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# YOUTHWIRE

— *Impact Starts Here* —



**American  
Red Cross**

Youth & Young Adults

A New Year, A New Hope: Red Cross Volunteers Make a Difference

JANUARY 2025

## Latest from Youth Leaders



We hope everyone had a pleasant time celebrating the end of 2024 and the start of 2025 with your family and loved ones! We understand that the start of 2025 was a challenging one, with thousands of Californians devastated by the catastrophic wildfires that destroyed homes and displaced families. The American Red Cross is working 24/7 to support those who have been impacted by the Southern California Wildfires, including [Palisades Fire](#), [Eaton Fire](#), [Hurst Fire](#), [Lidia Fire](#), [Sunset Fire](#), [Kenneth Fire](#), and [Border 2 Fire](#).

As we continue to face these ongoing challenges, we are reminded of the incredible impact each of you makes, whether you are on the ground helping those affected, donating blood, or supporting our operations behind the scenes.

Your dedication is the heart of our work, and we are deeply grateful for everything you do. As we move forward into 2025, we know that we can count on your compassion and expertise to help us face the challenges ahead, not just in California, but wherever disaster strikes.

## Young Adult Volunteer Spotlight: Joanna Hu



*Joanna Hu, Youth 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-

Thank you for being a vital part of our Red Cross family. Together, we make a difference.

## Help Needed for Los Angeles Wildfire Victims



The Los Angeles community is currently facing devastating wildfires, and we urgently need your help. The situation is dire, and your support can make a significant difference in saving lives. Here are several ways you can assist your neighbors in need:

- **Make a Financial Donation or Start a Fundraiser:** We need your support. Help people affected by wildfires in California in 2025 by visiting [redcross.org/donate](https://redcross.org/donate), texting the word CAWILDFIRES to 90999 to make a donation. You can set up online fundraisers using [DonorDrive](#), use the [Change for Change activity guide](#), or check out our other [fundraising activity guides](#). Your donation enables the Red Cross to prepare for, respond to, and help people recover from these disasters.

chair, where she helped drive youth fundraising, training, and community-building initiatives.

"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.

- **Volunteer in Health and Mental Health Services:** If you are a licensed medical professional, your skills are desperately needed to provide care and support to those affected. [Click here to volunteer.](#)
- **Donate Blood:** Blood donations are crucial during this time of crisis. Your contribution can save lives and provide hope to those in need. [Click here to donate blood.](#)
- **Become a Blood Services Volunteer:** We urgently need qualified drivers to transport blood to various locations daily. Your help in this critical task can ensure that lifesaving blood reaches those who need it most. [Click here for more information.](#) Note: if you reside outside of the Los Angeles area, please click [here.](#)
- **Disaster Assistance:** The response to the disaster is underway and will continue for the foreseeable future. If you are interested in contributing, there are many ways you can help, including assisting in shelters or distributing supplies. To join the response efforts, [please use this application link.](#)

Together, we can make a difference. Your compassion and generosity are deeply appreciated. Thank you for your support.

## Updated First Aid Guidelines from the Red Cross

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

January Monthly Focus:



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.
- 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.

## National Blood Donor Month



January is National Blood Donor Month! Every two seconds in the United States, someone needs blood. You may have volunteered at blood drives or blood donation centers before—if so, you've been participating in one of the Red Cross's fundamental lines of service. We need the support of all our volunteers, especially youth and young adults, to help Blood Services with their commitment to our mission! Find out how to get involved below.

- Host a blood drive at your [high school](#) or [college](#)
- Take a step forward and help [educate the younger generations](#) through The Future Blood Donor (6-8) program
- College students can help promote the diversity of Red Cross Blood Services Regions' donor recruitment by becoming a [Red Cross Collegiate Leader](#)
- Create an online blood donor campaign for a specific cause through [SleevesUp](#)

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.

## IHL Art and Essay Competition



The January 31 deadline for submissions for the [IHL Youth Action Campaign Art and Essay Competition](#) is coming up soon. Participants are invited to explore the theme of space law and the implications of armed conflict in outer space. The competition is open to students in 8th-12th grade, as well as undergraduate, graduate, and law school. Winners in each category receive a \$100 gift card and have their work published in the annual IHL Magazine. The competition is open to all U.S. citizens, regardless of location, and foreign nationals residing in the United States, overseas U.S. military bases or U.S. territories.

- [IHL ART & ESSAY COMPETITION FLYER](#)
- [IHL ART & ESSAY COMPETITION GUIDELINES](#)
- [2024 ART & ESSAY COMPETITION DIGITAL MAGAZINE](#)

- Establish positive donation experiences at Red Cross blood drives by becoming a [Blood Donor Ambassador](#)

## DonorDrive



What is DonorDrive?

DonorDrive is a self-service, online platform that allows for online donation collection on a customizable and branded page. The platform includes visuals to track progress and links to make a donation online.

Youth supporters can join fundraising efforts online by visiting the American Red Cross [peer-](#)

- [2024 ART AND ESSAY STORY MAP](#)

[to-peer fundraising homepage](#). You can start your own campaigns, share personal stories, and fundraise for Red Cross causes special to you. For questions, contact [p2pfundraising@redcross.org](mailto:p2pfundraising@redcross.org).



## 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](mailto:YouthInvolvement@redcross.org).

## Get Social and Share!

Share YouthWire with your peers and invite them to [subscribe](#).

## Log Your Hours on Volunteer Connection!

*Make it count!*

Remember to log your hours



Help us tell the story of youth & young adults' incredible impact by submitting a [spotlight form](#) today.

Need Volunteer Connection support? Check out these helpful [guides and video tutorials!](#)



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