

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed

Joyfully thankful



ON THE HORIZON

- Nov. 1, kicks off [Native American Heritage Month](#)
- Nov. 7, **Daylight Saving Time.** Turn your clocks and test your smoke alarms.
- Nov. 11, **Veterans Day.** Learn how we support our veteran communities and how you can get involved [here](#).
- Nov. 25, **Thanksgiving.**
- Nov. 30, **Giving Tuesday.** Learn how you can help make a difference [here](#).



22

Disaster responses in October. Clients helped: 74



MILESTONES

November

- BONNIE HASH,** 45 years
- SUE HENDERSON,** 15 years
- JACK WENSKE,** 10 years
- STEVEN CARR,** 5 years
- MIKE DARR,** 5 years
- MARY-JO EGERVARY,** 5 years
- SUE GILLESPIE,** 5 years
- JOHN GRUBB,** 5 years
- SETH JONES,** 5 years



The Winkelman family struggled through blood shortages during a time their son, James, needed ongoing access to blood products. Thanks to Red Cross donors who stepped forward, James has thrived.

Mom says donors gave son life

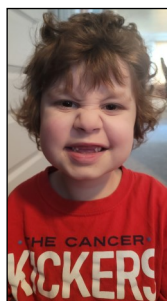
What began as severe arm pain for a young Caldwell boy in 2019 turned out to be something much worse. Seven-year-old James Winkelman and his family are now fighting a difficult battle with leukemia, but they aren't doing it alone.

Generous Red Cross blood donors provide the blood products James and others like him count on during the incredibly difficult treatment process.

"Thank you so much," James' mom Savannah said to the blood donors who are helping her son.

"Because of you — on my son's worst days — you made it better. You gave him energy. You gave him life to be a child during absolute hell. The donors are amazing, and these kids would die without them. That's the honest-to-goodness truth because chemo wipes out their blood cells."

Shortly before Christmas in 2019, James began experiencing arm pain. His family took him to urgent care, but X-rays didn't reveal



SEE JAMES, PAGE 3

RETIRED MEDICAL STAFF ENGAGED

Volunteers find fulfillment, rewards

Here are the stories of two retired women who have enriched their lives and found fulfillment using their lifetime of medical skills to help where they are needed, as Red Cross nurses.

* * *

Pair combines travel with helping others

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, as Judy and Ken Miller were planning a trip to visit their daughters in northern California and as wildfires burned across that state, Judy had an idea.

"I said, 'Hey, why don't we stop and help out at some of these fires,'" she said. "Let's volunteer with the Red Cross."

The Missoula couple contacted the Montana Red Cross, completed their



Judy Miller

training, learned some new software, and before they knew it, were on their way to Eureka, Calif., to help people

drive from their homes by fire.

Ken assisted with feeding operations while Judy, who's retired after a long career in the medical field, served as a Red Cross nurse — an extremely important position that's often hard to fill.

She tended to clients' basic medical and first-aid needs and helped clients replace lost prescriptions and items like walkers and eyeglasses that were left behind during a hasty evacuation.

Red Cross nurses also connect clients with spiritual care and mental health counseling.

Red Cross covers the cost of a volunteer's deployment, and the Millers decided to drive their RV to Eureka rather than fly.

"We got to meet some wonderful people and travel around northern

SEE NURSES, PAGE 2

Nurses: ‘It feels so good’

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California on our days off and just loved it,” she said.

“It’s an opportunity to travel, to use your skills to really help out and to serve people.”

From that point on they were hooked. “Once you get into it, Red Cross hangs on to you pretty tight,” she said.

Ken and Judy continue to serve Red Cross back home in Missoula, helping families impacted by home fires and other disasters. Much of Judy’s work is done virtually as she helps families across Montana and Idaho.

“I simply talk to the person, they tell me what meds they’ve lost, I call the pharmacy and check on the availability of refills, maybe call the doctor and make sure those meds are replaced,” she said.

“It’s just heartwarming to feel like you’re helping someone. It also brings you back to the realization that ‘Oh my gosh, this could be me.’”

Before she retired, Judy worked in hospice care in Missoula, and prior to that, in cancer and pharmaceutical research in Billings. Her Red Cross volunteerism allows her to continue to fill her need to help others.

And while they’ve been staying closer to home lately, come December, Ken and Judy are planning to hit the road again in their RV and maybe help out more folks impacted by disaster along the way.

“Giving here and there feels so good, and you get so much back,” she said. “The clients are wonderful and so grateful.”

35 years’ experience flows into Red Cross

MUCH LIKE JUDY MILLER, the desire to continue helping others post retirement also drew Barbara Gumbert to the Red Cross.

VOLUNTEER AS A RED CROSS NURSE

Montana Red Cross is seeking health professionals to assist with people’s health needs in disaster shelters. Both associate and supervisory level opportunities are available.



If you’re interested, or to learn more, please send an email to IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org or call 406-493-8778.



Barbara Gumbert

After a 35-year career as an operating room nurse, it didn’t take long for Barbara to begin looking for an opportunity to put her compassion and her talents to good use once again.

“I still had so much to give, and I still cared so much about people that I needed to do something,” she said.

That’s when she discovered the opportunity to volunteer as a Red Cross nurse.

Since signing on five years ago, Barbara, who lives in Kalispell, has deployed three times following major national disasters and has helped out during emergencies in Montana.

Her first deployment took her to Louisiana in 2016 during spring flooding.

“We had tornado warnings and thunderstorm warnings and flood warnings while I was there, but I enjoyed it immensely, taking care of the people who were in the shelter,” she said.

Three years later, while living in Ohio, she helped families in the Dayton

area after several tornadoes ripped through the region.

One of the shelters Barbara was working in closed and was combined with another shelter. Barbara remembers walking into that new location, where many of the clients she had been helping previously were now staying.

“I came in carrying my stuff and one of the clients saw me and went ‘Barbara!’ and then they all went ‘Yay, she’s here.’”

“The feeling that gave you ... I was almost in tears.”

Barbara said many of the clients she tended to during that deployment had serious medical issues including diabetes and heart problems.

She remembers one client who needed daily insulin shots but was unable to do it himself.

“He would bring me his insulin and know how much he needed, and I would give him the shot, and he was just as delighted as could be,” she said. “How easy is that to give someone some happiness?”

Barbara encourages others to raise their hand, roll up their sleeves and give it a try.

“The clients are very warm and very grateful to you just for sitting and talking with them,” she said. “They know they are being cared for, and they know that a person cares. They feel the love there ... that it’s not just me doing my job of having to take care of you. It’s because I want to take care of you.”

— *By Matt Ochsner*

Paid position open near Boise

A paid position is available in the Boise area, and volunteer blood drive ambassadors are needed, as well. Also, check out the virtual cookbook and the November Ketchup With Friends 2.0 for goofing off with colleagues.

ARMED FORCES PROGRAM MANAGER NEEDED. The Red Cross of Idaho and Montana is working to hire a Service to the Armed Forces and International Services program manager in the Treasure Valley area.

Are you an energetic, ambitious individual looking to support our military, veteran, and international communities?

The responsibilities include team-building, working with project management, supporting volunteer teams, and working with diverse people.

If this sounds like something up your alley, click on this link for more!

[Service to the Armed Forces/ International Services Program Manager](#)

IN THE KNOW



BLOOD DRIVE HELP NEEDED.

Volunteer Donor Ambassadors. In this position, you will ensure that blood donors have a pleasant and fulfilling experience.

You will be responsible for warmly managing the reception and intake process, overseeing the hospitality experience, and in general, demonstrating excellent customer service skills.

Time Requirements:

Preferred: One 4-6-hour shift per month for six months. Minimum: Once a quarter.

Needed availability: Monday – Friday during business hours when blood drives are held.

Primary Locations: Idaho Falls, Kalispell, Lewiston, and Missoula.

WHAT’S COOKING? We want you to help us put together a Red Cross family virtual cookbook.

The book will be completed during the first week of November, so hurry if you want to submit a recipe.

You can send a link, or take a picture of the recipe and send it over. Only those who submit recipes will receive the virtual cookbook.

Submit to IDMT.Vol@redcross.org

KETCHUP WITH FRIENDS 2.0.

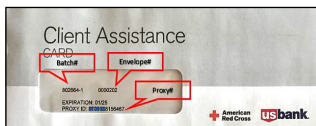
Please join us for our next social time together on Tuesday, Nov. 9, from 7:30–8 p.m.

Costume contest winners at the October get-together were Melanie Sheehan and Andrea Vlassis. Come this month for a chance to win a “great”ful prize.

Client cards: Attention snowbirds, those who wander!

Our next quarterly inventory of client assistance and mission cards is coming up on Dec. 1. Cardholders will have access to the online reporting form at that time.

In the meantime, we need your help to make this a success! If you will not be able to access your cards on Dec. 1 (or within the six following days) because of travel, please use one of the following options **in advance**. However, be sure to keep the information



current if you activate a card in the days just prior to Dec. 1.

■ **Take a photo** of your card envelopes or make a note of your card info in your phone so you can report from anywhere with a cell or wifi signal. You

will need the batch, envelope, and proxy numbers for each card.

■ **Contact Angela** by e-mail (angela.james@redcross.org) and give her your card info before you travel.

■ **Provide your card info** in advance to your DAT lead or DPX who can report on your behalf on Dec. 1.

Angela is accountable for more than 1,000 cards, so this is a huge task. As a region we are bound to these dates for national compliance.

James: Turning the corner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

anything serious.

With the pain growing worse by the day, James' family took him to see an orthopedic surgeon two days before Christmas.

Again, X-rays didn't show anything significant but just before they got ready to leave, the surgeon asked if James was having fevers.

The answer was yes, and that triggered added alarm. The doctor decided to give the X-ray a second look and schedule an MRI.

Four days later, that test revealed an abnormal bone marrow signal. The next morning a biopsy confirmed James had B cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia, a cancer that affects certain cells in the immune system. Thankfully, the cancer wasn't in his blood or spinal fluid and was treatable.

But that treatment is grueling.

During his first year of chemo, James lost his ability to walk three times, and at one point, was paralyzed from the neck down.

He faced infections, fevers, nausea, and frustrating physical therapy sessions, and had a feeding tube for 10 months.

He also received much-needed blood products that kept his tired body going while the aggressive chemo treatments continued. In the early going, that blood was hard to come by, however – a result of COVID-19 and challenges of collecting blood. That meant no transfusions unless James' symptoms were severe.

"Cancer treatment is bad enough and to have a blood shortage on top of it was horrible," Savannah said. "At that time, we were asking everyone to please donate."

But eventually that shortage began to ease, and James received several platelet transfusions a week for two weeks and whole blood as well.

And finally, James began to turn the corner.

A year and a half after his difficult diagnosis, James is a silly, video-game-loving 7-year-old. He enjoys playing pranks on his dad, Josh, and his little

brother, Noah, and hanging out with his dog, Finn.

"James is a little sweetheart," Savannah said. "He's so cuddly and so loving, and if someone is sad, he's just like 'Here's your daily hug. It's OK.'"

His hair has grown back, he's off his feeding tube, but his daily chemo regimen continues, as it will for the next two years. He's still battling infections and severe pain in his back and legs, but there's finally some light at the end of what has been a long dark tunnel.

"Right now, he's doing really well," Savannah said. "He's working on getting his energy back and just being a kid again."

And blood donors played a key part.

"They are keeping our kids alive and allowing them to get these treatments to save their lives," Savannah said.

"For those who are thinking about donating, I would just tell them this is massively impactful. And as a mom of a child with cancer, I am incredibly grateful when blood is available for my son so he doesn't have to suffer longer than necessary."

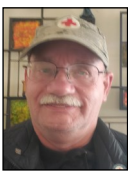
Meet fleet, facilities team



DAWN BROSSART

I oversee the operations for the region and work remotely. Our team works with all lines of business, and I enjoy the variety each day brings. Solving problems and helping others succeed makes me smile.

Favorite holiday: I love Thanksgiving for the amazing food and plentiful leftovers. We get to spend time with family and friends, and it's the start of the holiday season!



ALAN COLVIN

I live in Missoula and am a University of Montana Grizzly fan. I work part time as a building and fleet maintenance tech. There's so much to learn, but it's very rewarding helping with the Red Cross mission.

Favorite holiday: My favorite holiday is Veterans Day. I believe thanking our veterans is so important so they can receive the recognition they all deserve. I will be forever grateful for their sacrifice.



JOAQUIN LEMUS

I work at the Boise fixed site with fleet and facilities. I love my job because I work on something new every day and help so many people.

Favorite holiday: Christmas, because I love to see the joy on my children's faces when they open their gifts from Santa.



JENNIFER SHURBET

I am the business operations specialist for the Idaho Montana region and live in Boise.

A sampling of my responsibilities include Red Cross facility operations, fleet maintenance, Humanitarian Services budgets and overseeing our department volunteer program.

There is never a dull day in operations, and the variety and opportunity to work with every line of business in the organization is rewarding.

Favorite holiday: My favorite holiday is Independence Day because it represents family, friends, food, fireworks and fun on a relaxing summer day.



TRENT BROOKS

What's up, everybody! I help with general maintenance and fleet management supporting the Red Cross mission here in Great Falls, Bozeman and Helena.

My job is pivotal in the overall mission of the American Red Cross, and I'm looking forward to its success.

Favorite holiday: My favorite holiday is Veterans Day. My father and I both served in the U.S. Army, and my youngest son is serving now.

Thank you for all the American Red Cross does to support veterans!

Learn how you can support this team and become a fleet and facilities volunteer by sending an email to IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org or call 406-493-8878.



New application support available

The Red Cross has a team of bright volunteers standing by to help other users with training needs, application assistance and coaching.

The five-member team is headed by Sherry Israel, the Regional Application Support Team lead. The other four members include:

Jack Smith, Care Team Application Lead

Teresa Browning, Respond Team Application Lead

Kathy Mellinger, View NSS Team Application Lead

Shauna Wheelwright, Volunteer Connection Application Lead. (No photo available.)

HOW TO REACH US

Users can visit the newly launched Regional Application Support Team page in Volunteer Connection under My Chapter. Once in the support team page, users can find resources, phone numbers for application help, links to the Exchange, documents and information on how to determine whether to call application leads and when to contact IT.



Kathy



Jack



Teresa



Sherry