Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed

ON THE HORIZON

Native American Heritage Month, November. Learn more here.

Military Family Month, November. Learn more here.

Daylight savings ends, Nov. 1, test your smoke alarms.

Election Day, Nov. 3.

Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

Thanksgiving, Nov. 26.

53 Volunteers joined us in October.

MILESTONES

Carol Killian, 15 years
Jeff Cahill, 10 years
Burley Johnson, 10 years
Christine McFarlin, 5 years

28 Disaster responses in October. Clients helped: 103

Red Cross News & Happenings

IN THE KNOW

RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

“Good morning. I’d like to give a heartfelt thank you and commendation to those members of the Red Cross (Bozeman) who worked at the Lutheran Church. I was assigned there as a PIO for the Bridger Foothills fire for a couple of days. Everyone there was kind and accommodating to those who came in needing assistance. They were pros and did a great job. In addition, they were welcoming and friendly to me as well. I couldn’t have been treated better. Thank you.”

ANSWERING THE CALL

We would like to recognize the volunteers and paid staff who deployed, either in person or virtually, to help families impacted by disaster across the coun-

Recovery, one step at a time

Severely injured in bike crash, Idaho volunteer starting to walk again, sets sights on deploying

LayLa Johnson had just battled her way to the top of a steep hill she had biked many times before and was preparing for the payoff – the adrenaline surge of “an epic downhill.” Then something went horribly wrong.

“It’s a hill you take very seriously,” the Idaho Falls Red Cross volunteer said. “What possibly happened? Not a clue.”

A friend who was biking with LayLa eventually doubled back when LayLa was nowhere to be seen. He found her crashed along the side of the road and called an ambulance, immediately realizing the severity of the situation.

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“I am going to walk again, and it can’t come fast enough,” she said. “I have a lot of movement, but a lot of weakness. With a spinal cord injury, it all comes down to the nerves, and the nerve recovery is everything.”

In June she returned home to Idaho Falls, where she’s under- going up to six physical therapy sessions a week including regular trips to Salt Lake. It’s all incredibly exhausting.

“I look at it as an infant coming a toddler, she said. “Now I understand why they sleep all the time and are grumpy the rest of the time. It’s enormous work and just some-

SEE RECOVERY, PAGE 2

Stepping up during tough times

As you know, it’s been an extremely challenging last few months. Besides responding to our own wildfires in Idaho and Montana, we’ve also helped families across the country, in places like California, Colorado, Oregon and Texas, recover from disaster. Below is quick rundown of happenings across our region.

WITH GRATITUDE: We received this wonderful thank you from Forrest Ford, a public information officer who assisted with the Bridger Foothills fire in Gallatin County in September.

Volunteers LayLa Johnson, left, and Vicky Johns during their deployment to the Houston area following Hurricane Dorian. Johnson was severely injured in a cycling accident in April, suffering traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. She is making significant progress in her recovery.

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SEE KNOW, PAGE 2
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RECOVERY:

A lot of people think I always knew what to do — that everything was step by step in its place. But her own personal disaster has given her a more realistic perspective of what families face when forced from their homes by a hurricane or wildfire.

“The first few weeks after I came back, I thought a lot about this in a disaster context, she said. “This is what it means to be going through when they just lost everything. They’re not in their homes, oftentimes they may not be with their families and basically life looks like nothing. This is a disaster on a scale of one.”

“Often it looks at that it 50,000 people have been impacted by a disaster, but not as individuals who lost everything, and for them, it’s a disaster on a scale of one and it’s horrible.”

On the things she’s learned on deployment, LayLa said that everything has helped in her recovery, she said.

“I have seen enough disasters that I’ve known from the beginning that I really have to be an active part of my recovery and that I can’t wait for people to take care of things for me. And I haven’t.”

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