

RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



ON THE HORIZON

■ **Black History Month**, February. Learn more [here](#).

■ **President's Day**, Feb. 15.



31

Disaster responses in January. Clients helped: 126



MILESTONES

DEBBIE LYLE, 25 years

MARTIN HEISIG, 10 years

ETHEL BARDWELL, 5 years

DIANNE BRUSH, 5 years

JEROMY CROSS, 5 years

ALEX EROLIN, 5 years

JAMES FINDLEY, 5 years

KIM HACKL, 5 years

KATHY LAVOIE, 5 years

TODD NEIGHBOR, 5 years



IN MEMORIAM

Former Red Cross volunteer **Charlie Hash Sr.** of Bozeman. He was 86. Read his full obituary [here](#).



Sherrilyn Hamilton is no stranger to disaster. In 2012, her Montana home in the Bull Mountains burned during the Dahl fire. The Red Cross was there to help. Now Sherrilyn is helping others in disaster's path. "I promised myself that if I could do that for someone else, then I would have accomplished something," she said.

Empathy and understanding

After losing her home to fire, Sherrilyn Hamilton knows just what other families are going through

After the Dahl wildfire tore through her ranch in the Bull Mountains near Roundup, Sherrilyn Hamilton and her husband, Kendal, were wiped out.

The 2012 fire burned 73 homes, among them Sherrilyn's. That's when the Red Cross went from an organization responding to some distant disaster to a person holding her hand and telling her everything was going to be OK.

"Everybody knows about the Red Cross assisting in disasters and blood drives, but the first-hand experience opened my eyes to what the Red Cross can do for one person, for a family," she said.

"I never forgot that. I promised myself that if I could do that for someone else, then I



Sherrilyn helped Shepherd-area families after a devastating hailstorm struck the community in 2019 and severely damaged 45 homes.

would have accomplished something," Sherrilyn said. "It was a small thing, but it brought me to tears. It still does when I think about it."

Sherrilyn joined the Red Cross in 2017 and recently stepped forward as the interim disaster

SEE EMPATHY, PAGE 2

From the donor chair to the driver's seat

It wasn't the quiet Saturday that Mike Bolts had envisioned.

He settled into a platelet donation chair at the Red Cross donor center in Boise, contemplating the football game he had anticipated watching that afternoon. Then he learned that the game had been canceled at the last minute because of COVID-19.

But at least he could spend a couple hours doing someone some good.

He shifted in his chair and

waited to begin his platelet donation.

At home his wife, Liz, picked up the phone. It was the Red Cross looking for Mike. There was an urgent need for a transportation specialist – a Red Cross volunteer who helps deliver blood products – and Mike was on that list.

"You're looking for Mike?" Liz asked the caller. "He's right there

SEE DELIVERY, PAGE 2



Mike Bolts was in the chair donating platelets when the call came in that blood products were needed to be delivered urgently to Enterprise, Ore., more than three hours away.

New volunteer opportunities

Read about some new volunteer opportunities, the return of Ketchup with Friends and courses that will help you be prepared in case of disaster in this month's IN THE KNOW.

IN THE KNOW



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Help us make compassionate calls to our military and veteran families through this virtual volunteer opportunity, open to all current Red Cross Idaho and Montana volunteers.

Volunteers will reach out to former Service to the Armed Forces clients to check on their health and welfare and to offer assistance. This can be done from the comfort of your home in February, and the schedule is flexible. Call when you can between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

This is a wonderful way to connect with our community for those who miss our client-facing events. To sign up or for questions, please send an email to Anthony.Trimarco@redcross.org.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS OF THE MONTH: Now is the chance to inspire the next generation of American Red Cross volunteers! We have several open lead positions needed to expand youth programs and youth engagement.

Volunteer Services - Youth Engagement Lead (virtual) — Works with the Volunteer Services team to support National Youth Strategy goals to educate and engage youth in the Red Cross. The lead encourages participation in monthly meetings, arranges educational opportunities and oversees projects to engage youth across the region. **Time commitment:** Approximately five hours a month.



International Services - Youth Action Campaign (YAC) Coordinator (virtual): — The coordinator works closely with youth to spread awareness of international humanitarian law and the rules of armed conflict. This volunteer teams with the Service to the Armed Forces program manager to develop the Youth Action Campaign program and establish YAC teams. **Time commitment:** Approximately 10–20 hours a month; 3-4 hours a week with youth teams during the implementation of the campaign (school year).

Want to add a position to your volunteer profile? Do you know someone that would be a great fit? Contact Gini at IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org or by phone/text at 406-493-8778 for more information.

KETCHUP WITH FRIENDS RETURNS: We are bringing back our virtual get together, Ketchup with Friends. A team of volunteers will facilitate a monthly virtual social gathering on Microsoft Teams. NO agenda, NO training, just good times meeting other Red Crossers. (Oh, and there might be a drawing or two.)

Be on the lookout for an upcoming invitation, but you can hold the first date:

Feb. 9, 7:30-8 p.m.
(Second Tuesday of every month at either 7:30 p.m. or noon).

The team would like to try both evening and afternoon times to determine what works best.

If you would like to be part of this team, please let Wendy McGrew know at wendy.mcgreg2@redcross.org.

ARE YOU READY FOR EMERGENCY? The Red Cross of Idaho and Montana offers several online classes to help you be prepared in case mayhem strikes. Classes below are free and available to volunteers and the public.

Watch our Facebook pages — <https://www.facebook.com/MontanaRedCross> and <https://www.facebook.com/RedCrossIdaho> — for registration information.

Be Red Cross Ready

This course teaches individuals how to “Be Red Cross Ready” for an emergency or disaster .

- Feb. 18, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- March 18, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Ready Rating (organizational emergency preparedness)

Facilitators will walk businesses, schools or organizations through the free Red Cross Ready Rating program. This simple, online, step-by-step program makes developing an Emergency Action Plan easy.

- March 4, 10 a.m.

Going forward, Ready Rating courses will be offered the first Thursday of the month at 10 a.m. Be Red Cross Ready courses will be the third Thursday of the month at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Delivery: Emergency call comes in

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at the center, donating, as we speak.”

Quickly, the worker found Mike, explaining that an emergency call had come in. Platelets were needed in Enterprise, Ore. Mike had made many deliveries, but Enterprise is a seven-and-a-half-hour round trip from Boise.

The phone lines were busy between the Red Cross Center and the Bolts home that day. Liz agreed to accompany Mike on the drive as soon as his own donation was complete.

No stranger to disaster and crisis situations, Mike spent 20 years of his professional career as a member of the National Catastrophe Team for Allstate Insurance. His team traveled across the country to places struck by national disasters.

When retirement time came around,

he wanted to continue helping others. He'd hoped to volunteer as a volunteer transportation specialist, but he had to wait until a position opened. In the interim, he chose to take disaster action team training.

Liz also understands the impact of disaster. In 2007, she watched as fire nearly destroyed the high school where she worked as a library volunteer. In 2008 she responded, becoming a commissioner at the Middleton Idaho Rural Fire Department.

Then, a few months after Mike began volunteering with the Red Cross, Liz joined her husband as a disaster action team volunteer. Now when the phone rings with a disaster call, they respond together.

As wildfires ravaged Oregon this past year, Mike volunteered at a Red Cross shelter near Medford — rather, that was

where he thought he was going and what he assumed he would be doing.

“But,” Mike says, “when you assist with the Red Cross, you step in wherever you are needed.”

Instead of Medford, he ended up in a Red Cross warehouse in Portland. No problem — he was willing.

While there, he took the opportunity to certify as a forklift operator, adding one more item to his list of certifications.

Clearly, helping comes naturally to Mike and Liz. As Red Cross volunteers, whether donating platelets, transporting vital blood supplies, helping families impacted by home fires or stocking shelves, they give of their time and energy however and whenever they are needed.

— By Red Cross writing team volunteer Ellen McKinnon

Empathy: Several disaster responses

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program specialist while a staff member deploys with the military.

Sherrilyn and her husband are emergency response vehicle drivers, and Sherrilyn is a driver instructor.

She's also volunteered in engagement, onboarding and placement, and disaster response.

The best part of her time as a Red Cross volunteer has been providing comfort and putting a smile back on someone's face in their times of trouble.

“When I'm there as a responder and I can leave a person in a better place

emotionally, it's hard to describe how much that means,” she said. “What I got from the Red Cross was hope. I got kindness and a sense of love, and that's what I strive to give back.

Sherrilyn responded to several disasters, among them September's BobCat wildfire outside of Roundup, the 2017 Rice Ridge fire near Seeley Lake, two fires near Eureka the same year, and the big hailstorm that hit Shepherd in 2019.

She brings to a disaster response a deep empathy and understanding.

“I really know better what they're really feeling — the loss, the fear and the confusion — because I felt all of those things right after the fire,” she

said. “When somebody sits there and says I've lost everything. Well, all we had were the clothes on our backs, too.”

Sherrilyn has worked on ranches and in the medical field and retired out of the HIPPA compliance and medical records department. She's excited to experience this new role and expects to be in the position through October.

“Being a volunteer is much different than being an employee, but so far it's been a good fit,” she said.

Reach Sherrilyn at sherrilyn.hamilton@redcross.org or by calling 406-331-0149.

— By Red Cross writing team volunteer Kristen Inbody