



American  
Red Cross

# Volunteer Services

**FY25 YEAR IN REVIEW**



# American Red Cross Volunteer Services FY25 Year in Review

At the American Red Cross, volunteers are not just helpers, they are the heartbeat of our mission. This year, we witnessed the extraordinary power of connection: individuals from all walks of life coming together, sharing their time and talents, and transforming moments of crisis into movements of hope. Every volunteer story is a thread in the fabric of our humanitarian legacy, woven with compassion, courage and unwavering commitment.

We honor the more than 300,000 volunteers who gave their time, talents and hearts to serve communities across the country. Their stories of courage, resilience and leadership inspire us all. From youth leaders to seasoned professionals, each volunteer played a vital role in building a more compassionate and connected world.

As we look ahead, our vision is bold and inclusive: to **Reimagine Volunteerism** as a movement rooted in purpose, flexibility and empowerment. Together, we will continue to innovate, expand access, and foster environments where every individual can thrive and contribute meaningfully. Together, we are shaping resilient communities and creating lasting impact.

**“True leadership is not measured by titles or tasks, but by the ability to ignite purpose in others. At the Red Cross, we lead by lifting—creating spaces where every volunteer feels seen, valued and empowered to transform compassion into action.”**

— Matt Bertram, vice president, Volunteer Services



# The Volunteer Journey: FY25 Milestones

## Innovation That Opens Doors to Service

As part of the **Reimagining Volunteerism Initiative**, the Red Cross launched a new volunteer intake experience and opportunity finder tool—a streamlined platform that makes it easier than ever to get involved. This intuitive tool helps people find roles that match their interests, skills and availability. This tool redefines the volunteer journey, making it easier than ever for individuals to connect with opportunities that matter to them. It's volunteering, reimagined: flexible, personalized, and built for impact.

## Empowering Volunteer Leaders

Red Cross volunteers make a difference every day—and behind them are supervisors who guide, coach, and inspire. Many of these leaders are volunteers themselves, generously giving their time to support others. To strengthen their impact, the Red Cross launched the **Supervisor of Volunteers Development Series**—an interactive training program that builds leadership skills, boosts confidence, and creates consistency across the organization. Through real-life scenarios and hands-on learning, supervisors are empowered to deepen engagement, align teams with our mission, and grow in their own leadership journey.

## Adapting Volunteer Power in Times of Crisis

During the California wildfires, community members stepped up to serve. While many came forward to support disaster response, Volunteer Services quickly identified a critical need in blood collection and were able to redirect volunteers to serve as blood donor ambassadors and to donate blood.

This collaboration helped drive lifesaving donations during a time of urgent demand.

This agile, people-centered approach showcases the power of volunteerism—and the ability of the Red Cross to meet evolving needs with compassion and purpose.

## Flexible Volunteering, Lifesaving Impact

Volunteer Services is redefining engagement with more flexible ways to serve. A key milestone was the launch of the **Red Cross Delivers app**, which allows volunteers to schedule on-demand shifts as Blood Transportation Specialists delivering lifesaving products on their own time.

This innovation removes barriers to entry, empowering people to contribute without long-term commitments. By making volunteering more accessible, the Red Cross is opening the door for more individuals to support its mission in ways that work for them.

It's smart, strategic, and built for today's volunteers.

## Volunteerism as a Movement

In 2025, the Red Cross launched **Volunteerism as a Movement**, a fresh approach to how we talk about volunteering. This initiative shifts the narrative from obligation to opportunity, highlighting volunteerism as a rewarding experience rooted in shared purpose and real impact.

It promotes a culture of flexibility, empowerment, and sustainability encouraging long-term engagement and stronger communities. A new messaging framework, built around collective purpose, impact, empowerment, and joyful altruism, helps inspire new volunteers and deepen connections with those already serving.

## Cindy Pennie: Courage in the Eye of Hurricane Helene



**During Hurricane Helene, Red Cross nurse Cindy Pennie sprang into action at a Florida evacuation center when an elderly woman suffered a cardiac emergency.** With emergency services delayed due to the storm, Cindy administered aspirin, used an AED, and stabilized the woman until an ambulance arrived—ultimately saving her life.

A seasoned volunteer since Hurricane Irma in 2017, Cindy has responded to multiple disasters, driven by compassion and a strong faith in community. Her recent CPR and AED training proved critical during this crisis, showcasing her preparedness and dedication.

Cindy's story is a testament to the power of teamwork, training and heart in disaster response.

# FY25 At a Glance



**Increased community representation** among volunteers through offering **resources in multiple languages**, training regional volunteer services staff, and **expanding the approach to recruitment**.



Engaged more than **325,000 volunteers** who dedicated over **10.3 million hours** in service of the Red Cross mission, amplifying the ability to deliver vital support and relief to communities.



Designed a targeted **rural strategy**, grounded in sector research and proven field practices, to **expand reach and deepen engagement** in rural communities.



**Supported community blood drives** through passionate Blood Donor Ambassador volunteers—**over 30% of whom were youth and young adults**—demonstrating the next generation's **commitment to lifesaving service**.



Revamped and streamlined the **volunteer experience survey** to more effectively capture **actionable insights**, enabling data-driven improvements to enhance volunteer engagement and satisfaction.



Leveraged digital platforms to **connect with millions** of individuals through **targeted volunteer recruitment campaigns**.

# Volunteer Mission Impact

## From Drive to Delivery—Volunteers Power Lifesaving Impact



**Over 30,000 volunteers** contributed **1.4 million hours** to support **blood donors** and deliver lifesaving products to patients nationwide.



More than **4,000 volunteer drivers** traveled over **8 million miles** to ensure timely delivery of blood and platelets to hospitals and communities. Their dedication helps create a positive donor experience and ensures blood is available where and when it's needed most.

## Promoting Humanitarian Values Through Education



In FY25, **more than 1,400 Red Cross volunteers**

**contributed over 30,000 hours to the international humanitarian law program**—bringing global humanitarian principles to local communities. Through workshops and events, thousands were educated on the Geneva Conventions and the rules of war, inspiring greater respect for human dignity and international humanitarian law across the country.

## Serving those who Serve



In FY25, **over 19,000 Red Cross volunteers supported U.S. military members, veterans and their families**—providing comfort and care in hospitals, on bases, and during emergencies. Together, **veterans and active-duty volunteers contributed over 1.6 million hours** to strengthen and support communities at home and abroad.

## Volunteers Strengthen Communities



Nearly **63,000 volunteers** helped communities prepare for and respond to disasters—from home fires to hurricanes—providing vital comfort, care, and hope. Whether serving locally or deploying nationally, their dedication was essential to sustaining disaster relief efforts throughout the year.

## Restoring Hope Across Borders



In FY25, **over 350 Red Cross volunteers** dedicated **nearly 13,000 hours to the Restoring Family Links program**—reconnecting loved ones separated by conflict, disaster, or migration. Through free, confidential services, they helped families locate missing relatives and rebuild communication, offering hope and healing across international borders.

Their work reflects the humanitarian mission of the global Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: bringing vital human connection to those who need it most.

## Corporate Expertise in Action



**Volunteers contributed over 600,000 hours across Red Cross corporate departments**—bringing professional expertise to IT, finance, communications, and more. A standout example is the Translation Hub, which in its first year supported **more than 3,000 projects** and translated **2.5 million words**—making vital materials accessible in communities nationwide. As it enters its second year, the Translation Hub demonstrates how professional expertise can drive meaningful impact and expand the reach of Red Cross services.



# Everyday Heroes: Volunteer Spotlight

## Versie Page: A Cancer Survivor's Spirit of Service

### **Versie Page, a three-time cancer survivor and dedicated volunteer with the Eastern Chapter of the American Red Cross of South Carolina, exemplifies the spirit of service.**

Motivated by a desire to give back, Versie joined the Disaster Action Team (DAT) to support families affected by local emergencies—most often home fires. With the Red Cross responding to an average of six home fires daily across South Carolina, Versie and her fellow DAT volunteers are trained and ready to provide compassionate care 24/7. Her presence brings comfort and hope to those experiencing some of the worst moments of their lives.

Versie's commitment is deeply personal. As a recipient of Red Cross blood products during her own health journey, she understands the life-changing impact of the organization's mission. Whether offering a warm blanket, emotional support, or helping someone begin the recovery process, Versie's actions reflect the heart of Red Cross service. Her story is a powerful reminder of how volunteers—many of whom have faced adversity themselves—play a vital role in helping communities heal and rebuild.



**“I’m coming to help and let them know this is not the end of the road for them. It just feels good giving back.”**



## Ken Takata: Driving Hope, One Delivery at a Time

**When Ken Takata retired from the Hawthorne School District in 2021 after 31 years as a teacher and principal, he wasn't ready to slow down.** Guided by his father's belief that "the world doesn't work without volunteers," Ken knew his next chapter would still be rooted in service. Initially drawn to disaster relief, Ken explored volunteering with the Red Cross. While deployment timing didn't align, he found another critical way to make a difference—becoming a Blood Transportation Specialist in Culver City, California. In this role, Ken delivers lifesaving blood products from the Pomona center to hospitals across Southern California, supporting the Red Cross' mission to supply 40% of the nation's blood. "I wanted to keep making a difference," Ken shares. "Knowing someone's life depends on what I'm carrying—that's all the motivation I need."

Ken balances volunteering with caring for his family, choosing flexible shifts that fit around school drop-offs and caregiving. Whether on urgent STAT runs or regular hospital routes, he finds deep purpose in every trip—knowing each delivery could save a life. He enjoys the solitude of driving, often accompanied by music or podcasts, but it's the mission that keeps him going. Ken's quiet dedication and thoughtful approach reflect the true heart of service. Whether in the classroom or behind the wheel, he continues to lead by showing up—for others, every day.



**“The way you see life when you help others fills you physically, mentally, and spiritually.”**

## Carmen Hernandez: Serving Those Who Serve

**After Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico in 2017, Carmen Hernandez felt called to help.** She began volunteering with the Red Cross, first helping those impacted by the disaster and later found her place supporting military families through Service to the Armed Forces.

Years earlier, Carmen was stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army when her father passed away. The Red Cross helped reunite her family in Puerto Rico—a moment that shaped her empathy and commitment to service.

Now, as a Hero Care caseworker, Carmen helps deliver emergency messages and connect service members, veterans and their families to critical support. In 2024, the Red Cross delivered over 70,000 emergency communications, with Carmen and fellow volunteers logging hundreds of hours to ensure no call for help goes unanswered. Her story is a powerful reminder of how volunteers turn personal experience into lasting impact.

## Cynthia Bell: A Legacy of Care That Keeps Giving

**After 52 years in nursing—including 37 at the Cleveland Veteran Affairs—Cynthia Bell continues to serve with heart and purpose.** Now retired, she volunteers as a tutor, leading community health efforts as President of the Akron Black Nurses, and supports up to 10 blood drives a month as a Red Cross Blood Donor Ambassador.

**“You never know the kind of day someone’s having. Just being there, connecting, and showing kindness—it matters.”**

Cynthia's story is a powerful reminder: healing doesn't end with retirement—it continues in every smile, every conversation, and every pint of blood collected.



**“At the Red Cross, teenagers can serve and make a real impact.”**

## Maribel Sikes: Building Community Wherever She Goes

**At just 17, Maribel Sikes has already made a lasting impact—volunteering over 1,500 hours in 2024 and earning the U.S. Army's Military Child of the Year Award.** A passionate Red Cross youth leader, she discovered the organization at a cherry blossom festival in Japan and quickly got to work launching a story time program for preschoolers, organizing movie nights for single soldiers, and starting a Red Cross club with her siblings.

After relocating to Fort Knox, Kentucky, Maribel didn't miss a beat. She founded another club and began volunteering at the Red Cross Warrior Warehouse, helping military families settle into new homes.

Her drive to build community wherever she goes is matched by her belief in youth empowerment.

Maribel's story is proof that leadership isn't about age, it's about action.

# Youth Engagement & Impact

## Youth Engagement Milestones

This year marked a remarkable surge in youth involvement across the Red Cross:

### Red Cross Clubs Expansion

The Red Cross welcomed nearly **300 new Red Cross clubs**, a **26% year-over-year increase**. This growth reflects the rising enthusiasm and commitment of young people to humanitarian service.

### Service Hours Contribution

Youth volunteers contributed over **400,000 hours of service** in their communities—a **17% increase** from the previous year—demonstrating their dedication to making a tangible difference.

### Volunteer Growth

The Red Cross added **10,000 new youth and young adult volunteers**, bringing its total to over **47,000**. These young leaders are shaping the future of humanitarian work.

### Thought Leadership

The Red Cross proudly participated in the **Duke of Edinburgh's Youth Roundtable**, joining other nonprofit leaders to discuss youth empowerment and global service.

## International Engagement

Our youth leaders made their mark on the global stage:



### Global Representation

For the first time, we sent a youth and young adult delegate, Marisa Leong, to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Statutory Meeting & International Conference in October 2024.

### Youth Camps Abroad

Dianne N. Estévez and Sydney N. Martínez participated in the annual COATÍ Youth Camp in Costa Rica, where they joined hundreds of young leaders in workshops, trainings, and dynamic activities that fostered leadership, inclusion, and furthered the Red Cross mission.



## National Youth Council Highlights

The National Youth Council led innovative initiatives to amplify youth voices and impact:

### #ImpactStartsHere Video Challenge

Launched the first-ever national video challenge, spotlighting clubs and individuals across the U.S. and internationally for their outstanding community service.

### Youth & Young Adult Ambassador Program

Led a dynamic cohort of youth ambassadors who developed innovative local projects to advance the Red Cross mission.

### Annual Meeting in Nashville

Held their annual gathering in Nashville, partnering with the Vanderbilt University Red Cross club for a meaningful local service project.



## Youth Spotlight & Recognition

Celebrating excellence in youth leadership:

### Navin Narayan Award for Excellence in Youth Leadership

Awarded to Razi Aftab from the Northern California Coastal Region for outstanding service and leadership.

### Navin Narayan 2025 Scholarship Recipients

- Sean Lane – North Carolina Region
- Ishani Gandhi – North Texas Region

## Social Outreach & Engagement

The Red Cross digital presence continues to grow, connecting and inspiring youth nationwide. Its Youthwire newsletter, curated by our National Youth Council to highlight youth volunteerism, surpassed a new milestone of more than 10,000 subscribers.

# FY26 Vision: Building the Future of Volunteerism

As we look ahead to the next year, Volunteer Services is driving innovation to transform how we engage, empower, and elevate our volunteer workforce. Our vision is rooted in two strategic imperatives: **growing our volunteer workforce capacity** and **enhancing the volunteer workforce experience**—ensuring every volunteer is equipped, supported and inspired to serve.

In FY26, we will accelerate our **Reimagining Volunteerism** initiative, embracing flexible, inclusive, and innovative models that meet people where they are. We envision a future where **Volunteerism is a Movement**—a dynamic, community-driven force that transcends traditional boundaries and invites everyone to contribute their time and talents, strengthening individuals and communities alike.

Our commitment to **disaster response operations** will deepen through targeted investments in **local community volunteer mobilization**, ensuring that communities are not only recipients of aid but active participants in their own resilience. We will also advance our alignment with **national readiness targets for disaster responder capacity**, building a scalable, diverse, and mission-ready volunteer force prepared to meet the challenges of an evolving disaster landscape.

FY26 will be a year of action, innovation and impact.



## Be Part of the Movement

We invite you to join us in shaping the future of service. Whether you're responding to a disaster, mentoring a new volunteer, or helping build stronger communities, your engagement matters. Together, we will redefine what it means to serve—and ensure that volunteerism remains a powerful catalyst for hope, connection, and change.

