

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



## ON THE HORIZON

■ Dec. 3, [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#).

■ Jan. 6, Hanukkah ends.

■ Dec. 25, Christmas Day, and Clara Barton's 200th birthday.

■ Dec. 26, Kwanza begins.

■ Jan. 11, Idaho-Montana-East Oregon virtual volunteer recognition event, 7-8 p.m.

Look for more information in next month's RED ALERTS.



### 19

**Disaster responses** in November. **Clients helped:** 57



## MILESTONES

### December

**MARY MARTIN,** 15 years

**KARL AMES,** 5 years

**BARBARA DIAMOND,** 5 years

**LARRY GANIEANY,** 5 years

**JACK SMITH,** 5 years

# Afghan assistance



Idaho Red Cross volunteer Jim Findley worked with service members to load a truck with much-needed supplies for Afghan evacuees.

## Two lend a hand to evacuees who came to U.S. with little

Idaho Red Cross volunteer Cora Lee Findley never dreamed the gift of a single banana could leave such a lasting impression but that's what happened on a recent deployment near Chaparral, N.M., to help Afghan evacuees.

In September, Cora Lee and her husband Jim spent two weeks at the Doña Ana Range Complex, a dusty, windy military training site not far from Fort Bliss. There a village of 100 tents housed about 10,000 Afghans who had evacuated from their country during the U.S. military withdrawal.

At the request of the Department of Defense, the American Red Cross helped provide temporarily care for evacuees sheltered at military sites across the country. Many of the refugees are U.S. citizens or supported U.S. troops in Afghanistan and left their homes with little more than the clothes on their backs.

"A lot of these people had been more than two weeks in the clothes they arrived in, so they were pretty desperate," Jim said.

Cora Lee supervised the camp's baby center, which distributed items like diapers,

wipes and formula, and also oversaw the shoe resource center. Jim spent much of his time traveling through the camp via truck distributing clothing.

The majority of those items had been donated, and supply often could not keep up with demand.

People began lining up at the shoe resource center at 4 in the morning, even though it didn't open until 9. Inside, the shoes were sorted in boxes by size, sometimes with only 20 pairs of the most popular sizes available.

"In the first hour the shoes would all go and then we would have to close," Cora Lee said.

The refugees became so desperate they began to rush the door, and extra military personnel were brought in to control the crowds.

"This is for a pair of used shoes," Cora Lee said. "This is how desperate these people are for something."

As word got out about the tremendous need, more donations began to roll in. Volunteers called home asking their local churches

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# Still donating, six decades later

Rich Paul was at boot camp at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio in the early 1960s when an instructor came in with an announcement. There was a girl at the military hospital who had cancer, and they needed blood donors.

"He said, 'We'll give you the rest of the day off if you give blood now. So I raised my hand right away,'" Rich said. "It sounded like a good deal to me."

Six decades and 214 donations later, Rich is still raising his hand as a loyal Red Cross blood donor.

"Hell, I got lots of blood," he said. "If I could do something to help somebody it's just a gift as far as I'm concerned."

Eighty-three years old, Rich lives just west of Lincoln and donates at community drives there as often as he can. Fellow donors and the Red Cross crew know him well.

"It's like old-home week every 60 days," he said. "I walk in the door and



Rich Paul, 83, of Lincoln has been donating blood since the early '60s.

a good percentage of them say 'Hi Rich, I haven't seen you in a couple months.'

Rich's daughter, Dawn Charron, said her dad certainly draws a crowd.

"He gets plenty of hugs and kisses on a give-blood day," she said. "I'll let him tell you about that."

Sherry Sidell is the blood program

leader in Lincoln and helps organize the community drives. She said Rich is always lending his time to others, whether it's giving blood, climbing a ladder to help paint a house or using his incredible carpentry skills.

"He's a very amazing man and good

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# Well-known: ‘Big heart’

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friend of everybody in town,” she said. “He’s just got a very big heart.”

Rich spent almost 33 years as a guardsman with the Montana Air National Guard and 28 years as a civil service technician with the Guard. Besides Lincoln, he’s lived in Great Falls and has had a long list of employers including Caterpillar, the Anaconda Co., Albertsons and Riverside Machine Works. Through it all, he’s made helping others a key part of his life.

“Giving blood is kind of like walking down the street and seeing somebody who’s having a hard time and they need money or whatever and I’ll give it to them,” he said. “I’m also a good tipper.”

“It’s something that has made my heart feel good, and probably bigger, because of what I do. I’ve been that way

for 60-some years.”

Blood donation has been part of his family as well. His mother was a blood donor back in the ‘50s before she got sick, needing blood herself. Rich said he dreads the day when he’s no longer able to give.

“Some days I think ‘how much longer can I do this,’ and I’m concerned about it cause I don’t want that to sneak up on me,” he said. “When they tell me I can’t

give blood anymore, it’s going to hurt. It’s going to hurt my heart.”

For all he’s given others, Rich says he’s gotten back just as much along the way. That’s why he goes by Rich – and not his given name, Richard.

“The reason he’s been rich all his life isn’t because he’s got money or it’s his name,” Dawn said. “It’s because of all the people, places and things he’s had in his life. That’s what makes him rich.”

**PLEASE DONATE TODAY**

Never given blood before? It’s time to give it a try. A donation takes less than an hour and can save up to three lives. Plus, you get juice and cookies afterward. Learn more about donating blood and find a blood drive near you by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or by calling 800-RED-CROSS.



## Virtual positions available

Are you aware of how many virtual positions are available? Below are some to consider. Also, volunteers are encouraged to perform some act of public service for Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January, and don’t miss Ketchup with Friends on Dec. 14.

**VIRTUAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

The Red Cross offers a variety of virtual volunteer opportunities. They include educational outreach, client support, and administrative support. Below are a few showcased options. For a full listing, visit [www.redcross.org/volunteer](http://www.redcross.org/volunteer) and search “virtual”.

**Location:** The comfort of your home.

1. Service to the Armed Forces — Hero Care Caseworker. Are you ready to support those that serve our country?
2. Disaster Action Team Duty Officer. Duty Officer volunteers play a key role in disaster response.
3. Volunteer Services — Recruitment Volunteer: We help volunteers find the perfect opportunity for their interests.

**DAY OF SERVICE.** This January, the Red Cross of Idaho, Montana and

**IN THE KNOW**



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

East Oregon is launching the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. During the week of Jan. 17, we encourage everyone to take part in a volunteer activity or event that fits their interests and passions. Below are a few ideas.

**Be Red Cross Ready:** Be sure you can weather a crisis safely and comfortably yourself. Tune in to this 6 p.m. MST Be Red Cross Ready presentation on Jan. 17 to learn more.

Join on your computer or mobile app.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only) at +1 901-248-1330, 18200224#

Phone conference ID: 182 002 24#

**Donate Lifesaving Blood:** Find a blood drive near you and schedule an appointment to donate.

**Help Us With Social Media:** Share our posts and your stories from Facebook, and encourage friends and family to follow us. Thank you for your help.

**FUN EVENT.** All volunteers are invited to attend our event honoring and thanking volunteers. The event is Tuesday, Jan. 11, 7-8 p.m. (MST). An RSVP is requested.

To be prepared, volunteers have two opportunities to practice attending the meeting and having IT support.

The two practice events are:

- Tuesday, Jan. 4 at 5 p.m. (MST)
- Monday, Jan. 10 at 5 p.m. (MST)

Please follow this link:

[https://teams.microsoft.com/j/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_Yjc3YmJiNTYtNDQwMS00MzYwLTg5ZmEtNWZgZTg4YzI5MjYx%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%22dd5b5d42-c0d3-4ad2-b5f1-60edb3af2771%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22aeba9089-37ba-45db-af07-7a36390d5c67%22%2c%22isBroadcastMeeting%22%3atruel%7d&btype=a&role=a](https://teams.microsoft.com/j/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_Yjc3YmJiNTYtNDQwMS00MzYwLTg5ZmEtNWZgZTg4YzI5MjYx%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%22dd5b5d42-c0d3-4ad2-b5f1-60edb3af2771%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22aeba9089-37ba-45db-af07-7a36390d5c67%22%2c%22isBroadcastMeeting%22%3atruel%7d&btype=a&role=a)

**KETCHUP WITH FRIENDS, 2.0.**

Come continue our “family” event on Dec. 14 from 7:30-8 p.m.

If you come, you can win a WARM prize. November’s thankful prizes went to John McGrew and Bersabeh Zellele. [Click here to join the meeting.](#)

## Afghan aid: Helping make people whole

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to organize shoe drives. A professional runner, Jim and Cora Lee’s daughter used the equipment allowance provided by her sponsor to buy 32 pairs of new shoes for the camp.

One man even drove all the way from Illinois with 1,200 pairs of shoes in the back of his pickup, sorted and ready to distribute.

Early in her deployment, Cora Lee identified another pressing need and worked tirelessly to fill it. Parents of youngsters between the ages of 2 and 5 were asking for milk to help relax their children at night. But with a lack of refrigeration that wasn’t possible.

When they were younger, Cora Lee and Jim had spent 15 years living in the Middle East where they had come across a long-life milk product that didn’t require refrigeration. Cora Lee began talking with people at Doña Ana about it, but they either hadn’t heard of it or didn’t know where to get it.

“Eventually I figured if I talked to enough people somebody’s going to have something,” Cora Lee said.

Sure enough, someone from Armed Services YMCA came in one day and asked Cora Lee if there was a need that wasn’t being filled. Cora Lee explained what she was looking for, and the wom-



**Cora Lee Findley works at the Baby and Mother Resource Center helping displaced Afghans.**

an said they had just received three pallets of this milk product and they didn’t know what to do with it.

“She brought all three pallets over, and we made so many families so happy with this simple product, and I just felt good about that,” Cora Lee said. “I felt like I had made a difference.”

But it was something that one of the evacuees gave to her that will stick with Cora Lee the longest.

Many of the refugees coming to the baby resource center spoke Dari or Farsi, but the interpreter provided by the

military spoke only Pashtun. That military interpreter said she knew someone who could help if Cora Lee would accompany her.

The two made their way across camp and to the tent of the new interpreter. As they were preparing to leave, the original military interpreter ran back to her own tent and came out with a single banana.

“This is for you. Please take this, it’s all I can offer,” she told Cora Lee.

Cora Lee was blown away.

“Here are these people who have nothing, but they cannot have me go into their tent without offering me something. The day could not get better after that.”

This was the Findleys’ third Red Cross deployment together. In March, the Boise couple traveled to Dallas where they helped provide comfort and care to 2,500 unaccompanied minors sheltered at the Dallas Convention Center. Two years earlier, they volunteered in southeast Texas following Tropical Storm Imelda.

“I’m retired and I just want to get some value out of my time by helping others,” Jim said.

“To me, I feel somewhat selfish when I volunteer because I get so much out of it,” Cora Lee said. “I feel like I have a whole heart, and I’ve gained so much.”