

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteers workforce engaged and informed



LOG YOUR HOURS AND WIN! In July, we will have drawings for Red Cross apparel. Volunteers who have logged 20 hours will have four chances to win while those with 100 hours will have eight chances.

SHOW YOUR PRIDE: Complete your volunteer survey and have your voice heard. All eligible volunteers are encouraged to participate here: volunteerconnection.redcross.org/?and=survey_jump&survey=OP2321.



RED CROSS HOTLINE provides services to volunteers seeking emotional support. Call 571-353-1661.



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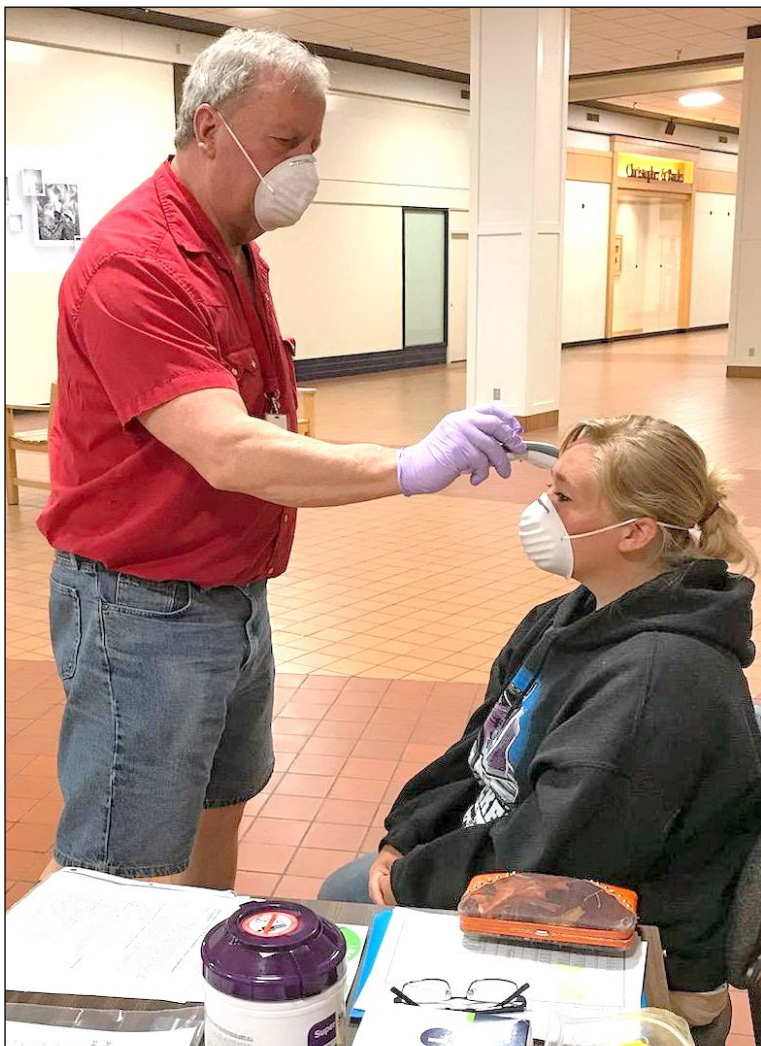
Disaster responses in May. Clients helped: 35



MILESTONES

LEE LANGBEHN,
5 years

PAT NORDEL,
5 years



Red Cross volunteer health screener Kenneth Akers takes Jaymee Turner's temperature before she enters a blood drive at the Pocatello mall. Screeners help keep donors and staff safe.

Screeners play key safety role

More volunteers needed to take donors' temperatures, ask health questions before they enter a donation area

Six years ago, after retiring from a long career as a railroad conductor for the Union Pacific Railroad in Pocatello, Kenneth Akers found himself puttering around trying to fill his time. Even though he volunteered as a foster grandparent at elementary schools, he still had hours left in his day. That extra time spent sitting around concerned his lifelong friends, who started referring to Kenneth as a couch potato.

He knew he had to find something else to keep him busy.

For Kenneth, that something became volunteering as a health screener and donor ambassador for the Red Cross of Idaho, a great fit for the well-organized and outgoing 69-year-old.

Up to five days a week, Kenneth stands outside the Red Cross blood donation site at the Pocatello mall, greeting each donor with a handheld thermometer and making sure they're healthy enough to donate. Each donor also receives a nametag, hand sanitizer and a face mask before entering the donation area, precautions put in place to keep donors and staff safe during COVID-19.

SEE SCREENERS, PAGE 2

Idaho student donates convalescent plasma

In early March, Idaho State College student, Lijah Van Gardner attended a medical conference in Las Vegas with several other colleagues. Approximately two weeks after his trip, Gardner began to develop what he thought was the flu, experiencing fever, chills, body aches and eye pain. These symptoms lasted for a couple of days, then subsided. Soon after that he experienced new symptoms that included throat irritation and a complete loss of smell and taste.



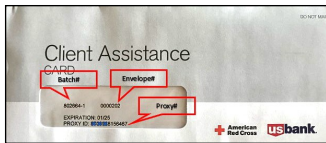
Lijah Van Gardner tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from a medical conference in Las Vegas. Now recovered, the college student recently donated convalescent plasma to help others who are ill with the virus.

SEE PLASMA, PAGE 2

Help inventory client assistance cards

The fourth-quarter inventory of client assistance cards and mission cards takes place June 1-12. It's crucial for Red Cross to keep an accurate record of all cards issued to volunteers and staff in the field.

Disaster Cycle Services volunteers will receive an email called Quarterly Cardholder Verification from Regional Disaster Officer Ted Koenig. It will provide a link to a short online form to record your name and the current count



of cards in your possession. All Disaster Cycle Services workers with client assistance cards and/or mission cards must complete the form, regardless of position.

If you are a DCS worker who does

not carry these cards, please still complete the form indicating you do not hold cards. Cards that are not reported will be electronically destroyed shortly after the form closes on June 12 so our fiscal year can be closed out by June 30.

If you will not have access to your cards between June 1 and June 12, please contact Angela James at angela.james@redcross.org prior to June 1 so your cards can be counted within the reporting window.

Plasma: Board member donates, too

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

During this time, the coronavirus was gaining traction, and six or seven days into his illness, Gardner decided to self-isolate to avoid spreading his flu-like symptoms to his roommates. Out of an abundance of caution, he decided to get tested for COVID-19 at a Boise hospital. Shortly after taking the test, he received a call confirming a positive result. Gardner now believes he might have been infected with the virus at the conference in Las Vegas.

"There were several other of my colleagues who attended the same conference and developed symptoms around the same time as I did — about two weeks after the conference," said Gardner. "I know another person who tested positive after this conference, and several others who showed symptoms, but were not tested."

Although Gardner was not critically ill and had mild symptoms that eventually disappeared, through his online research, he learned about how recovered COVID-19 patients could help critically ill patients also recover.

"I saw that the Red Cross started collecting convalescent plasma for use in patients with COVID-19," Gardner said. "I was so fortunate not to have COVID-19 progress into something worse, and I would love to prevent it from becoming worse in vulnerable patients."

After a month of being symptom free, Gardner was able to schedule a convalescent plasma donation with the Red Cross Boise Blood Donation Center. As a first-time donor, he wasn't sure what to expect but said it was the staff and volunteers who made the process easy and quicker than he imagined, especially since he was able to do school work



Idaho Red Cross board member Vanessa Fry recently donated convalescent plasma after fully recovering from COVID-19. Fry is also a regular blood donor.

while donating lifesaving plasma.

"The actual donation took just about an hour. As a medical student I never have any trouble figuring out how to pass an hour of time — I study," Gardner said. "The donation center was a nice, quiet environment for me to read one of my medical textbooks."

When asked if he would donate again in 28 days, he excitedly said, "Yes! I'd like to continue helping in any way I can." Gardner continued, "As a student entering the health care field I'm not quite yet on the frontline, so donating what I have is what I can do right now to help people."

Board member donates

Idaho Red Cross board member Vanessa Fry also donated convalescent plasma at the Boise Blood Donation Center in May after recovering fully from COVID-19.

"I had COVID really at the beginning of its time in Idaho," she said. "To know so many people are suffering, and the Red Cross is giving me the opportunity to help other people, it just means so much to me."

Fry is a regular Red Cross blood donor and also has a special type of blood that's in high demand for babies.

She is CMV-negative, meaning she doesn't have antibodies from being exposed to Cytomegalovirus, a flu-like virus that about 85 percent of adults have been exposed to. Babies can receive blood only from CMV-negative donors.

"Learning this made my commitment to give even stronger, and the Red Cross makes giving easy," she said.

To hear more from Fry and why she donates, check out this video: https://youtu.be/Zb7YujGJc_E.

To learn more

To learn more about the convalescent plasma program, visit RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid.

Through May 23, 51 convalescent plasma donations have been made at the Boise Blood Donation Center and six donors have given convalescent plasma in Montana.

Combined, the Idaho/Montana region has collected 154 convalescent plasma units.

Screeners: More volunteers needed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In his role as a donor ambassador, he answers donors' questions, gets them a snack afterwards and makes sure they had a good experience.

These volunteer opportunities seemed like a natural fit for Kenneth, a long-time blood donor himself.

"When I was working with the railroad, if I was in the offices on the day of a Red Cross blood drive, I donated," he said, adding that the Red Cross staff he became familiar with often mentioned volunteer opportunities that might interest him after he retired.

"Eventually they had turned their blood donor into an ambassador. Now, each day I volunteer I show up to the drives a bit early to set up the goodie tables with water, cookies and treats. ...

Though I do the prescreening outside, I do save myself a few cookies for the end of the day to take home."

Before these enhanced safety precautions were put in place because of COVID-19, Kenneth spent his entire volunteer shift in the donation area, seated at the goodie table talking with fellow volunteers and thanking each donor.

An admitted "workaholic" before retirement, the divorced Pocatello railroad worker has three adult sons between the ages of 30 and 40.

"My kids are grown, and I just have to keep active," he said. "I love to talk to people, all kinds of people. It comes from being a G.I. kid who has seen all 50 states and lived in all kinds of countries (while) growing up."

To stay even more involved with his

community, he also volunteers with the Operation Lifesaver group at the railroad.

However, his busiest volunteer commitment is with the Red Cross. Because of his rewarding experience with the organization, he encourages others to volunteer there as well.

"It's a great way to meet people and have great conversations during each day," he said.

Join the team

To learn more about becoming a Red Cross volunteer health screener or blood donor ambassador, visit redcross.org/volunteer, send an email to IDMT.recruiting@redcross.org or call Nate Gilbert at 208-488-5231. Volunteers for these position are needed in both Idaho and Montana.