

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



## ON THE HORIZON

■ **November** – [National Veterans and Military Families Month](#)

■ **November** – [National Family Caregivers Month](#)

■ **November** – [Native American Heritage Month](#)

■ **Nov. 5** – Daylight saving time ends. Don't forget to test your smoke alarms when you turn your clocks.

■ **Nov. 7** – Election Day.

■ **Nov. 11** – Veterans Day.

■ **Nov. 13** – [World Kindness Day](#).

■ **Nov. 15** – [World Philanthropy Day](#).

■ **Nov. 18** – [International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day](#).

■ **Nov. 24** – Native American Heritage Day.

■ **Nov. 28** – [Giving Tuesday](#).



# 18

**Disaster responses in October. Clients helped: 56**



## MILESTONES

**KERRI STRASHEIM,**  
20 years

**TINA WILLIAMS,**  
10 years

**ERIN MADSEN,**  
5 years

**JAN NISSI,**  
5 years

**GERRY SHIMADA,**  
5 years

**KEITH CREVELING,** 5 years



## FOLLOW US

Thanks again to everyone who follows us on Instagram. And if you don't, please come check us out. For Red Cross news and updates visit [www.instagram.com/](http://www.instagram.com/)



Red Cross volunteer Cheryl Brower meets with Carol Cooper during October's Sound the Alarm event in Meridian. Volunteers and Red Cross partners made 132 homes safer over two days.

# 'Planting seeds of preparedness'

*Red Crossers, partners install smoke alarms in Meridian mobile homes*

Every day, seven people in the U.S. die in home fires. But Red Cross volunteers like Cheryl Brower are determined to change that by helping fellow Idahoans stay safe. She's served her community for more than five years through campaigns like the Sound the Alarm home fire safety event.

"My favorite stops are the homes with children," Cheryl said. "It's not only making them safer today, but maybe planting the seeds for preparedness for tomorrow."

On Oct. 20-21, dozens of volunteers helped homeowners in Meridian mobile home communities by installing free smoke alarms and sharing home fire safety information. Red Cross crews made up of volunteers like Cheryl visited 132 homes, far exceeding organizers' goal of 90.

Cheryl said that while home visits are usually short, the meaningful connections and relationships formed with residents will have a long-term impact.

"It's very rewarding to be in a neighborhood to visit folks who either can't climb that ladder anymore, or don't know

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Volunteers Adria Waters and Vicky Johns have some fun during the recent Meridian Sound the Alarm event.



Rick Applegate installs a smoke alarm in a Meridian home. Teams installed 284 free alarms.

# Red Cross CEO McGovern retiring

The American Red Cross announced recently that Gail McGovern will retire as president and CEO of the humanitarian organization on June 30, 2024, after more than 15 years at the helm. The Board of Governors elected Chief Operating Officer Cliff Holtz as the next president and CEO.

McGovern is the longest-serving CEO since Clara Barton.

"It has been the honor of my life to lead the American Red Cross and be part of an organization that serves millions of



Gail McGovern

people at times when they are at their most vulnerable. The extraordinary skill, compassion

and commitment I have seen in our more than 300,000 volunteers and employees across this country humbles me every single day," McGovern said.

"I could not be prouder of how we have stepped up to address the challenges of our time."

McGovern has led the organization through some of the worst domestic and international disasters in the world as the number and severity of disasters continues to grow. She

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# Volunteer to help those who serve

Learn volunteer opportunities, help spread the word about our need for duty officers and explore local Red Cross photos in this month's In the Know.

## IN THE KNOW



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

**POSITION OF THE MONTH:** Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to members of the military, veterans and their families in their preparation for, management of and response to the unique challenges associated with military service. The Red Cross offers a range of vital services, including:

- **Financial aid:** We provide 24/7 emergency financial assistance through partnerships with military aid societies.
- **Information and referrals:** Our services offer confidential connections to vital local, state and national resources for military members and their families.
- **Deployment support:** We assist with training, information, and emotional support throughout the deployment process.

■ **Emergency Communications:** During crises, we step in with emergency communication and vital services through our Hero Care Network.

■ **Resilience workshops:** Our Reconnection Workshops help military members with reintegration and resilience-building.

But we can't do it without our volunteers. To explore volunteer opportunities and learn more about how you

can get involved with our Service to the Armed Forces team, please visit [red-cross.org/volunteer](http://red-cross.org/volunteer) or email [jdmt.recruiting@redcross.org](mailto:jdmt.recruiting@redcross.org).

**MORE DUTY OFFICERS NEEDED:** Our region needs more duty officers to help our teams deliver help and hope during disasters including home fires.

As a duty officer volunteer, you will provide leadership and guidance by answering initial calls for temporary assistance, gathering vital information and dispatching disaster action team volunteers.

This is a virtual position, so you can contribute your skills and expertise

from your own home. Shifts are generally six hours each, and we ask for you to serve approximately one to two shifts per week. Visit [www.redcross.org/volunteer](http://www.redcross.org/volunteer) or email [IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org).

And please help us spread the word.

**RED CROSS PHOTOS:** Want to see pictures of Idaho, Montana and East Oregon Red Crossers in action in our communities? Come check out our Flickr account. We have more than 5,300 photos and videos posted. You might just find yourself or someone you know. Visit [www.flickr.com/photos/166244868@N08/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/166244868@N08/albums) to check it. Or visit [www.flickr.com/photos/166244868@N08/albums/72177720304287301](http://www.flickr.com/photos/166244868@N08/albums/72177720304287301) to see our Faces of Red Cross series, featuring volunteers, blood donors, blood recipients and families we've helped during disaster.

**Happy Red Cross Anniversary!**



**See your email for an invite to complete the Annual Volunteer Satisfaction Survey.**

Please consider giving us a 9 or a 10 when asked "How likely are you to recommend the American Red Cross to a friend or colleague as an organization where they can volunteer?" If you're hesitant to recommend the Red Cross as a 9 or 10, let us know what we can do to earn it in the future. Email [IDMTEOR.teamwork@redcross.org](mailto:IDMTEOR.teamwork@redcross.org).

# Two more join Red Cross workforce

Our region is pleased to welcome two new members to our team.

**ROB EDWARDS:** Rob Edwards is our new Disaster Program Manager for Southwest Montana.

Rob is a seasoned professional with a wealth of experience in volunteer management and senior management. With



more than 15 years of expertise in volunteer coordination within educational and older adult settings, he has honed his skills to serve his community.

In his most recent role as the director for Missoula Aging Services, Rob served as the community engagement director and operations manager, showcasing his leadership abilities. He devoted 10 years to this management.

Rob has also dedicated eight years to disaster response in Missoula County, where he served on committees, including Community Organizations Active in Disaster, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the Access and Functional Needs committee.

Rob holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Montana.

Rob enjoys spending time outdoors and cheering on the Grizzly football team with his wife, Dani, and their children, Maddie, Kenna, Brynne and Jared.

**JACOB JUNGWIRTH:** Jacob Jungwirth is our new volunteer engagement specialist,

Jacob moved to Missoula from Minneapolis last December. While attending the University of Minnesota where he

obtained a bachelor's degree in nutrition, Jacob joined the staff at the Ronald McDonald House near campus and fell in love with nonprofit work as well as volunteerism. After his time there, he joined a small startup nonprofit grocery store and helped form and run their volunteer program.



Jacob was originally introduced to Montana as a seasonal guide at the Ranch at Rock Creek in Philipsburg. He loves the outdoors where his hobbies include fly-fishing and skiing. He also enjoys playing tennis and soccer any chance he gets.

If he isn't outside, he is most likely at home hanging with his cat Misa, watching football or cheering on the Minnesota soccer team, the Loons.

# McGovern: Holtz will take the reins

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harnessed the power of technology to improve service delivery including developing a system to ensure the highest standards of blood safety. In addition, McGovern put the Red Cross on the path to financial stability.

"The American Red Cross has been transformed under Gail's brilliant leadership," Chairman of the Board of Governors Bonnie McElveen-Hunter said. "She has led the Red Cross with the one-of-a-kind combination of her heart and her mind, bringing her deep compassion and also the superb business skills to ensure our humanitarian mission continues to be a beacon of hope and help for

generations to come."

As chief operating officer, Cliff Holtz has overseen all mission delivery for the 142-year-old organization, comprising Blood Services, Training Services and Humanitarian Services.

"Cliff and I have worked closely since his first day here and during the past year we have prepared for my transition. He has been integral to our progress, and I have absolute confidence and trust in his ability to assume the reins with continuity and care," McGovern added.

Prior to joining the Red Cross, Holtz

held several executive leadership positions at for-profit companies including Pelco, Nortel Networks Corp, Deloitte Consulting LLP, Qwest Communications, Gateway Corporation and AT&T.

"Our world is changing faster than any of us have anticipated – from escalating climate-driven disasters to a rise in tragic mass casualty events, the growing need to increase and diversify our blood donor base and complex international crises," Holtz said. "People rely on us to be there. And it is my commitment to our country and to my colleagues that the Red Cross will be there for them, no matter what."

These leadership transitions will go into effect in July 2024.



Holtz



More than 45 Red Cross volunteers, employees and partners teamed up to make three Meridian mobile home communities safer from home fires. This was one of our region's largest Sound the Alarm events ever, making more than 130 homes safer.

# Alarms: Campaign saves lives

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that maybe they need to check those batteries and just to go in their home, spend 10 or 15 minutes, and know that they're going to be safer than when we walked in the door," she said.

Even before the installation event, dozens of volunteers canvassed neighborhoods and connected with households and park managers to introduce the Sound the Alarm program and garner interest.

Red Cross Regional Disaster Officer Director Scott O'Connell believes those relationships were key to the event's success.

"We couldn't do this without our amazing partners in these communities and for the volunteers who already set out," he said.

Members of the Meridian Fire Department also joined in both days. Deputy Fire Chief Jordan Reese said the work installation crews completed could make all the difference during a fire.

"Statistics are showing that almost 92 percent of houses do have smoke alarms in them, but the problem is they're not properly maintained," he said.

Reese also emphasized the risk of death in a home fire drops nearly 50 percent when there are working smoke alarms in the home.

"What you do today could potentially save somebody's life," he told volunteers.

Sound the Alarm has already made lifesaving impacts in Idaho and around the nation. More than 1,900 lives have been saved in the U.S. because of Sound the Alarm events like the one in Meridian. That included a family in Jerome, who safely escaped after their home burned several years ago.

Arlene Ankenman, who has lived in the Embassy Park mobile home community for more than 10 years, says



Red Cross volunteer Rick Applegate shares home fire safety information with Dennis and Diana Hamrick during the Meridian Sound the Alarm event. On average, people have just two minutes to escape their home safely during a fire.

Sound the Alarm gave her the opportunity to make much-needed updates to her home that will keep her community safe.

"Mobile homes are known to go up really fast so I'm just doing my protection not only for me, but for my neighbors," she said.

Arlene said the new alarms check one more thing off her list that she won't have to stress about. A crew replaced batteries in one alarm and installed three more. She was grateful for not only the new alarms, but the education and conversations with volunteers about staying safe during a fire, urging others to "Take advantage of this program!"

Cherry Lane resident Dennis Hamrick said he knows all too well the devastation fire can cause communities like his after a career in the fire service. He's continued helping others by becoming the mobile home park's maintenance man and ensures areas stay clean and safe.

While he appreciates the work fellow Cherry Lane employees do, Dennis was grateful for the added efforts from volunteers, saying "my coworkers and myself appreciate you coming in and

doing this."

Dennis and his wife live with his parents, who he says have a harder time seeing and hearing smoke alarms. He's thankful the installation crew made sure to install smoke alarms meant for people with hearing and/or eyesight challenges.

"It's very nice to have volunteers to install these for the elderly people plus other people that are not aware that this program exists," he said.

Volunteers, community partners and staff installed 284 smoke alarms over two days.

Volunteers like Cheryl not only focus on home fire prevention, but they're also there to deliver help and hope after a home fire. When residents face the toughest days of their lives, it's volunteers who offer assistance, bring resources and provide comfort. They are ready to respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

But, they can't do it alone. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, visit [redcross.org/volunteer](http://redcross.org/volunteer) and sign up today.

— Story and photos by Keeley Van Middendorp

