

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our valued Red Cross volunteers engaged and informed



ON THE HORIZON

■ **Missing Types blood donation campaign begins, June 11.** Visit www.redcrossblood.org/missingtypes.

■ **World Blood Donor Day, June 14.**



26

Volunteers joined us in April.

MEET A LEADER



KATHLEEN MELLINGER,
Regional Duty Officer, Dillon

I enjoy being the Duty Officer Training Lead because it gives me the opportunity to support our Duty Officer and Disaster Action Teams as we continue to fill the demand for new duty officers. I help recruits navigate the training requirements on their way to becoming full-fledged duty officers and realizing their volunteer goals for this challenging but rewarding position.

FUN FACT: I head to the mountains with my husband and two dogs every chance we get, rain, snow or shine — and being Montana, sometime all three on the same hike!



Red Cross volunteers recently installed smoke alarms in the Helena home of Glyn and Belva Vergatt, who have been married for 67 years. “We’re not youngsters anymore,” Belva joked.

New alarms & peace of mind

Volunteers’ efforts will keep elderly couple off the ladder and sleeping easier at night

A few weeks ago, a smoke alarm began chirping somewhere in Glyn and Belva Vergatt’s Helena home. The alarms were 19 years old and the couple couldn’t figure out which was the culprit. One by one they began replacing batteries, with Glyn, age 85, up on the ladder, and Belva, 84, holding on below.

“We’re not youngsters anymore,” Belva joked.

Then, as luck would have it, all three alarms began chirping. So Glyn took them all down, sprayed them with compressed air to clean the computers and put them back up.

That seemed to be the trick, but just a couple of days later, as Glyn was reading the newspaper, he saw a story about the Montana Red Cross and the Helena Fire Department planning to

install free smoke alarms in Helena homes. They decided to sign up.

“They were working OK but old enough they needed replacing,” he said.

Not long after, a Red Cross volunteer team arrived at their door and installed free smoke alarms throughout their home. Each alarm was equipped with a 10-year battery meaning Glyn, who’s on oxygen, won’t have to get back on a ladder any time soon.

That’s a big relief to Belva.

“We don’t have to worry about it anymore,” she said.

Glyn also has difficulty hearing so the next day the team returned with a free bed shaker alarm — an alarm that vibrates and will wake Glyn during the night if there’s a fire.

Volunteers also talked with the Vergatts, who have been married for 67 years, about the best ways to escape their home during a fire. Glyn is a Korean War veteran whose professional career included work as an insurance investigator and

SEE ALARMS, PAGE 2

Volunteer donates beloved Suburban

Their family suburban had lived through its glory days, and Marty Boes decided this winter it was time to get rid of the beloved 2003 “Burb” with 230,000 miles on it.

“I knew I couldn’t send it to college with a kid,” the Great Falls volunteer said. “It was in good shape, but its days were numbered.”

Boes also knew she wasn’t likely to get much money if she tried to sell the red Chevy Suburban. All three of her kids had driven it through their high school years and there were scrapes, dents and other damage that only time and teenagers can create.

SEE DONATE, PAGE 2



The Boes family was surprised at how easy it was to donate their well-worn Suburban. “I didn’t even have to deliver it,” Marty Boes said.



MILESTONES

BETH MORRIS,
15 years

CAROLE
AHLER,
10 years

MICHAL
DELGADO,
10 years

JIM MEYER,
10 years

JOHN TODD,
10 years

SANFORD
McALLISTER,
5 years



17

Disaster
responses
in April.
Families
helped: 28.



RED CROSS has a critical need for type O blood right now, but donors of all types are urged to give. Schedule an appointment today by using the Blood Donor App, visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 800-RED CROSS.



8,095

Hours logged
in April by our
volunteers.

SOUND THE ALARM NAMP



Over two days, Red Cross and its partners installed 560 free smoke alarms and made 250 Nampa homes safer from fires, many in predominantly Spanish-speaking neighborhoods.



Montana Red Cross Executive Director Diane Wright speaks with Belva Verzatt as Red Cross volunteers install a bed-shaker alarm in their Helena home. Belva’s husband Glyn has difficulty hearing, so the alarm vibrates to wake him during the night if there’s a fire.

Alarms: Homes made safer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a real estate agent before retiring from the Montana Department of Transportation where he worked as a Right of Way agent for 10 years. Belva worked in the registrar’s office and the business office at Montana State University.

Both are grateful to the Red Cross and its volunteers for making their home safer.

“Everyone was very professional and very friendly and nice,” Belva said. “We very much

appreciate what you did.”

The Verzatts were one of more than 40 families the Red Cross and the Helena Fire Department visited over two days in early May. Teams installed 110 alarms and taught families about fire safety. The Helena event was part of a nationwide Red Cross effort to install 100,000 alarms in homes in 100 U.S. cities during a two-week push this spring. Since 2014, the Red Cross and its volunteers have installed more than 1.5 million smoke alarms and saved more than 580 lives. — *Story by Matt Ochsner*

Donate: \$1,000 went to Red Cross

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“It just looked terrible,” she said.

So she decided to donate The Burb to the American Red Cross so that the organization could put whatever money her “tank” could make toward humanitarian efforts.

Having been a disaster response team member for the Montana-Idaho Red Cross for the last five years, Boes said she had heard of the national vehicle donation program, but didn’t realize how easy it was until she filled out the form online at [www.redcross.org/donations/ways-to-](http://www.redcross.org/donations/ways-to-donate/car-donations.html)

[donate/car-donations.html](http://www.redcross.org/donations/ways-to-donate/car-donations.html). She said the hardest part was tracking down the vehicle title and getting it notarized, but even that wasn’t difficult.

She was assisted by Red Cross’ partner in this effort, Insurance Auto Auctions. The program can accept vehicles in almost any condition in all 50 states. They work directly with the vehicle owner to pick up the vehicle at no cost to the individual, at any convenient time. IAA then provides the documentation needed for tax purposes and will sell the vehicle. Revenue enables the Red Cross to carry out its humanitarian mission locally, national-

ly and around the world.

Boes was worried they wouldn’t take the vehicle because the battery wasn’t working. But that didn’t matter.

“They made it really easy, she said. “They picked it up at my house. I didn’t even have to deliver it.”

Boes gets to claim the donation on her taxes, and her vehicle nabbed \$1,000 for the Red Cross, an organization she loves to support.

“I’ve always wanted to help people who’ve had something unexpected happened to them,” she said. “This was just another way to help the Red Cross.” — *Story by Kristen Caldwell*