds satisfaction in delivering care

When Randy Warburton was ready to retire, his doctor gave him some sage advice. “Just remember, Randy, the day you quit helping people is the day you start dying,” he said.

Randy, 61, took those words to heart. It wouldn’t be enough to relax and fish and be sorry about the eye disease that ended his career.

Then at a blood drive in Bozeman, his wife visited with a Red Cross volunteer, and she told him, “They need you here.”

Randy was drawn to the Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces program. He is a regional caseworker for the American Red Cross Hero Care Network and provides local follow-up for their efforts delivering financial aid, emergency communications and referrals.

When the family of a deployed service member has a major life event back home, such as the birth of a child or loss of a loved one, the network verifies the event and coordinates with a commanding officer. If the

service member has an issue, the connection runs the other direction, too. When service members or veterans need help, the network connects them with low-interest loans and local resources.

“When I thank them for their service, they thank me for my support. It does mean a lot to them that we are doing this,” Randy said. At least once a month, he has a case that sticks with him. Recently, a mother was trying to reach her three children in three different military branches to let them know their grandmother was just about to pass away and to see if they could make it home.

“Usually what I do takes about three or four minutes on the phone. I went through the steps with this lady, and then when I asked if there was anything else I could do, she asked if I had a minute to hear her story,” Randy said. “That became a 34-minute call, and I realized she was sitting with her dying

SEE HEROES, PAGE 2

Leaders step into interim roles

We have some exciting news to share regarding our leadership in Idaho, Montana and East Oregon.

Our Regional CEO, Nicole Sirak Irwin, was asked to temporarily serve as interim regional executive for the Louisiana region based in New Orleans and began that role on Nov. 27. She’s excited about this opportunity and is looking forward to sharing best practices

Sirak Irwin

and taking what she learns from this assignment back home to our region.

“I consider myself fortunate to currently hold my dream job working alongside incredibly talented people here in the Idaho, Montana and East Oregon region, and I eagerly anticipate returning to my role this spring,” Nicole said.

In light of this transition, Montana Red Cross Executive Director Diane Wright has been selected to serve as the interim regional executive for our region, effective Dec. 1.

Diane brings a wealth of experience and dedication to the organization and has been with Red Cross for more than 13 years, first as chief development officer and then as executive director.

Diane has served as acting regional executive many times during Nicole’s deployments and time away. Congratulations to both Nicole and Diane!

Wright

Join our virtual volunteer townhalls

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER TOWNHALLS: Our next round of volunteer townhalls will be Dec. 13 and Dec. 14.

These meetings will provide an overview of current and upcoming priorities within each line of service and highlight our region’s progress toward our shared goals. There also will be an opportunity to ask questions.

- **Meeting option 1:** Dec. 13 at noon (MST). [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- **Meeting option 2:** Dec. 14 at 5:30 p.m. (MST). [Click here to join the meeting](#)

POSITIONS OF THE MONTH: Sharing your time and talent is the most meaningful gift you can give this holiday season! Consider giving the gift of time by getting involved through one of our urgently needed volunteer opportunities:

Blood transportation specialist:

IN THE KNOW



Deliver lifesaving blood products from collection sites to processing labs and/or hospitals.

Preferred commitment: At least one shift per month (length varies).

Duty officer: Answer the initial call for assistance and deploy volunteers to active disaster scenes throughout the region. Virtual/remote!

Preferred commitment: One 6-hour shift per week.

Disaster action team: Provide in-person support, comfort, and compassion to members of our community who have experienced a disaster (such as home fire). Preferred Commitment: On-

call.
Light up this holiday season with the warm glow you get from giving the gift of time. Apply now at [redcross.org/volunteer](#) or contact Cami at IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org for more information.

LOG YOUR HOURS: Thank you for logging your volunteer hours! If you have not logged recently, please take a few minutes to do so on the home page of your Volunteer Connection profile or on your Volunteer Connection mobile app.

You make up 90 percent of our workforce, and your time is highly valued. Tracking volunteer hours allows us to honor the work you do to deliver our mission.

This includes readiness activities (preparing to deliver services) and service delivery activities.

FROM THE FIELD ...



LEFT: Red Cross volunteers and Go Team Therapy dogs were a hit at a Trunk or Treat event at the Boise VA. ABOVE: Staff dives into some teambuilding fun at our annual retreat.



LEFT: Nicole Sirak Irwin, Courtney Wilson and Sheila Warner take part in a Veterans Day parade in Boise. RIGHT: Phlebotomist Aaron Wise assists as Colin Hardy donates blood at a Cat-Griz Blood Battle drive in Missoula. Cats fans prevailed.

Heroes: Someone willing to listen

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mom in the hospital and just needed someone to listen.”

Sometimes that is what the Red Cross mission to “alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found” looks like.

Randy heard of the children’s grandfathers, who served in the military, and their grandmothers, who served their communities. Only one of her children was close enough to get home in time, but Randy learned about them carrying on the family commitment to service and to leaving no one behind.

“I was helping her in her time of need,” he said. “That made me feel honored. That’s why I do what I do. I know I’m making a difference.”

In this era of instant communication around the world, the Red Cross re-

mains an important link between home and deployed service member.

“If you ever have an emergency with a deployed person, this is the process you want to use. The message goes to command, and they know it’s verified and are more likely to grant leave,” Randy said.

The program starts before deployment. Randy works with families and service members on family contact cards. When the emergency communications are needed, he gets ahold of the family, offering condolences or expressing concern if there was an issue. He makes sure the message reached command and checks if they need anything else.

Randy also is on the Red Cross disaster recovery team, following up with families to make sure they have what

they need to continue moving forward. He continues to give blood, and he noted that means he’s supporting three missions of the American Red Cross.

“When I posted that I started volunteering with the Red Cross, many people thanked me. I thought, why are you thanking me, but this is a valuable service,” he said. “The more I can do on the volunteer side, the more the paid staff are freed to develop the programs and the more people are helped.”

JOIN THE TEAM

Are you interested in becoming a Service to the Armed Forces caseworker?

Visit [redcross.org/volunteer](#) to learn more and sign up.

— Story by Red Cross writing team volunteer Kristen Inbody