It wasn’t the quiet Saturday that Mike Bolts had envisioned. He settled into a platelet donation chair at the Red Cross donor center in Boise, contemplating the football game he had anticipated watching that afternoon. Then he learned that the game had been canceled at the last minute because of COVID-19.

But at least he could spend a couple hours doing someone some good.

He shifted in his chair and waited to begin his platelet donation.

At home his wife, Liz, picked up the phone. It was the Red Cross looking for Mike. There was an urgent need for a transport specialist—a Red Cross volunteer who helps deliver blood products—and Mike was on that list.

“You’re looking for Mike?” Liz asked the caller. “He’s right there.”

At the donation center, Mike was in the chair donating platelets when the call came in that blood products needed to be delivered urgently to Enterprise, Ore., more than three hours away.

Sherrilyn Hamilton is no stranger to disaster. In 2012, her Montana home in the Bull Mountains burned during the Dahl fire. The Red Cross was there to help. Now Sherrilyn is helping others in disaster’s path. “I promised myself that if I could do that for someone else, then I would have accomplished something,” she said.

After losing her home to fire, Sherrilyn Hamilton knows just what other families are going through. After the Dahl wildfire tore through her ranch in the Bull Mountains near Roundup, Sherrilyn Hamilton and her husband, Kendall, were wiped out.

The 2012 fire burned 73 homes, among them Sherrilyn’s. That’s when the Red Cross went from an organization responding to some distant disaster to a person holding her hand and telling her everything was going to be OK.

“Everybody knows about the Red Cross assisting in disasters and blood drives, but the first-hand experience opened my eyes to what the Red Cross can do for one person, for a family,” she said.

“I never forgot that. I promised myself that if I could do that for someone else, then I would have accomplished something,” Sherrilyn said. “It was a small thing, but it brought me to tears. It still does when I think about it.”

Sherrilyn joined the Red Cross in 2017 and recently stepped forward as the interim disaster specialist.

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RED ALERTS!

New volunteer opportunities

Read about some new volunteer opportunities, the return of Ketchup with Friends and courses that will help you be prepared in case of disaster in this month’s IN THE KNOW.

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER OPPOR- TUNITY: Help us make compassionate calls to our military and veteran families through our virtual volunteer opportuni- ty, open to all current Red Cross Idaho and Montana volunteers. Anyone interested is encouraged to forward the Armed Forces clients to check on their health and welfare and to offer assistance. This can be done from the comfort of your home in February, and the schedule is flexible. Call when you can between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

This is a wonderful way to connect with our community for those who miss our client-facing events. To sign up or for questions, please send an email to Anthony.Trimarco@redcross.org.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS OF THE MONTH: Now is the chance to inspire the next generation of American Red Cross volunteers! We have several open leadership positions leading to expanded youth programs and youth engagement.

Volunteer Services - Youth Engage- ment Lead (virtual) — Works with the Volunteer Services team to support National Youth Strategy goals to educate and engage youth in the Red Cross mission. This role, which commences in monthly meetings, arranges educational opportunities and over- sees projects to engage youth across the region. Time commitment: Approximately 5-10 hours per month.

Volunteer - Youth Action Camp (virtual) — The coordinator works with the Youth Action Campaign (YAC) program and establish YAC teams. Time commitment: Approximately 10-20 hours a month; 3-4 hours a week.

KETCHUP WITH FRIENDS: Returns! We are bringing back our virtual get together, Ketchup with Friends. A team of volunteers will facilitate a monthly social gath- ering on Microsoft Teams. NO agenda, just good conversation with other Red Crossers. (Oh, and there might be a drawing or two.) Be on the lookout for an upcom- ing invitation, but you can hold the first date:

**Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m.**
**Mar. 2, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.**
**March 9, 4 p.m.**

Ready Rating (organizational emergency preparedness) Facilitators will walk businesses, schools or organizations through the Ready Rating program. This simple, online, step-by-step pro- gram makes developing an Emergency Action Plan easy.

**March 4, 10 a.m.**

Go forward, Ready Rating courses will be offered the first Thursday of the month at 10 a.m.