

CROSS TALK

EASTERN NIAGARA COUNTY CHAPTER

Proudly Serving Eastern Niagara County Since 1917

PUBLICATION No. 10

News from your American Red Cross

Summer 2003

Local Volunteers Rush to Tornado-Ravaged Midwest



A half-mile wide tornado tore through the once quiet town of Stockton, MO. It will take months to rebuild the downtown area.

In response to the barrage of deadly tornadoes in early May, the American Red Cross quickly activated thousands of relief workers to the devastated areas. The ongoing rash of tornadoes prompted the most simultaneous American Red Cross disaster relief operations since the September 11 attacks.

Disaster operations quickly began in Missouri, Kansas, Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Alabama, Illinois, Mississippi, Georgia and West Virginia. Red Cross is providing for the immediate needs of the tornado victims, including food and shelter, counseling, emergency healthcare and medication needs. In addition, 119 Emergency Response Vehicles (ERV's) outfitted to deliver food, water, comfort and hygiene supplies, as well as mobile kitchens, traveled within the affected communities.

Mobile kitchens, one of which is capable of preparing up to 10,000 hot, homestyle meals per day, were sent to assist those affected by the tornadoes as well as the rescue workers assisting them.

As they always do, our local disaster volunteers answered the call along with thousands of other Red Crossers who were called to America's heartland shortly after the first wave of tornadoes hit. Challis Dietz (Family Service Coordinator/Officer) was sent to Missouri while Susan Beamer (Mass Care Tech) and Warren Rathke (Government Liaison Tech) were assigned to the Oklahoma operation. We are proud to have them represent our chapter and the communities of Eastern Niagara County as they travel our nation providing comfort to those affected by the devastation of a natural or man-made disaster. They voluntarily leave their families, jobs and commitments to assist wherever needed.

Locally, we have been working very hard in our ongoing preparedness effort. Since March, we have recruited and trained **six (6)** new Disaster Action Team (DAT) members who are now taking on-call duty. We also recruited and trained **five (5)** new members of our Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) team who are also taking on-call duty. These volunteers are helping to provide our necessary 24-hour a day, 7 day a week coverage for emergency disaster and military calls. We also had **18** people from the community participate in the Introduction to Disaster Services course that gives an overview of all functions on a disaster operation. In addition, we trained **nine (9)** individuals in the Family Services course, **four (4)** took Shelter Operations training, **seven (7)** people participated in Shelter Simulation and **29** members of our community learned about disaster preparedness in our presentation, "Preparing for the Unexpected".

Would you, or someone you know, be interested in joining this special team? If so, please call our office for details.

For a complete report on this and other disasters log on to www.redcross.org.



The May barbecue was a big success thanks to all of you! We sold 1320 dinners. Our next Chiavetta's Chicken barbecue will be in September. Watch for details.

Red Cross Workers Remain On Duty In Gulf Region

Although combat is over in Iraq, thousands of American troops will remain in the region and away from their families for many months to come as the reconstruction and stabilization phase continue. Just as their work continues so does that of our 31 colleagues, the Armed Forces Emergency Service (AFES) staff members currently deployed with the troops, who work around the clock to keep the troops connected with their families back home.

The primary mission of the American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services is to relay emergency messages between families and service members in times of celebration and of loss—news about the arrival of a baby, a serious illness in the family or the death of a loved one. The Red Cross verifies and speeds more than a million messages a year across thousands of miles to U.S. service members separated from their families. Many times, the verified Red Cross message is the determining factor for granting emergency leave.

Of the thousands of emergency messages delivered during Operation Iraqi Freedom, AFES workers relayed 6,800 messages about the serious illness or death of a loved one, and also delivered the good news about the birth of a new son or daughter to 1,614 servicemen.

The service offered by the American Red Cross provides comfort to our troops stationed so far from home and our staff remains focused on that mission.

In addition to soaring temperatures, reaching 120 degrees, staff members have endured horrendous dust storms and hailstorms and, in the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom, they also experienced repeated chemical/biological alerts, requiring them to shelter in bunkers wearing gas masks or full chemical suits.

In spite of the challenging conditions, dedicated AFES staff members continue to deliver emergency messages and offer support to the troops. They are expected to remain in the region for as long as their services are needed.



Nation's Terror Threat Level Raised to Orange

America's terror threat level was once again raised to "High/Orange" and the American Red Cross urges the public to make appropriate preparations. Preparations should include developing a family disaster plan and assembling a disaster supplies kit. A complete summary of recommended actions is available on our public website at www.redcross.org.

If disaster strikes, remain calm and be patient. Follow the advice of local emergency officials by listening to your local radio or television stations for news and instructions.

Local officials may ask you to leave your home. If so, they have good reason to make this request and you should heed their advice. Listen to your radio or tv and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.

If you are advised to "shelter in place" please remain inside your home or workplace and protect yourself there. Get your disaster supplies kit and make sure your battery-operated radio is working and that you have extra batteries. Keep listening to your radio until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.

For assistance with your disaster plan or kit, please call or visit us. We will be happy to help you prepare.



BLOODMOBILE SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIMES</u>
June 3-2003	Tuesday	Eastern Niagara Chapter House, Lkpt.	2:00pm-7:00pm
June 9-2003	Monday	Gasport Chemical Hose, Gasport	2:00pm-7:00pm
June 17-2003	Tuesday	Eastern Niagara Chapter House, Lkpt.	2:00pm-7:00pm
June 24-2003	Tuesday	Faith UMC-Barker	1:00pm-6:00pm
June 30-2003	Monday	Eastern Niagara Chapter House, Lkpt.	2:00pm-7:00pm
July 2-2003	Wednesday	South Lockport Fire Hall, Lkpt.	2:00pm-7:00pm
July 3-2003	Thursday	Wrights Corner Fire Hall	12:00pm-5:00pm
July 12-2003	Saturday	YMCA-Lockport	9:00am-1:00pm
July 15-2003	Tuesday	Eastern Niagara Chapter House, Lkpt.	2:00pm-7:00pm
July 26-2003	Saturday	Pendleton Center-UMC	9:00 am-1:00pm
July 28-2003	Monday	Miller Hose-Newfane	1:00pm-6:00pm
August 5-2003	Tuesday	Eastern Niagara Chapter House, Lkpt.	2:00pm-7:00pm
August 18-2003	Monday	St. Paul's Lutheran Church-Wilson	1:00pm-6:00pm
August 27-2003	Wednesday	South Lockport Fire Hall, Lkpt.	2:00pm-7:00pm

Since our last newsletter, we...

- ✓ Provided relief to 47 individuals involved in 10 disaster-related incidents.
- ✓ Provided communication assistance for 11 members of the Armed Forces and their families.
- ✓ Provided fuel assistance and other casework to 25 families.
- ✓ Trained 703 individuals in CPR/AED and First Aid skills.
- ✓ Trained 243 people in Water Safety courses.
- ✓ Certified 18 youth in Babysitter's Training.
- ✓ Sponsored 26 bloodmobiles; collecting over 876 units of blood.
- ✓ Checked 209 blood pressures.
- ✓ Participated in 9 presentations and other community events, reaching approximately 280 people.
- ✓ Loaned hospital equipment to 19 people in the community.
- ✓ Sent 3 local disaster volunteers to Missouri and Oklahoma for the Midwest tornadoes.