Lee Montgomery didn’t like to be idle. Yet, after 40 years operating his own ceramics manufacturing business with his wife, often working 70 hours a week, retirement sounded good. They moved from California to Idaho to be closer to grandkids, but found they had excess time on their hands and retirement lost its charm. So both found jobs and returned to the work force. Then COVID-19 struck. Lee “celebrated” his 82nd birthday in a local hospital with both the COVID-19 virus and pneumonia. But he recovered, and soon the Montogomerys had another celebratory event. They made the last payment on their house, and Lee decided he would try retirement again. Staying at home and relaxing still did not suit him, so he decided to find a place to volunteer and put his time and energy to use.

 Recovered, volunteer donates plasma

SUPPORT HOTLINE
The support hotline offers emotional support during COVID-19. It’s staffed by experienced mental health volunteers from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. EST, seven days a week. Call 571-353-1161.

MILESTONES
JAMES ARMSTRONG, 5 years
PHIL CARLOS, 5 years
STEVEN CHANDLER, 5 years
GARRETT MAGNUSON, 5 years
KIM STOUSE, 5 years
KATHY SWIFT, 5 years

Volunteers provide wheelchair, comfort to family displaced by BobCat wildfire

When the Worley family moved from Kentucky to rural Montana, they knew wildfires would be a concern. They just didn’t know how real that concern would become.

In early September, the 30,000-acre BobCat fire burning southeast of Roundup forced the Worleys and several of their neighbors from their homes. Rose Worley remembers seeing smoke plumes grow as she stood on her family’s land.

“I’m kind of scared of fires anyway, and I knew it was possible (in Montana),” the 58-year-old said. “Our neighbors who live five miles away lost their home. That was far enough away to not get all panicky, so we just kept watching.”

Seeking a change of scenery, multiple generations of the Worleys decided to move to the mountains of western Montana. But by the end of September, the Worleys’ home was under a Level 3 evacuation notice.

“Eventually, we had to evacuate,” Rose Worley said.

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After spending his 82nd birthday in the hospital with COVID-19, Idaho volunteer Lee Montgomery recently donated convalescent plasma to help others seriously ill with the virus.

SEE WILDFIRE, PAGE 2

SEE PLASMA, PAGE 2
Wildfire: Family thanks volunteers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ations of Worley’s moved to the Round-up area just two years earlier. Besides Rose and her husband Stuart, their son John W. and his wife Tabitha also joined them. Both in their 30s, the Worleys chose instead to pack his much loved volunteer administrator. 

WELCOME ABOARD: Three new members have joined our team

Mike Romig will be assisting with fleet, facilities and operations for Great Falls, Helena and Bozeman locations. He’s based in Great Falls.

Prior to joining the Red Cross, Mike had extensive experience as a project manager and contractor and was a locomotive engineer for 10 years. He has a bachelor of science degree in industrial technology.

Lori Fons has joined our fundraising team as a national philanthropy officer.

Lori has been working as a philanthropy officer in the western region for the past two years.

Fons

She has more than 20 years of experience in fund development and sales including as the development manager for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and as a sales

Plasma: Welcomes donors to drives

Story by Red Cross writing team volunteer Ellie McKinnon

RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

WELCOME ABOARD

Three new members have joined our team.

found a position that pleased him — volunteering as a medical screener at Red Cross blood drives. He had given blood frequently while living in California, but didn’t know what donations could do. Now he works at putting people at ease and helping them sign in as they arrive to make their own gifts of blood.

He likes his volunteer work, and the Red Cross likes him. His is a welcome and familiar face at drives conducted all over town, and he enjoys the camarade- ́rie he feels when he’s there helping. And he helps a lot — three or four times weekly.

When Lee heard about the convales- ́ cent plasma program designed to help seriously ill COVID-19 patients, he knew he wanted to be part of it. The convalescent plasma program involves providing antibody-rich plasma of those fully recovered from the disease to currently hospitalized patients.

Lee figured he was a perfect candi- ́ date and signed up to donate.

“If my pint of plasma will help anoth- ́ er, they are welcome to it,” he said. “We have got to try everything we can to get ahead of this thing.”

Lee plans to donate again very soon. Donating plasma doesn’t take much longer than donating blood.

“Just come in and relax and let the machine do the work,” Lee advises.

Those who have recovered from COVID-19 are eligible to donate conva- ́ lescent plasma. Sign up to donate by visiting redcrossblood.org.

— Story by Red Cross writing team volunteer Ellie McKinnon

“Dad has died in his eyes when he saw the wheelchair,” Rose said. “In Kentucky, you don’t get this kind of help — and Daddy — he is humble.”

“It was awesome to be outside. There was a walking trail, and Trent was able to get out all the time.”

Red Cross also provided comfort to the young grandchildren. While the two children shared a hotel bed, they were able to cuddle up with a blanket they brought from home — one they received when completing a Red Cross program that taught children about blood donation for natural disasters. Eventually, the family was able to return home.

“They’ll be a lot more prepared next time,” Rose said. “I wish I had a better plan for the cats. It was terrible not knowing where they were, but when I found my kitty … I held my kitty and just cried. I didn’t cry the whole time but holding the kitty did it.”

— Story by Red Cross writing team volunteer Amy Joyner

Plasma: Welcomes donors to drives

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

But we didn’t have a wheelchair in our main storage area, so our volunteers went shopping for a brand-new folding wheelchair that a local store had on hand.”

Volunteers Sherry Hamilton and Rita Tucker delivered the wheelchair to him.

“They called Rose telling her they had a surprise, and they needed to come down to the lobby,” Firman said.

Rose said it was an emotional mo- ́ ment.

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“These are our new volunteer engagement repre- ́ sentative.

Amada Schmierer takes the reins as our new volunteer engagement repre- ́ sentative.

Amada has built volunteer programs from the ground up and has connected thousands of volunteers to causes they are passion- ́ ate about.

In 2018, she was awarded the Idaho Education Foundation Volunteer Award and, in 2019, became one of only five people in Idaho to hold the designation of an internationally certi- ́ fied volunteer administrator.

She lives in Nampa with her husband.