

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our valued Red Cross volunteers engaged and informed



ON THE HORIZON

■ **Real Heroes event**, March 5, Idaho Falls, nominate a hero at redcross.org/idahoheroes.

■ **Red Cross Giving Day**, March 25.



36

Disaster responses in November.



MILESTONES

CURTIS BARROW, 5 years

WILLIAM GRAVES, 5 years

STEVEN McKAGUE, 5 years



WELCOME BLOOD DONORS

Blood donor ambassadors welcome donors, help schedule their next appointment and make sure they have a pleasant experience. If you're interested in this volunteer position or know someone who might be, call 406-493-8778 or email IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org.



Since Paul Gay decided to make major lifestyle changes, he's lost 80 pounds and is no longer diabetic. Besides joining the gym and eating better, he also has become a regular blood donor.

Blood, sweat and cheers

Great Falls man makes donating blood part of healthy lifestyle change

When Paul Gay signed up for a gym membership three years ago, his wife figured it was a waste of money. She didn't think he'd ever actually work out.

It's the time of year when many people focus on what they want their lives to be like and though it's not always easy to stick with it, sometimes those aspirations actually become reality.

Getting fit was just one of Gay's resolutions. He also made a lifestyle change that included

better eating and giving blood.

And, Gay followed through with his commitment to better health.

He started small and now cycles 20-50 miles a day, indoors and outdoors. He's down 80 pounds, no longer diabetic and teaches spin classes at Peak Health & Wellness Center in Great Falls.

"I'm not young — 60 next year — and when I was 55, I thought that was it. I'll never be better than this," he said. "But I am."

His energy level is up, he looks great, and he's found giving blood — with the included vital signs check — keeps him on track and inspired.

Gay has donated more than two gallons of blood, which have gone toward saving the

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On-call vs. worked volunteer hours

As more volunteers become comfortable logging their hours, we're often asked about the difference between on-call, general availability and worked hours.

ON-CALL: This allows us to manage to our capacity. When volunteers register for shifts (on-call hours) we can determine if we have enough volunteers ready to provide services and allows our supervisors to see if there are any holes in the schedules. On-call is forward-looking.



YOU WANT TO KNOW

Send in a question at volunteerconnection@redcross.org

WORKED: This status helps us tell the story of the actual services provided within a community and is important to our fundraising efforts.

GENERAL AVAILABILITY: This status is part of Volunteer Connection and isn't used in our region. Behind the scenes, Volunteers Services changes any entries to a status of worked.

If there are Red Cross topics you are curious about or questions you would like addressed in this section, please click [here](#). All submissions through this link are anonymous.

Or you can send an email to matthew.ochsner@redcross.org.

‘Always wanted to be a nurse’

During her military service, her professional career and her volunteerism, Pat Nordel driven by desire to help others

For as long as she can remember, Red Cross volunteer Pat Nordel wanted to be a nurse. “I just wanted to help people,” said Nordel, the disaster health services lead for the Red Cross of Idaho and Montana. “Over the course of my childhood I’d look at my chosen career choice and think, ‘oh gosh, I have to go to school this many years’ ... but it always came back to I just wanted to be a nurse.”

Nursing has come in many forms for Nordel, and in many places. A graduate from the University of Connecticut, she was commissioned into the United States Air Force Nurse Corps, where she served from 1987-1994. During her seven years of military service, which included time during the First Gulf War at a base in England, she worked medical and surgical units, in a clinic setting and in labor and delivery and newborn nursery.

It was during her first military assignment at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, that Nordel had her initial encounter with the American Red Cross. The humanitarian organization offered a damage assessment class, and since Illinois is in tornado country, she decided to sign up.

“I was hoping that if anything happened then I could take part and help out,” she said.

That never happened, but Nordel would find other opportunities to serve the Red Cross later in life.

After leaving the military and raising a family, Nordel has had a long professional career spanning several states.



Pat Nordel traveled to Washington, D.C., in 2017 to advocate for Centers for Disease Control funding for a Red Cross partnership program working to eradicate measles and rubella.

Her husband Dave had a 30-year military career with the Air Force so her family moved every few years.

She now works at St. Vincent Healthcare in Billings.

Her love of nursing and helping others has taken her down one more path — as the program lead for disaster health services for the Red Cross of Idaho and Montana.

As a Red Cross volunteer, Nordel helps people impacted by disaster replace medications, supplies or items like walkers or wheelchairs. She also works with integrated care condolence teams to help verify deaths after events like house fires. She has installed smoke alarms during Sound the Alarm events and conducted shelter surveys to

determine if potential shelter locations meet Red Cross needs.

In 2017, as a member of international services, Nordel traveled to Washington, D.C., to advocate for Centers for Disease Control funding for the Measles and Rubella Initiative, a Red Cross partnership program working to eradicate measles and rubella.

Nordel hopes to one day deploy with the Red Cross during a national disaster, but working full time makes that difficult.

Until then, she will continue to provide comfort and care to families closer to home.

“I’m still hoping for that deployment piece — that’s eventually where I would like to get myself — but in the meantime I just enjoy being able to help out clients in any way I can,” she said.

And Nordel is grateful she chose a career path that has allowed her to help so many people, whether through her military service, during her professional career or as a Red Cross volunteer.

“There’s always a place, there’s always a need for nursing,” she said.

“Every time I go away from nursing for a while and come back to it I always realize how much I love it.”

JOIN THE TEAM

The Red Cross of Idaho and Montana needs more volunteer nurses like Nordel to help with its disaster health services program.

These volunteers work with physicians and pharmacists to help replace medications and medical equipment for those impacted by disaster. =Volunteers also work in a local disaster shelter to provide health services to families displaced from their homes.

Visit at redcross.org/support/volunteer or call 208-258-0592.

Gutierrez named disaster program manager

George Gutierrez has been selected as the new Red Cross disaster program manager for southwest Idaho.

Prior to joining the American Red Cross, Gutierrez was the deputy administrator for Policy and Innovation at the Idaho Division of Medicaid, where he was responsible for ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations and for implementing new Idaho Medicaid initiatives.

He also worked as the bureau chief for the Crime Victims Compensation

Program for the State of Idaho, where he administered a health care plan and support services for victims of violent crimes.

Prior to his time at the State of Idaho, Gutierrez worked for several nonprofit organizations, where he managed multiple

vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. He also was

responsible for recruiting and cultivating volunteers to support services, fundraising, board administration and agency initiatives.

Gutierrez received his master’s degree from Pepperdine University in clinical psychology and his bachelor’s from UCLA in psychology, with a business emphasis. He has received formal training in crisis response, trauma response, mediation and process improvement.

He has lived in Boise for 26 years.



Blood: Gay has donated at least two gallons

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lives of as many as 48 people.

“Every time I’ve given blood, it’s gone somewhere — Los Angeles to Atlanta, Wolf Point to Benefis,” he said.

He uses the American Red Cross blood donor app, which tracks appointments, includes a digital donor card, logs total pints or platelets donated, offers a rapid pass so you can answer eligibility questions ahead of time and tracks donated blood from your vein to a patient’s vein.

Gay, a veteran who works in electronics, gave blood regularly in high school but fell out of the habit as he got older. He wishes he hadn’t quit now that he’s seen the difference his three years of blood donations have made. He could already be in the 100-gallon club, he said, if only he had stuck with it.

“It doesn’t hurt. You’re not giving something that diminishes you,” he said. “I think of it as a renewal. You give a pint and produce it again. And, you’re helping your community.”

Gay gives blood at the Red Cross site in Great Falls and occasionally at the

mobile clinic.

“I hope I never need blood, but if I do I know it will be there,” he said.

DONATE TODAY

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Schedule an appointment today or find a drive near you by visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767). The donation process takes about an hour.

— Story and photo by Red Cross writing team volunteer Kristen Inbody