

ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

# XX

## 1987-91 SUMMARY OF AMERICAN RED CROSS ACTIVITIES

# VI

**Report to the XXVI International Conference  
of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**



**American Red Cross**

## **MISSION OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS**

The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization, led by volunteers, that provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. It does this through services that are consistent with its congressional charter and the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**

The American Red Cross was established in 1881 through the tireless efforts of Clara Barton, who saw the need to provide immediate personal service to the men in uniform during the American Civil War. The organization was officially chartered by the United States Congress in 1900 to meet the needs of the American people in times of calamity and was instrumental in the founding of the League of Red Cross Societies (now the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) in 1919.

Today, the American Red Cross, with its more than one million volunteers and 27,000 paid staff, provides an array of domestic and international services in a variety of areas, including health and safety, blood services, disaster relief and preparedness, services to the U.S. armed forces, and youth services.

The American Red Cross is primarily a volunteer organization whose nonprofit, nonsectarian activities and operations are financed by contributions from the American public. The organization's more than 2,000 active chapters and other field units are spread throughout the United States and its territories.

The emblem of the American Red Cross is a red cross formed by five equal squares on a field of white.

The American Red Cross national headquarters is located in Washington, D.C.

## **ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE**

The American Red Cross is governed by a 50-member volunteer Board of Governors. Eight of the governors, including the Chairman, are appointed by the President of the United States; 30 are elected by chapter delegates at the organization's annual convention; and 12 are elected by the Board itself as members-at-large. In addition, the President of the United States, who is Honorary Chairman

of the American Red Cross, designates one of the eight appointed governors as the principal officer of the organization and Chairman of the American Red Cross.

The American Red Cross also has a President (a position referred to in other Red Cross and Red Crescent societies as Secretary General), who is nominated by the Chairman and appointed by the Board of Governors. He or she is the chief executive officer of the organization and is responsible for carrying out the policies and programs adopted or approved by the Board of Governors.

The American Red Cross consists of both a national and a chapter sector. The national sector provides leadership, guidance, and technical assistance to the more than 2,000 active chapters located in communities throughout the United States and its territories. These local chapters are the primary deliverers of American Red Cross services.

The American Red Cross is currently being restructured as a result of a comprehensive two-year internal survey called Service Delivery 21 (SD21). The study has helped the American Red Cross to decide upon the best ways of delivering humanitarian services—both at home and abroad—as we head into the 21st century, and links the American Red Cross to the League's Strategic Work Plan for the 1990s.

## **HOW THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IS FINANCED**

The American Red Cross receives no special appropriations from the U.S. government, but does receive grants and other contracts in competition with other nongovernmental organizations. American Red Cross core activities and operations are financed through voluntary contributions from the American public. Chapters raise funds in affiliation with other organizations, in particular with the United Way of America. Some chapters conduct membership enrollment campaigns during the year. The American Red Cross also participates in a special Combined Federal

Campaign, which allows U.S. federal employees and military personnel to designate personal contributions to the American Red Cross.

Frequent or large-scale domestic disasters sometimes require the American Red Cross to conduct special disaster fund campaigns. For example, in the fall of 1989, the American people donated more than \$168 million to the American Red Cross Emergency Disaster Relief Campaign to help victims of Hurricane Hugo and the Northern California earthquake, two of the worst natural disasters to ever hit the United States. The money raised by this campaign was the most ever donated for disaster relief in the 110-year history of the American Red Cross. In addition, substantial donations were made by sister national societies, both bilaterally and through the League.

In addition to raising funds to help victims of domestic disasters, the American Red Cross, through the generosity of the American people, also plays a vital role in international disaster relief. In the past several years—whether it be a devastating typhoon in Bangladesh; volcanic eruptions in the Philippines; earthquakes in Armenia, Iran, Ecuador or Costa Rica; famine in Africa; or a crisis in the Middle East—the American Red Cross has been the conduit of tens of millions of dollars, in support of humanitarian aid to victims of these and other disasters outside its borders.

## **AMERICAN RED CROSS ACTIVITIES**

### ***Disaster Services***

The American Red Cross has been providing disaster services since 1881 and, in 1905, received a mandate from the U.S. Congress “to undertake relief activities for the purpose of mitigating the suffering caused by disaster.” Today, disaster relief services remains a core activity of the American Red Cross.

In 1990, for example, more than 78,000 American Red Cross volunteer disaster workers located in chapters nationwide responded to more than 55,200 domestic disasters (up from 43,700 in 1986)—including hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, other storms, fires, explosions, and transportation accidents. These trained volunteers, often working alongside expert American Red Cross paid disaster staff, provided nearly 800,000 victims with emergency care, including basic necessities such as food, clothing, emergency sheltering, blood and blood products, and other types of special assistance.

Between 1986 and 1990, American Red Cross expenditures for all disaster preparedness and relief activities, including foreign disasters, amounted to more than \$633 million, more than twice what was spent during the first half of the decade. As part of its ongoing effort toward improved efficiency, the American Red Cross continually evaluates its disaster relief operations.

The American Red Cross maintains an active computer list of disaster volunteers and their qualifications, called the Disaster Services Human Resources System. This system helps the American Red Cross immediately identify and dispatch experienced Red Cross workers to locations where they are most needed.

In addition, the American Red Cross is playing a lead role in the United Nations-sponsored "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" (IDNDR), part of an international effort to call public attention to the urgent need to reduce loss of life and property caused by natural disasters.

### *Health and Safety Courses*

American Red Cross instructors each year certify more than 7 million people in Red Cross health and safety courses. Since 1986, the American Red Cross has issued nearly 34 million first aid, CPR, and water safety certificates. Other family and community health courses offered

by the American Red Cross to both adults and young people include prenatal health education, child care, and home health courses. The purpose of these courses is to help make communities healthier, safer places to live and work.

In response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the American Red Cross has made AIDS education part of its public health initiative, becoming a leader in HIV/AIDS education. Since 1986, for example, the American Red Cross has collaborated with numerous other public and private sector organizations to reduce unreasonable fears about HIV and AIDS, to foster a compassionate and humane response toward those living with HIV infection and AIDS, and to help stop the spread of HIV infection.

In 1988, for example, the American Red Cross entered into a cooperative agreement with the National AIDS Information and Education Program (NAIEP), within the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, to develop and make available HIV/AIDS education to the general public. Throughout the entire second half of the 1980s, the American Red Cross has reached millions of people with its HIV/AIDS education materials and programs by producing brochures, posters, slide shows, and video tapes on HIV/AIDS; developing HIV/AIDS education programs to reach specific groups, including Black youth, Hispanic families, and workers at the work site; and making American Red Cross video tapes on HIV/AIDS available free of charge at many video outlets.

The American Red Cross shares these materials with the League.

### *Blood Services*

The American Red Cross operates one of the largest blood services in the world. Throughout its 52 Blood Services regions located throughout the United States, the American Red Cross—

- Collects, processes, and distributes approximately one-half the nation's supply of whole blood and blood products.
- Maintains a Rare Donor Registry of thousands of donors nationwide who provide rare blood to meet emergency situations.
- Researches and tests blood for various types of diseases.
- Lends technical assistance on blood identification and blood management to hospitals, their blood banks and medical staffs.

In the past five years, the American Red Cross has further improved the safety of the U.S. blood supply by implementing three new tests to detect hepatitis. The American Red Cross also introduced a new test to help screen out the HTLV-I retro virus from the blood supply.

In 1991, the Rare Donor Registry brought in its 20,000th rare blood donor and shipped nearly 1,500 units of rare blood to blood banks throughout the United States and abroad.

By 1993, the American Red Cross plans to transform its 52 Blood Services regions into state-of-the-art Blood Services operations.

### *Tissue Services*

The American Red Cross is the largest single tissue bank in the world, servicing both the United States and international markets.

The American Red Cross first offered tissue services at the local level in 1982. Since then, its Tissue Services has expanded nationally to 39 chapters, all of which are actively involved in providing both human tissue products and education pertaining to Tissue Services.

The American Red Cross, for example, educates the general public about the need for human tissue. It also educates professionals on how to use tissue and how to ask for tissue donations.



During 1991, the American Red Cross distributed over 52,000 tissue components—including bone, skin, heart valves, and connective tissue, such as tendons and ligaments —across the United States and overseas.

### *Services to the Armed Forces*

The nationwide network of community-based American Red Cross chapters provides a vital link between the men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.

For example, the American Red Cross provides—

- Emergency communications between U.S. military personnel and their families back home.
- Caseworkers who personally deliver these messages.
- Emergency financial assistance to help during critical times.
- Volunteers at military and veteran hospitals who aid in recovery and healing.

These services provide humanitarian relief and peace of mind to the servicemen and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, and in no way compromise the neutrality of the American Red Cross. During the Persian Gulf Crisis, for example, 156 American Red Cross staff members deployed in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq delivered more than 180,000 emergency messages for U.S. military personnel and their families.

### *Youth Services*

Nineteen-ninety-two marks the 75th anniversary of youth involvement in the American Red Cross. For three-quarters of a century the American Red Cross has been offering young people opportunities in volunteer community service and youth-oriented courses, including—

- Health and safety training in school.
- Young people leading peer education programs for other young people in HIV/AIDS and in drug and alcohol abuse prevention.
- Youth-sponsored blood drives.

- International youth exchanges.
- Programs to assist the elderly.

Despite these efforts, the American Red Cross began to see a dramatic decline in youth volunteers in recent years—from 224,000 in 1986 to 134,000 in 1988.

To attract younger volunteers into its ranks, in 1990 the American Red Cross launched the “Play Your Part” and “Another Chance” campaigns that reach out to college-age youth and young adults by promoting the rewards of volunteerism and blood donations. In one year, the number of American Red Cross youth volunteers (under age 18) increased by 23 percent, to 167,000.

In addition, in recent years the American Red Cross has revised its handbook for youth involvement and published a book titled “Volunteer Career Paths for Youth and Young Adults: A Mentor’s Guide.” It also sponsors an annual youth first aid competition in which winners are recognized at the American Red Cross national convention.

In celebration of the 125th anniversary of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the American Red Cross sent a delegation of five American youths to Solferino, Italy, and Geneva, Switzerland, to participate in Supercamp ‘89. In addition, the American Red Cross sponsored scholarships for 27 youth delegates from other national societies. In all, 521 Red Cross and Red Crescent youth delegates representing 132 nations participated in this historic event.

### *International Services*

The American Red Cross, as part of its Congressional mandate, offers a wide array of international services, including—

- Local community-based chapter activities that range from language banks to various kinds of assistance and services to foreign nationals, refugees, new citizens, and community ethnic groups. Chapters also play an inte-

gral role in disseminating information on international humanitarian law.

- International social services that help locate relatives of U.S. residents in foreign countries separated because of war, civil disturbance, disaster, or changing world conditions. It assists other societies in providing similar services.
- The promotion of international understanding by participating in League activities, the development of other national societies, youth exchange programs, and various projects that facilitate understanding among societies.
- Disaster relief by channeling financial aid, material, and personnel through the League and national societies to victims of disaster.
- Assistance to victims of international and civil conflict by assisting the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in upholding the Geneva Treaties and Conventions and in providing relief to victims of conflict.

For example, during fiscal year 1990-1991, the American Red Cross channeled more than \$17 million to assist countless people around the world in the aftermath of disasters; deployed 120 American Red Cross delegates on international assignments (four times as many as ever before); and opened the Holocaust and War Victims Tracing and Information Center to help victims of World War II locate and trace the lives of separated family members.

The American Red Cross also participates in many special projects related to international services.

In 1989, for example, the American Red Cross was awarded a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to establish pairings (sometimes referred to as "twin-nings" in other societies) between 20 American Red Cross chapters and 10 national societies in the Caribbean and 10 in southern Africa. The purpose of these pairings is to

enable both partners to benefit from program, material, and development/education exchanges. All pairings were successfully initiated and are currently underway.

## **AMERICAN RED CROSS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**

The current world situation has brought about a dramatically increased need and demand for public understanding and respect of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the Geneva Conventions, and their additional Protocols—and the part these laws have in protecting human life. The American Red Cross is playing an ever-increasing role in this area.

For example, the American Red Cross—

- In October 1988, received a major grant from the United States Institute of Peace to develop print and audiovisual materials to educate the American public about the fundamental principles of IHL and the role of the International Red Cross Movement. These materials, upon completion, will be distributed to American Red Cross chapters and field units to increase awareness at the local community level and also will be made available to members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- Participates in annual IHL seminars for diplomats sponsored by the ICRC at New York University in New York City and American University in Washington, D.C.
- Co-sponsors IHL seminars for law students.
- Provides orientation to IHL on an ongoing basis at regional and national American Red Cross conferences and conventions.
- Assists chapters to establish IHL speakers bureaus, local seminars, and youth programs, and to participate in the World Campaign for the Protection of War Victims.

In addition, SD21 reaffirmed the organization's commitment to international services, including the dissemination of information about IHL, and specifically the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols.

# **CORPORATE GOALS OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS**

July 1, 1991–June 30, 1997

1. The American people can expect the American Red Cross to deliver quality mission-related products and services in a consistent and responsive manner.
2. The American people can expect the American Red Cross to provide nationwide—
  - Disaster planning, preparedness, and education;
  - Prompt relief to victims of major disasters;
  - Emergency communication between members of the United States Armed Forces and their families and supporting casework management services; and
  - International tracing services.
3. The American people can expect the American Red Cross to be a leading provider of—
  - Prompt relief to victims of single-family disasters;
  - Information, referral, and financial assistance to members of the United States Armed Forces and their families;
  - First aid training;
  - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training;
  - Swimming and lifeguard training; and
  - HIV/AIDS education.
4. The American people can expect the American Red Cross to provide a reliable and adequate supply of blood, blood products, tissue services, and related biomedical products and services to meet the needs of those it serves, as well as to support corporate and regional biomedical research and development.
5. As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the American Red Cross will mobilize the support of the American people for international disaster relief and international humanitarian law.

6. American Red Cross products and services, governance and management, and paid and volunteer staff will reflect the diversity of the communities served.
7. The American Red Cross will adapt its volunteer development and management practices to reflect the changing needs of volunteers.
8. The American Red Cross will develop sufficient financial support by the American people to provide quality products and services consistent with its mission, and will continue to demonstrate fiscal responsibility and stewardship to the American people.
9. The American Red Cross will be a unified organization for its customers, clients, and contributors.

XX

VI



**American Red Cross**