

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



ON THE HORIZON

- September, [National Preparedness Month](#); [Sickle Cell Awareness Month](#).
- Sept. 4, [National Suicide Prevention Week](#) begins.
- Sept. 5, Labor Day; [International Day of Charity](#).
- Sept. 15, [Hispanic Heritage Month](#) begins.
- Sept. 21, [International Day of Peace](#).
- Sept. 15, [Gold Star Mother's Day](#).



20

Disaster responses in August. Clients helped: **78**



MILESTONES

- PATRICK TERRY**, 50 years.
- JIM STUMPF**, 30 years
- BRITNEY COMON**, 5 years
- LINDA CONNERS**, 5 years
- ROBERT FRITSCHE**, 5 years
- KATE HARRISON**, 5 years
- JACKI KAELEN WILLIAMS**, 5 years
- KELLI LARSON**, 5 years
- MARY MANGOLD**, 5 years
- FRANCES NEWCOMBE**, 5 years
- MICHAEL STULL**, 5 years
- LAUREL TORGERSON**, 5 years



IN MEMORIAM

Montana Red Cross lost a friend and one of its oldest volunteers in July. **Syd Brosten**, 93, was a Disaster Action Team volunteer in Gallatin County, joining the team at age 90. Syd's wife Joanne continues on volunteering with the Red Cross as a Disaster Action Team member and Pillowcase Project assistant. Read more about Syd's incredible life [here](#).

Linking families



Joan Cleary helps reconnect families through the Restoring Family Links program. She has worked five cases since joining the Red Cross including helping Boise-area families with connections to Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Program reconnects loved ones separated by crises

Joan Cleary has always loved travel and learning about other parts of the world. So when she discovered the opportunity to volunteer with the Red Cross Restoring Family Links program and help reconnect families separated by international crises including war, famine and disaster, she knew it was the right fit.

“When I was a kid, I used to send postcards from different countries — just made-up stuff based on highlights from a world encyclopedia,” she said. “Restoring Family Links is sort of like that, but the stories are real.”

Each year the Restoring Family Links program reconnects thousands of people with their



families including helping them acquire essential documents for reunification. After requests come in, Red Cross partners with sister Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the world to locate missing loved ones including helping families living right here in Idaho and Montana deliver messages to families abroad.

Joan, who lives in Boise, interviewed to join the Red Cross in February, a few weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine, giving her an outlet of sorts to cope with the images she was seeing in the news.

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Four stars recognized

The Red Cross of Idaho, Montana and East Oregon recognized four fabulous volunteers recently at its annual board meetings.

Paul Ayers

The family of Paul Ayers accepted the Roy Eiguren Leadership Award on Paul's behalf in July. A true Red Cross leader, Paul began volunteering with the organization in 2017, providing comfort and care following disasters like home fires to countless families and teaching classes throughout the organization.

He deployed to disasters across the country including to Florida and California. A Disaster Action Team lead in Ada County and an emergency response vehicle lead, Paul also provided valuable insight on Red Cross hiring panels. Paul has been a hero to all who know him, often being the first to respond and the last to leave.

He recently passed away at his home in Meridian. He was 69.

Paul will be forever missed and never forgotten.



Paul Ayers

Scott Willoughby

Scott Willoughby received the Dane Watkins Exceptional Volunteer Award in July, given to the Red Cross volunteer who logged the most hours in Idaho and East Oregon.

Scott joined the duty office program in 2019 and quickly became a duty officer coach, supervisor and chief, providing invaluable leadership. He's a disaster responder in Eastern Idaho and supports the entire region by helping with virtual intake.

He also completed the Red Cross Information and Planning Mastermind series this year and has deployed on two regional disaster responses to assist with planning.

Scott logged a jaw-dropping 3,614 hours.

Kathy Mellinger

Kathy Mellinger, who recently celebrated her sixth anniversary with the Red Cross, received the Tom Wozniak Volunteer Award



Scott Willoughby

SEE AWARDS, PAGE 3

We need your help to boost pages

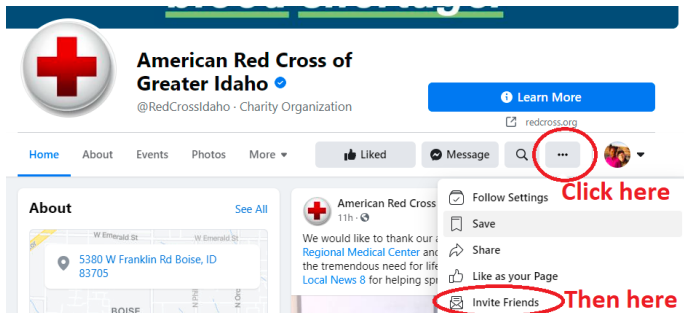
Hooray! We have more than 6,700 followers on Facebook, which is fabulous. Great job, social media team volunteers. Now we would like to turn 6,700 followers into 7,000, and we need your help.

If you haven't already, please hit the **Like button** at the top of our Idaho and Montana Facebook pages. Find the Montana page at facebook.com/MontanaRedCross and the Idaho page at facebook.com/RedCrossIdaho.

And even better, **invite your friends and family** to follow our pages as well. It's pretty simple.

Step 1) Click the **three dots** at the top of our Montana or Idaho Red Cross Facebook page.

Step 2) Click the **Invite Friends** link.



Step 3) Check the boxes next to the names of the friends you would like to invite.

Step 4) And finally, click the blue **Send Invites** button.

It's that easy and will help us spread the word about the amazing work we're

doing with more people.

If you have questions or need help, please send an email to matthew.ochsner@redcross.org and we'll be happy to walk you through it.

Thank you for helping us tell the Red Cross story.

Drivers needed to help move blood

This month, we want to know if you are ready to hit the road on behalf of the Red Cross! Transportation specialists are needed across Montana. Also, don't miss this month's Ketchup With Friends after a summer hiatus.

POSITION OF THE MONTH.

How does it feel to help save a life? **Transportation specialists** know how exhilarating that is. You are the critical link between blood products getting from donors to blood recipients. Simply driving from collection locations to the processing center and out to hospitals helps save lives. Training is free, but the blood you deliver is priceless.

Title: Transportation specialist. volunteers use Red Cross vehicles and can have a navigator ride along.

Locations: Missoula, Bozeman, Great Falls and Kalispell.

Time requirements: Schedule yourself for one or more shifts a month as convenient for you.

Job Requirement: Position requires a valid driver's license and a clean driving record.



Questions? Contact Gini at IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org or by phone/text at 406-493-8778 for more information.

KETCHUP WITH FRIENDS. We took our summer break in August, but we are back with enthusiasm! Please



join fellow volunteers at our virtual social time, Tuesday, Sept. 13, from 7:30- 8 p.m. Those who attend are eligible to

win a door prize. Click [here](#) to join the meeting.

If you join and don't have access, please send Nate Gilbert an email at

Nathan.Gilbert@RedCross.org and we will see what we can do to help get you connected.

We hope you can join us this month. See you all there!

Here is a link to a video if you need help joining the meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYdZYP9tITg>

ORNAMENT AVAILABLE. The 2022 Red Cross holiday ornament is now available for purchase until Sept. 12.

The ornament is made from seeded paper. The entire ornament can be planted to produce garden wild flowers.

Orders must be received by 6 p.m. ET on Sept. 12 and will begin shipping the week of Oct. 24.

To learn more, and to place your order, please visit the Red Cross Store at shoptheredcross.com.



Linking: Bringing families together

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"When that happened, I was confused and worried like everyone else, but I also had this tangible way to combat the chaos. Or so it felt," she said. "RFL is not a panacea for what is happening there, or anywhere else. It is just a really basic program built around respect. Respect for roots. Respect for loss. Respect for that terrible feeling of not knowing. Respect for family."

Joan has worked five cases since joining the Red Cross including helping Boise-area families with connections to Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Tracking down family members across the globe can be extremely difficult.

Despite these challenges, Joan has done an amazing job jumping in and learning the program, said Sara Cease, the Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces and International Services director for Idaho and Montana. In fact, Joan has also helped the Cascades Region in Oregon with their RFL program after they experienced turnover.

"She is a true leader who has taken the program to new heights," Sara said. "If you think of the dream volunteer, that's Joan."

JOIN THE TEAM



Are you interested in becoming a Restoring Family Links volunteer? Visit www.redcross.org/volunteer to complete your application or contact our team at IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org to learn more.

The Restoring Family Links program faces two big hurdles in Idaho and Montana – a lack of public awareness and language barriers – Joan said. Not enough communities and families know the Restoring Family Links program exists and that their local Red Cross can help them track down loved ones abroad, she said. Also, finding someone who can serve as an interpreter for any of a number of languages and dialects that might come through the door is tricky.

But she's hopeful that with more visibility that could change, and more families will be put on a path to finding their missing loved ones.

"The good news is that anyone can help chip away at both of these challenges," she said.

"Consider sharing ... on social media or encourage bilingual friends and neighbors to volunteer for ad-hoc interpreting."

Joan, who works at the Idaho State Board of Education, encourages others to sign up to volunteer with the Red Cross program. Most of the work can be done from home after business hours, she said, and the reward you get by knowing you're helping someone move one step closer to locating a missing mother or father, brother or sister is incredibly fulfilling.

"You can tell there's that sense of relief that someone is paying attention and action is being taken," she said.

"I appreciate how unwavering the Red Cross is in its neutrality. Restoring Family Links wouldn't be possible without that complete absence of judgement or politics. This program, the International Committee of the Red Cross ... this is what humans-looking-out-for-each-other is supposed to look like."

— Matt Ochsner
Regional Communications Director



Will Lynn of Absarokee, pictured here with fellow Montana volunteer Sherrilyn Hamilton, pitched in wherever he was needed during the Montana flooding response. “You really have to be flexible in these situations,” he said.

New volunteer helps neighbors

When Will Lynn signed on to become a Montana Red Cross volunteer in April, he knew he might be responding to a home fire or two, but had no idea that less than two months later he would be out in the field helping his neighbors recover after historic flooding.

In June, heavy rains combined with quickly melting mountain snow pushed the Yellowstone, Stillwater and Clarks Fork rivers to record levels, triggering devastating flooding in communities in Carbon, Stillwater and Park counties.

Close to 150 homes were destroyed or severely damaged including some outside of Will’s hometown of Absarokee.

Over the next few weeks, Will pitched in wherever he was needed, pivoting from one community to the next as the constantly evolving situation changed.

“Most of it was on the fly,” Will said. “You really have to be flexible in these situations.”

Will helped open shelters, arrange rides and work in a disaster recovery center, where he provided a listening ear and a shoulder to lean on.

“A lot of the people coming in were my neighbors,” Will said. “Quite a few people were from my church. I did a lot commiserating and listening if they wanted to talk about it and worked to point them in the right direction.”

That included working with a man he knew whose home became an island after the Stillwater River flooded and changed course. The road and bridge were washed away, and the man had to take a raft to get to his house. Will was

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE TEAM?



Red Cross is currently recruiting more volunteers to help the organization respond to disasters in Montana, Idaho and beyond. These Disaster Action Team members help deliver food and shelter — and just as importantly — provide emotional support and a shoulder to lean on for those impacted.

To learn more about becoming a Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteer, visit redcross.org/volunteer, email IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org or text or call 406-493-8778.

there to listen and help connect him with FEMA and other community resources.

“Will is a wonderful volunteer,” said Sherrilyn Hamilton, a Disaster Action Team volunteer who helps lead the team in Eastern Montana.

“He has a knack at seeing what a client needs whether it is just a minute of time, a smile or a cup of coffee, and (he is always) there to assist. Working with him is an absolute pleasure. Red Cross is a better organization with him on board.”

Will came to the Red Cross after a career as a rehabilitation counselor, helping people with disabilities live more independently.

Always civic-minded, Will enjoys donating his time to worthy causes including serving as a president of the Stillwater Senior Center. In May, he worked with others to help Red Cross install free smoke alarms in Busby, located on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

While he enjoys volunteering, Will said he would like to see more young

people get involved in their communities.

“With these groups, it seems like they’re all gray hairs,” he said.

During the months-long flooding response in the region, more than 100 Red Cross volunteers and staff supported the disaster relief operation, some coming from as far away as Alaska and California.

Will said he’s proud of what they accomplished together and was happy to be part of a diverse team who came together with one goal – to help Montanans get through an extremely difficult time.

“I enjoyed being with people who really believe in what they were doing,” he said. “There were people from all over the country who all had the same vision regardless of things like politics or religion.

“During a disaster, these are the kind of people you want to be around.”

— Matt Ochsner
Regional Communications Director

Awards: Excellence shines through

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for Excellence at the Montana annual board meeting in June. Kathy was also awarded the White House Presidential Volunteer Award this year and has recorded more than 4,000 hours during her time with Red Cross.



Kathy Mellinger

She manages the duty officer program and consistently ranks as one

of the most-engaged volunteers. Her leadership has helped grow the program to a point where shifts are filled

with experienced and knowledgeable team members.

Kathy’s calm demeanor helps keep everyone focused and productive in the midst of chaos, and she is the go-to person for the hard-to-answer questions our clients might ask.

Scott Fairfield

Scott Fairfield – a tireless one-man team in Lincoln County in northwest Montana – received the Volunteer Engagement Award presented to the most active volunteer in Montana.

This year he logged an amazing 1,528 hours.

Scott is on the Disaster Action Team

and also serves as the disaster team coordinator, regional duty officer, mass care lead and Pillowcase Project presenter.

He helps with government operations and also serves as a blood donor ambassador and wherever else he’s needed.



Scott Fairfield

He does it all, while covering a two-county area that stretches from the Idaho-Canadian border to the Missoula County line.

His passion and dedication to the Red Cross and the communities he serves is unmatched.