

American Red Cross Impact Report

Northern California Coastal Region
for Fiscal Year 2020
July 1, 2019—June 30, 2020



The mission of the American Red Cross is to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. Our region proudly carries out the mission by serving over 10 million residents across 15 counties from Monterey to Sonoma. This past year has been particularly challenging for our region as we battled numerous wildfires, power outages, the Gilroy Garlic Festival shooting, over 1,500 home fires, and the worldwide battle against COVID-19. Thank you for supporting our work, which brings help and hope to our neighbors during their greatest time of need. We hope you will review this report in its entirety and realize this would not be possible without your steadfast commitment to the American Red Cross Northern California Coastal Region, and our Bay Area Chapter.

DISASTER RESPONSE

The power of our **5,324** Bay Area volunteers is how our Disaster Action Teams (DAT) can respond to emergencies effectively. In Northern California, our DAT teams are called to respond to disasters every six hours on average. Since July 2019, our region has responded to **814** disasters by providing food, shelter, and comfort to individuals and families in need, as well as casework, guidance, and financial assistance to help survivors with recovery. The average distribution of financial aid to disaster victims experiencing home fires is **\$600**. We know the average American is not prepared to handle an emergency of more than \$400, and with the economic impacts from the pandemic affecting low-income families, we are actively preparing for financial assistance requests to rise. All Red Cross disaster assistance is free.



Since the start of the pandemic, we have aggressively adapted our services to support those impacted by COVID-19, this includes special feeding missions, distribution of PPE, and other efforts shared in further detail below. Our volunteers have worked tirelessly to adapt how we deliver our disaster relief to ensure the safety of disaster workers and the people we serve. We provide health services and financial assistance directly to families virtually, and we

are prioritizing hotel rooms instead of traditional shelters whenever possible. If we do need to open a shelter, we screen for COVID-19 symptoms at the front door, conduct enhanced cleanings of shelter spaces, and follow additional safety precautions. Our Red Cross staff and volunteers have been retrained to set-up a congregate shelter while implementing specific distance and health safety measures.

In May, we extended our mission delivery with the creation of a Virtual Family Assistance Center, which offers integrated condolence care to help people who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. We have a virtual team of specially trained mental health, spiritual care, and health services volunteers to support coping skills, assist in virtual memorials, and link people with local community resources. For example, in Marin County, the Red Cross has partnered with Canal Alliance Emergency which offers financial assistance to support families affected by this crisis.

"In the midst of a tragedy in my community you were there first to help. Thank you."



236,579 total volunteer hours worked



\$1,079,277 given out in local financial assistance



Opened 1,642 cases to assist families impacted by disaster

Gilroy Festival Shooting

On Sunday, July 29, 2019, a tragic mass casualty event occurred in the closing hours of the Gilroy Garlic Festival. Shortly after, the City of Gilroy Fire Department and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) formally requested American Red Cross support for a city shelter providing refuge for people who could not retrieve their personal belongings, vehicles, and or identification. The Red Cross opened a shelter at Christopher High School in Gilroy and operated that shelter until Thursday, August 1. Our compassionate Red Cross staff, volunteers, and community partners provided health, mental health, feeding, and recovery planning services.

The Red Cross effort was truly part of a team effort with key partners, including the Santa Clara County District Attorney, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the City of Gilroy, the City of Gilroy Unified School District, Morgan Hill Emergency Manager and Children's Disaster Services.

California Wildfires

In fall 2019, wildfires once again raged across California, burning nearly 200,000 acres of land and driving hundreds of thousands of residents to flee their homes. Northern California battled the Kincade Fire, the largest wildfire ever to occur in Sonoma County. Dry conditions, high-wind events, and the fast-moving wildfire led to the unprecedented evacuation of nearly 190,000 residents, more than a third of the county's population. For residents who had survived the deadly Tubbs Fire only two years before, experiencing another evacuation was especially traumatic. The Kincade Fire destroyed 175 homes and burned an area more than twice the size of San Francisco in the two weeks before it was fully contained.

We quickly opened shelters, where guests received a place to sleep, meals, comfort, and the opportunity to reconnect with loved ones. Red Cross staff and volunteers were on hand providing emotional support, spiritual care, and health services such as replacing lost medications.

During the recovery phase of this disaster operation we were able to provide hundreds of wildfire survivors financial assistance totaling more than \$1.3 million. This assistance helps meet urgent needs such as buying groceries and replacing lost clothes, as well as home repairs and construction. Our Recovery Program continues to provide ongoing support of individual needs, outreach to under-served populations, capacity building of local community agencies, and preparedness and resiliency efforts.

KerryAnn Laufer lost her home in Northern California’s Kincade Fire, but her experience with the American Red Cross at the Local Assistance Center in Healdsburg helped her when she needed it most. “I’m so grateful for the Red Cross. You guys bailed me out when I wasn’t in a good place,” she said of her visit to the assistance center. The mental health worker who assisted Laufer “was so kind and so patient,” Laufer reported. The worker walked



Laufer through the sign-up process and had transferred financial assistance to Laufer’s bank account by the end of the conversation. KerryAnn shared, “It let me know things are happening, there are people here who are helping me,” Laufer said of the experience. “It calmed me down and let me know everything was OK.”



More than 4,800 individual care contacts made



More than 58,600 meals and snacks served with partners



More than 11,400 shelter stays provided with partners

Sound the Alarm – Home Fire Campaign

On average, seven people die, and 36 more suffer injuries each day in the U.S. due to home fires, which make up more than 90 percent of Red Cross domestic disaster responses. Research shows that working smoke alarms reduce the risk of fatalities in a home by 50 percent. The Red Cross Home Fire Campaign aims to reduce fire deaths and injuries by installing working smoke alarms in at-risk communities. Red Cross volunteers and partners canvass neighborhoods to test and replace smoke alarms for free and educate families on fire prevention and safety.

Mobile Home Fire in San Jose



San Jose resident Nguyen Robson had been an American Red Cross volunteer for less than a year when he was called to help two mobile home residents displaced by a fire. That day Robson received a vivid lesson about how his volunteer work makes a significant impact.

When Robson arrived at the Sunshadow mobile home park in San Jose, the two residents — waiting safely outside their home — greeted him with grateful recognition in their native

Vietnamese. They remembered Robson as one of the volunteers who had installed smoke alarms and prepared an evacuation plan for their mobile home only six months earlier. The alarm woke them from a mid-afternoon nap and allowed their escape.

The couple expressed their gratitude to Nguyen, “They thanked me for coming to the house to install the fire detectors and also for being there after the fire to help out,” Robson said.

Robson said he became a Red Cross volunteer for the Silicon Valley chapter in the hopes of giving exactly that type of help, after hearing of several fatal fires in his Vietnamese community. After a grandfather and two children were killed in a swiftly-moving mobile home fire in August 2017, Robson said he was so touched he attended the funeral. “It really hit me,” he said. “It could have been avoided.”



Installed 6,641 free smoke alarms



Taught 3,058 children preparedness skills through Pillowcase Project



Made 2,196 homes safer through educational visits, free smoke alarms and preparedness plans

BIOMEDICAL SERVICES

The American Red Cross blood program started in 1940, and today, we provide blood products for patients in approximately 2,500 hospitals across the U.S. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood, and our commitment is to ensure the blood used in an emergency is already on the shelves before they need it. Each year nationally, we collect approximately 4.6 million blood donations from more than 2.6 million volunteer donors, and we strive to give each of these donors the best customer service because every donation of blood can help save more than one life. This year our region collected **82,373** units of blood from **4,117** drives.

The Red Cross has been a national leader in collecting and distributing convalescent plasma from individuals who have fully recovered from COVID-19 for potentially lifesaving treatment for critically ill COVID-19 patients. Since June, we have distributed over 28,000 lifesaving

convalescent plasma products from nearly 10,000 donors to help give patients and their families hope. The Red Cross recently secured vital resources to sustain this program from the U.S. Health and Human Services and Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA). As we still face much uncertainty in the fight against this coronavirus, the need for convalescent plasma only continues to grow. As such, our Biomedical Services team determined that convalescent plasma needed to become a formal Red Cross blood product.

In conjunction with our convalescent plasma efforts, beginning June 15, Red Cross blood centers started testing all donated blood, plasma, and platelets for COVID-19 antibodies. We hope this added free service, authorized by the FDA, will provide blood donors insight into whether they may have been exposed to coronavirus along with helping us recruit more convalescent plasma donors. Thus far, we have tested over 400,000 donations in 44 states.

Since the start of the pandemic, our region has been working hard to sustain our blood supply due to cancelled blood drives as a result of closure of schools, universities, and many companies working from home. We have relied on our local partners like the Warriors and Kaiser Permanente to help us spread the word about the need for blood donations, especially for blood among diverse communities who may have the unique ability to help patients with different illnesses or inherited diseases including sickle cell anemia.

"I'm alive because of blood donors"



SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES

The Red Cross Hero Care Network supports military members and their families through communication services, financial assistance programs, re-integration, and veterans services. The American Red Cross supports veterans and families across the U.S., proudly serving those who serve our nation. A brief look at our services' local reach this year includes **883** emergency communications to **2,241** military members and their families. Volunteers provide home comfort visits and critical services in military hospitals and on bases. The Red Cross also supports military families during deployments and emergencies. We continue servicing our nation's veterans after their service ends.

Comfort Kits

The Red Cross has provided comfort and care to service members, veterans, and their families for over 130 years, including knitting socks and helmet liners, sewing coverings for casts, and crocheting/quilting lap blankets for injured wheelchair patients. This legacy continues now with Red Cross volunteers distributing comfort kits for military service members and veterans. These kits typically include a toothbrush, toothpaste, washcloth, shaving cream, razor, shampoo, and much more.

Throughout the region, volunteers seized the opportunity to facilitate the distribution of 250 kits to the Veteran’s Transition Center of Monterey in Seaside, CA. These kits were gratefully received by the Center as part of their mission “to empower Veterans to transition from crisis to self-sufficiency.”

In San Francisco, comfort kits were provided to patients of the San Francisco VA Medical Center. According to a volunteer, “Patients are not provided with everyday toiletries and the kits help the patients feel better about themselves and more comfortable during their stay.” The kits are given to veterans in the Emergency and Admissions areas when they are admitted.

There were 54 kits given to men and women veterans who visit the San Francisco VA Clinic. The Clinic provides a variety of medical, nursing, and health care services for veterans. Another 54 kits were delivered to the Hoptel, a facility of the San Francisco VA that provides temporary lodging for people who will need to be hospitalized or were recently discharged but can’t go home. Volunteers also delivered kits to the Santa Rosa VA Medical Clinic with other deliveries scheduled for Eureka and Clear Lake.



Briefed 5,832 personnel through our “Get to Know Us” program



Delivered 1,601 comfort kits and 500 masks sewn by Red Cross volunteer

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

90% of the Red Cross workforce are volunteers: neighbors, friends, and coworkers who selflessly give their time and effort to support and deliver the Red Cross mission every day. In FY20 **5,324** northern California volunteers provided more than **236,579** hours of service to their communities.



Alongside local partners, our volunteers have been requested to support feeding missions across the Bay Area to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities do not go hungry due to the pandemic's economic hardships. This effort is continuously changing as food insecurity is identified in communities and the need for volunteers is requested. Our region has deployed volunteers at close to a dozen organizations including, Emergency Food Bank in Stockton, Second Harvest Food Bank in Manteca, and Community Food Bank of San Benito in Hollister.

Project Sew

Red Crossers know how to pivot in disaster. Since the dawn of the COVID-19 crisis, the Red Cross Disaster Action Team (DAT) have done just that. Now when a DAT member mobilizes to answer a call-in person, they must wear a mask. When members of the DAT team sent out a call for masks, other members of the Red Cross team responded in kind – this time with needle and thread.

“So far, 59 DAT members requested masks, and 43 members have volunteered,” says Peggy Pinarbasi, Disaster Workforce Engagement Manager. “It has been a wonderful way for our volunteers to feel connected to the cause and continue to contribute their time and talents. It reminds people of the early days of the Red Cross when volunteers would knit and sew garments for people.”

Americorps member and Regional Workforce Engagement Coordinator Janet Solis coordinates the mask distribution from her home. “Teamwork is making this project possible,” she says. As of early May, Red Cross volunteers have sewn more than 500 masks, and 224 have been shipped to DAT members.

Youth Services

The Red Cross Northern California Coastal Region is committed to integrating youth into the core of our mission. Through involvement, youth gain life-long skills as community leaders, organizers, and educators. Moreover, the Red Cross helps shape and grow the next generation of community-minded and disaster prepared adults. In our region we have nearly **100** youth clubs active in our local schools. Our Red Cross youth clubs serve as the epicenter for all engagement.

This year, nearly **800** youth volunteered over **13,000** hours to advance the Red Cross mission. The coronavirus pandemic inevitably impacted our programs, but our Youth Services team quickly and seamlessly adapted to ensure valuable virtual opportunities were still readily available for our dedicated youth.

Youth Preparedness

Red Cross Youth Preparedness Programs foster a generation of youth that are knowledgeable about threats to their environment and are empowered to take action before a disaster strikes. To address preparedness among children and their families, the Red Cross has developed three programs for students of different ages:



- **The Pillowcase Project:** Our signature youth preparedness program designed for school-aged students grades 3–5. In the Northern California Coastal Region, our Pillowcase program has reached nearly **3,318** youth and families.
- **Prepare with Pedro:** A preparedness presentation designed for school-aged students grades K–2. The program is currently delivered in 10 Red Cross regions and has already reached **7,000** students.
- **Monster Guard Mobile App and Lesson Plans:** A fun and engaging app designed for children ages 7–11 which helps them prepare for real-life emergencies. Since its launch in 2014, Monster Guard has been downloaded **104,000** times.

In addition to benefiting individually from preparedness training, youth play a vital role in community preparedness by effectively influencing their families and others. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) found that 70% of households where children brought preparedness materials home from school have an emergency plan that has been discussed, and 38% of these households have participated in a home evacuation drill.

For regular updates on the impact your support has made, please visit our American Red Cross Northern California Coastal Region website and blog:

Website: <https://www.redcross.org/norcalcoastal>

Blog: <https://redcrossblognccr.org/>