
YOUTHWIRE

— *Impact Starts Here* —



**American
Red Cross**

Youth & Young Adults

Together, We Can Make the Holidays Brighter for All

DECEMBER 2024

Latest from Youth Leaders



What an incredible month we've had! November was all about impact and action, and you showed up in a big way. This year's National Youth Involvement Month (NYIM) theme, *Pathway to Impact*, was a great success--huge thank you to everyone who participated, stayed engaged, and contributed to one of the National Youth Council's biggest initiatives. We hope you learned valuable lessons and feel inspired to continue making an impact!

As the year winds down, it's the perfect time to reflect on everything you've accomplished and how you've contributed to the Red Cross mission. Check out [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) for a series of stories featuring each line of service as part of our 2024 year-in-review: Biomedical Services ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)), Climate/Disaster ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)), International Services ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)), Service to the Armed Forces ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) and Training Services ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)).

Young Adult Volunteer Spotlight Joanna Hu



*Joanna Hu, Volunteer Engagement Lead –
Greater New York Region*

Joanna Hu, originally from San Jose, California, has long been driven by a desire to serve. Her first experience with the American Red Cross was more than 10 years ago, when she organized a blood drive at Evergreen Valley High School in San Jose, where she was a member of their Red Cross Club.

"I organized several blood drives in high school, and my peers loved it because they got to get out of class," joked Joanna.

Joanna was also a member of the Youth Executive Board at the Silicon Valley Red Cross Chapter for four years, eventually serving as co-chair, where she helped drive youth fundraising, training, and community-building initiatives.

Your dedication, compassion, and hard work have made a real difference, and we couldn't be prouder of all you've achieved. Let's keep that momentum going—seek out volunteer opportunities in your region and finish 2024 on a high note!

From all of us on the National Youth Council, we wish you a joyful holiday season and a bright start to the New Year. See you in 2025—let's make it another year of impact and change together.

Updated First Aid Guidelines from the Red Cross



The American Heart Association and American Red Cross have released the 2024 Guidelines for First Aid, which is the first comprehensive update since 2010. These evidence-based recommendations equip responders with the latest techniques for managing mild to life-threatening emergencies.

Key Updates

- Expanded Topics: Covers opioid overdoses, tick bites, pediatric emergencies, and modern tools like pulse oximeters.
- Pediatric Focus: Tailored strategies for children, including stroke recognition and seizure care.

"Volunteering gave me something meaningful to focus on outside of class," she said. "It broadened my perspective on what it truly means to contribute to your community and helped me realize that personal growth and impact extend beyond academics."

Joanna's work at the Red Cross also extends to education. As an intern, she translated materials from English to Mandarin and led disaster safety education courses at retirement homes. She is passionate about bridging gaps between diverse populations, ensuring that critical information reaches more communities.

After graduating from high school, Joanna moved to Philadelphia to attend college. In college, she served on the National Youth Council, a proud moment that gave her a broader perspective on how the Red Cross operates by connecting chapters across the country. Her work involved crafting case studies of successful events in one region and sharing them with other regions, bringing different chapters together and helping spread best practices throughout the nation.

After graduating from college in 2021 and starting her career in the private sector, Joanna began volunteering as the Youth Engagement Lead in the Greater New York region, supporting youth and internship programs.

"Because I grew up in the Red Cross, I learned a lot personally and professionally from my

- Updated Techniques: Includes guidance on bleeding control, spinal motion restriction, and managing heat stroke or hypothermia.
- Empowering Bystanders: Simplified instructions for lay responders to act confidently in emergencies.

Why It Matters

“First aid saves lives,” says Dr. Elizabeth Hewett Brumberg, co-chair of the guidelines writing group. The updates reflect new public health challenges and ensure responders are equipped to reduce harm and improve outcomes.

To learn more, watch our YouTube [interview](#) with the co-authors of the writing group. Take action by [reading the guidelines](#), enrolling in a first aid class, or downloading the Red Cross First Aid App.

Avoid a Home Fire: Decorate Safely for the Holidays



Did you know that December is the peak month for home fires caused by candles and holiday decorations? Stay safe and enjoy the season with these simple tips from the American Red Cross to prevent a home fire during the holidays:

experience as a youth volunteer,” said Joanna. “Coming back to the Red Cross and working with other youth volunteers and interns was a really good way for me to do something good and impactful [as an adult], especially since it’s close to my own experiences as a youth volunteer.”

Joanna also offered words of advice to young people thinking about getting more involved with volunteer organizations such as the Red Cross.

“I’ve always found that organizations like the Red Cross, which embrace volunteers, want to bring you in and give you ownership and power to affect change. It just takes the first step of getting plugged in and connecting with a group, and then everything else from there will come naturally.”

This article was republished with permission from the Greater New York Region’s news article, [‘A Desire to Serve from a Young Age.’](#)

Do you know a volunteer who has gone above and beyond to make an impact in their community? Nominate them [here](#) so we can recognize their hard work.

December Monthly Focus: National Human Rights Month

Holiday Lighting Safety

- **Choose flame-resistant decorations.** Select items that are labeled as flame resistant or flame retardant.
- **Use the right lights.** Check whether your lights are for indoor or outdoor use, and don't mix them up.
- **Inspect your lights.** Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.
- **Follow connection guidelines.** Adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for how many light strands you can safely connect.
- **Avoid cord damage.** Use clips—not nails—to hang lights so cords don't get damaged.

Tree Safety

- **Real Trees:** Choose one with fresh, green needles. Cut 2 inches off the base before placing it in the stand, keep it hydrated daily, and position it at least 3 feet from heat sources. Turn off lights when leaving or sleeping.
- **Artificial Trees:** Look for a fire-resistant label, keep it away from heat sources, and avoid using electric lights on metallic trees.

Candles and Home Fire Safety

- **Consider flameless candles.** They look and smell like real candles without the risk of open flames.
- **Practice safe placement.** Keep candles at least 1 foot away from anything that can burn and use sturdy, tip-proof holders on uncluttered surfaces.
- **Blow out candles.** Always extinguish candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- **Avoid candles in the bedroom.** Never use candles in areas where people might fall asleep.
- **Handle carefully.** Don't burn candles all the way down—extinguish them before they get too close to the holder or container.
- **Skip candles with oxygen use.** Never use candles in homes where oxygen tanks are present.

Smoke Alarm Essentials



December is National Human Rights Month, a time to celebrate the inherent dignity and rights of every person. It's important to reflect on what unites us as humans and to appreciate the diversity of values, cultures, and backgrounds that make our communities vibrant.

The Red Cross is committed to protecting human rights through its focus on [International Humanitarian Law \(IHL\)](#). Upholding fairness, equality, and access to basic needs is central to our humanitarian mission.

- Take free professional training courses and discover how you can support the [IHL Youth Action Campaign](#).

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas.
- Test your smoke alarms monthly, and if they require batteries, replace them at least once a year.
- Check the manufacturer's date—alarms older than 10 years need to be replaced.

What is YouthWire?

Created by your National Youth Council, YouthWire is a monthly e-newsletter containing important Red Cross youth volunteer opportunities, stories and resources for youth, young adults and youth champions. We always want to highlight great stories and hear about what awesome things are happening in your region!

Let us know what's new for you!

Questions about youth volunteering with the American Red Cross? Email YouthInvolvement@redcross.org.

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Log Your Hours on Volunteer Connection!

Make it count!

Remember to log your hours



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