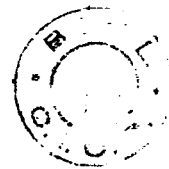


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Report of  
The American  
National  
Red Cross  
to the  
XXIIIrd  
International  
Conference  
of the  
Red Cross



Bucharest, Romania  
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## **INTRODUCTION—THE AMERICAN RED CROSS**

For more than 100 years the red cross on a field of white has been recognized by people and nations around the world as the universal symbol of help to mankind, in war and in peace. It is the emblem under which men, women, and children unite voluntarily to combine their resources to prepare for, prevent if possible, and alleviate the many kinds of suffering resulting from family, community, national, or international crises.

The Congress of the United States chartered The American National Red Cross to assume certain responsibilities in behalf of the American people, including alleviating sufferings caused by disasters, serving as a means of communication between members of the armed forces and their families at home, and carrying out the humanitarian purposes of the Geneva Conventions of the Red Cross.

The Congress specified that the powers of government, direction, and management at the national level be vested in an all-volunteer group of 50 democratically selected men and women. In more than 3,000 local units across the country, known as chapters, management is also in the hands of volunteer boards of directors.

Although the American Red Cross works closely with the government, there are no federal funds appropriated for its support. The American Red Cross depends upon memberships and other voluntary contributions from the American people to enable it to carry out the functions of its charter.

The Red Cross has earned its title of The Good Neighbor through the dedicated efforts of thousands of volunteers who daily give of their time, talents, and skills to help others in their communities so that they will be better places in which to live.

As the needs of the American people change, so do the Red Cross services provided to them. Since Red Cross programs are so diversified, the scope of the Red Cross is much broader than that of any other voluntary agency. There is hardly a problem area in this country in which the Red Cross is not involved in helping to solve.

## **SERVICES TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Last year—on American military installations and in hospitals around the world—the Red Cross provided 876,031 separate services to help servicemen and their families resolve personal and family problems in 799,122 cases (a case may require more than one kind of service).

Assistance to members of the armed forces is a responsibility given to the Red Cross by the Congress of the United States.

The principal Red Cross services to military personnel and their families are counseling, emergency communications, and financial assistance. The Red Cross assists military personnel in utilizing appropriate military and community resources to help resolve problems. Although financial assistance is required in only a small proportion of cases, it can be a vital resource, enabling service members and their families to deal with crisis at the time the help is needed.

The need for Red Cross services has not diminished with the establishment of the all-volunteer armed forces. Although the armed forces are not currently in a combat situation, many service personnel work with highly sophisticated weaponry, maintain complex and heavy hardware, and fly all types of aircraft. These are dangerous pursuits, even for competent and well-trained personnel.

Families are often separated. The all-volunteer armed forces have more married men than in previous years, and many of them are younger than their predecessors. All of these elements tend to produce situations with which service members and their families cannot always cope alone.

A vital part of Red Cross assistance to service personnel and their families is its nationwide communications network, which is tied in with overseas military communications. On an average day last year, more than 2,000 messages flowed to and from Red Cross chapters and overseas military installations through high-speed facilities at the Red Cross national headquarters in Washington, D.C. At the same time, there were thousands of messages each day sent between chapters and military installations in this country.

Each month, there are nearly 4,500 messages sent by chapters to AMCROSS in Washington, asking for emergency services such as locator information for military personnel in transit and emergency messages to be sent to service members aboard ships at sea or at small isolated bases in remote parts of the world. These crucial messages receive high priority in handling.



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An extension of Services to the Armed Forces is that of helping veterans and their families or survivors to be aware of and to obtain government benefits to which they are entitled. Last year, through the combined efforts of trained staff located in chapters and in Veterans Administration regional offices, 234,707 various types of service were given, involving educational benefits, disability compensation, pensions, insurance, medical care, and changes in type of discharge. Helping veterans have their less-than-honorable discharges reviewed and upgraded is a service not only to the veteran but also to the community.

## **DISASTER SERVICES**

Disasters do not keep business hours. They occur at any hour—at night or on weekends. Over the past 5 years there has been an average of nearly 29,000 disasters a year to which the Red Cross responds with all its resources to alleviate the sufferings of the victims of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, fires, explosions, hailstorms, windstorms, and snowstorms.

The year 1977 has seen heavy outlays for relief assistance to thousands of victims of winter storms and spring flooding. But the preceding fiscal year, which ended June 30, 1976, was the costliest in the history of Red Cross disaster activities. Total expenditures, which included disaster preparedness and training, amounted to



\$42,259,417. Emergency assistance was given to more than 320,000 individuals, and almost 108,000 families were helped by the Red Cross to resume the pattern of their normal lives.

Among the major disasters during the 1976 fiscal year were Typhoon Pamela, which devastated Guam and the Mariannas; Hurricane Eloise, which hit Puerto Rico and the coasts of Florida and Alabama, then swept northward along the East Coast; the Teton Dam break in Idaho; floods and tornadoes in Oklahoma; and flooding in Houston, Texas.

Thousands of volunteers and staff, many with specialized disaster training, cared for victims in shelters, in mobile feeding and first aid units, and in a variety of other ways. Red Cross disaster care covers food, shelter, clothing, medical and health assistance, blood and blood products. It can also include replacement of essential household furnishings, prescription drugs and prosthetic devices, occupational tools and supplies, and funds for rent or emergency repairs to make homes livable again.

The Red Cross also assists victims in obtaining additional disaster assistance from government agencies and other resources and handles welfare inquiries from concerned out-of-town relatives.

The congressional charter of 1905 assigned to the Red Cross the responsibility of caring for victims of disaster, a role that continues to be recognized in current legislation. The Red Cross has specific

Statements of Understanding with the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration and the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency, and works closely with other voluntary agencies, as well as federal, state, and local governments, to ensure coordination in disaster preparedness and relief operations. The federal government, however, still expects the American Red Cross to take the lead in immediate response to the needs of disaster victims.

In addition to thousands of trained volunteers, Red Cross resources in disaster include paid staff with years of experience in this field and strategically placed emergency vehicles, communications equipment, and supplies.

Funds spent by the Red Cross on disaster assistance not only benefit the victims and their families but also assist in the economic recovery of the stricken communities.

## **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

Without the thousands of Red Cross volunteers who give generously of their time and talents to help others, many activities so vital to the well-being of our communities would not be possible.

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Men, women, and young people serving through the Red Cross find satisfaction in being The Good Neighbor in a variety of ways. Red Cross volunteers are found in community hospitals and Veterans Administration health-care facilities, in clinics and nursing homes and health centers, in mental institutions and child-care centers, in prisons and probation departments, and in many other programs designed to meet special community needs.

Some volunteers work in groups. Others find a one-to-one relationship with a prisoner, a juvenile offender, or an elderly person a more effective means of helping.

Last year, in more than 1,000 chapters, Red Cross volunteers served in hospitals and clinics, over 700 chapters provided transportation services, and more than 400 chapters provided programs for the physically and mentally handicapped.

Red Cross services to the elderly have expanded considerably during the past few years. Many older persons are able to maintain their independence in their own homes or apartments because Red Cross volunteers are available for friendly visiting, daily telephone reassurance calls, and shopping services. The Red Cross also assists in group meals-on-wheels.

For many senior citizens, transportation has become a major problem. Red Cross volunteer drivers take them to church, to clinics and doctor's appointments, to stores for shopping, and to recrea-



tional events. In some chapters, the Red Cross provides transportation for older persons who participate in foster grandparents programs or similar programs.

Many Red Cross programs in the community have evolved in an effort to meet specific needs. To enable other chapters to institute similar programs to meet similar needs, the Red Cross national headquarters in Washington maintains a Chapter Program Exchange that details nearly 1,000 different programs that have successfully met community needs. This information is available to Red Cross chapters throughout the country.

On the national level, relationships are developed with other national organizations that share with the Red Cross a concern for unmet needs in the community. On a local level, Red Cross chapters cooperate closely with other private groups, government agencies, churches, and other institutions.

Red Cross assistance during the unprecedented winter of 1977 would not have been possible if it had not been for the thousands of volunteers who left the comfort of their own homes to ensure that others would not suffer.

## **BLOOD PROGRAM**

From the 58 Red Cross regional blood centers, more than 4,000 hospitals, clinics, and blood banks received 6,697,945 units of blood and blood products for patient treatment during the past year.

Total services given by the Blood Program, however, transcend regional boundaries. For example—

The National Red Cross Blood Preference Laboratory assisted blood centers and hospital blood banks in solving some 1,000 problems relating to identification of antibodies in blood, to crossmatching blood, and to providing rare blood for patients.

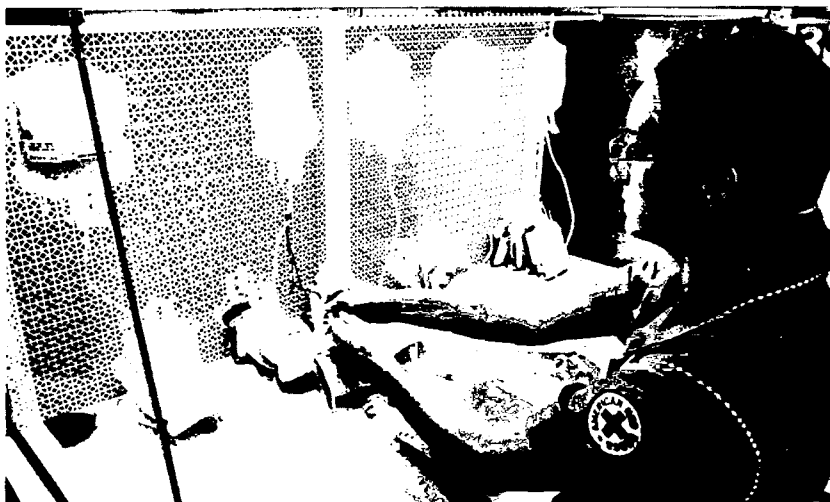
The Red Cross provided supplies of immune serum globulin to communities threatened with outbreaks of infectious hepatitis. The blood derivative was used to inoculate persons exposed to that disease.

In 133 Veterans Administration Hospitals throughout the country, patients received blood and blood products from Red Cross centers.

Chapters assisted non-Red Cross blood centers in recruiting volunteer donors.

Non-Red Cross blood centers also benefit from the research carried out at the Red Cross National Blood Research Laboratory at Bethesda, Md., and at regional centers. Among the key areas probed last year were hepatitis incidence and transmission studies, electronic data system applications in blood service, identification of rare blood factors, and improved methods of preparing plasma protein fractions to treat or control disease.

Blood centers across the country will benefit from improvements in mobile collection equipment including beds, nurses' stations, storage containers for blood, and other necessary equipment and supplies.





The Red Cross continues to cooperate actively through the American Blood Commission with other concerned groups and organizations, as well as with the government, in implementing the National Blood Policy of the United States. These collaborative efforts are directed toward ensuring that the safest blood is available at all times—to all who require it—at the most economical cost. This cooperation will benefit patients in hospitals throughout the nation.

The Red Cross Blood Program is financed principally from fees paid by hospitals that receive blood and blood products from regional centers. Hospitals pay the basic costs required for the collection, processing, and distribution of blood and blood products that are provided to them, and, in most cases, the hospitals pass cost-recovery charges on to the patients. Such charges are often covered by patients' hospitalization insurance. **THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THE BLOOD ITSELF.**

## **INTERNATIONAL SERVICES**

Because of the diversified ethnic and national backgrounds of the American people, there is hardly a conflict or a disaster in any part of the world that does not affect someone in this country.

When tragedies occur, the Red Cross is often the only means of communication between concerned persons here and their relatives abroad.

Recent events in Lebanon, Guatemala, Angola, Cyprus, Chile, Ethiopia, Southeast Asia, and many other parts of the world have brought home to many Americans the vital role that the Red Cross plays in international communications.

The Office of International Services (OIS) at Red Cross national headquarters in Washington is able to provide international communications through its ongoing relationships with 122 national societies (including the Magen David Adom in Israel), the League of Red Cross Societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In time of disaster, in addition to providing communications, the Office of International Services transmits the generous contributions of the American people to the national society of the country involved in the disaster. OIS coordinates its efforts with those of the League of Red Cross Societies in identifying specific kinds of help needed and putting requests into proper channels.

Americans detained abroad by circumstances beyond their control also receive Red Cross assistance in the form of mail and packages transmitted through the International Committee, which also

negotiates on behalf of the detainees.

During the past year, the American Red Cross continued its efforts with the International Committee and the United States government to assist in effecting reunions of American men and their wives and children in Vietnam.

On the basis of reciprocal arrangements with certain national societies, Americans hospitalized abroad may have their blood needs met by the local Red Cross, and the American Red Cross provides blood needed by citizens of those countries when they are hospitalized here.

An American tourist on a visit to another country became so seriously ill that he was at the point of death. Special medicaments were forwarded to the national society in that country by the American Red Cross. The patient recovered sufficiently to be able to return to the United States by plane.

In local communities, new Americans—such as the thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia—are assisted by Red Cross chapters through their International Services Committees. Their services range from helping new families learn the resources of the community to aiding them in obtaining citizenship papers.

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Many chapters maintain “language banks”—lists of bilingual volunteers who can be called upon to interpret if foreign visitors or residents are involved in an emergency.

Red Cross societies exchange technical information through visits, correspondence, and consultation on such varied subjects as disaster training, safety services, blood recruitment, and youth and adult volunteer leadership.

## **YOUTH SERVICE PROGRAMS**

Last year approximately 6,300,000 young people found ways of using their talents and skills to serve others through the Red Cross or by participating in Red Cross programs in school.

Across the country, chapters offer a wide variety of projects for both elementary school students and older youth.

Elementary school programs focus on service to others, health and safety, and intercultural and international relationships. Through first aid and water safety and mother's aide courses, boys and girls learn and practice health and safety rules. They also develop concern for improvement of the environment, as well as good nutrition and accident prevention. Through the Red Cross, young people help to alleviate the loneliness of the elderly by “adopting” grandparents and by sharing creative materials, companionship,

and talents with the hospitalized, the handicapped, and the aged. They become acquainted with youth in other parts of the United States and overseas by sharing tokens of friendship and ideas through varied means of communication. They also learn leadership skills through their service activities.

For young people in junior and senior high schools, the Red Cross provides an opportunity for action-oriented school and community projects such as individual work and teamwork in hospitals, nursing homes, preschool centers, and recreation sites. Young people also serve in blood donor recruitment efforts. In-school projects include "adopting" community agencies and meeting their specific needs, giving community services as a part of schoolwork or course requirements, and promoting health and safety programs for the student body and the community.

Guidance for these activities is provided by councils, clubs, or student organizations, which may be school or community based. Many high school youth find leadership training centers a rewarding experience.

International student exchanges enable high-school-age youth to work with other Red Cross societies and to host foreign Red Cross youth volunteers.

Red Cross chapters offer students, educators, youth groups, and



schools the American Red Cross Health and Safety Service Awards that are presented for excellence of health and safety programs extending beyond the classroom and for outstanding student leadership in health and safety projects.

Reflecting the Red Cross concern for young people in the community are three new courses under development at national headquarters. Two deal with alcohol abuse, and the third is designed to help youthful offenders find useful ways to serve their communities.

During 1977, 25 chapters will test and evaluate a new Red Cross course in emergency first aid for educably retarded persons. The course features instruction through the use of games, word association, and much repetition.

## **COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL AND SAFETY PROGRAMS**

### **Safety Programs**

10 Skills in first aid, small craft safety, and water safety can help families avoid suffering or death caused by accidents and can enable them to cope with such misfortunes when they occur. Safety Programs courses, textbooks, and films teach such skills, making it possible through self-help for everyone to lead safer, happier, and more productive lives.

Last year, 2,575,378 certificates were awarded in 312,604 water safety courses; 1,891,140 certificates in 132,738 first aid courses; and 65,790 certificates in 6,137 small craft safety classes. More than 346,000 instructor authorizations were awarded in these courses.

Certificates in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) were awarded to 191,026 successful candidates. Many of the several hundred thousand cardiac deaths that occurred last year (most of which occurred outside a hospital) could have been prevented if basic life-support emergency treatment had been given in the first few seconds after cardiac arrest. The CPR course develops awareness of early warning signs, risk factors, and symptoms.

The new modular method of CPR instruction, while not replacing the lecture and discussion format, enables the Red Cross to reach a larger segment of the community with this important training. Students pace themselves through the instruction, thus assuring a high level of standardization, retention, and proficiency.

The Red Cross has now developed a booklet, *First Aid for Foreign Body Obstruction of the Airway*, that details steps to be taken to assist victims of "cafe coronary"—asphyxiation and possible



death from an airway obstruction—usually caused by food.

Based on a special report submitted to the Red Cross by the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, a booklet and a home poster were developed in April 1977 to provide new first aid information for poisoning victims.

Two textbooks—*Standard First Aid and Personal Safety* and *Basic Rescue and Water Safety*—have been translated into Spanish. The textbook *Adapted Aquatics*, used for training instructors and as a reference text in aquatic activities for disabled persons, is now available.

Small craft safety educational activities have been expanded, and the Red Cross continues to enjoy a large measure of cooperation from boating industries, which consign equipment for use in small craft safety classes. A new textbook on *Canoeing* has been completed; an instructional leaflet, *Whitewater in an Open Canoe*, is now available, as is a film on the same subject, *The Uncalculated Risk*. A related film, *PFD—Personal Flotation Devices*, is also available.

In addition to the 451,479 formal safety programs conducted during the past year, the Red Cross has provided a variety of types of safety information to many millions of Americans through news stories, radio and television, magazine articles, films, and demonstrations of safety techniques.

## **Nursing and Health Programs**

Self-help courses offered by Red Cross Nursing and Health Programs are designed to teach skills that enable individuals to care for ill family members at home and to provide knowledge that helps persons improve and maintain good health for themselves and others.

Red Cross courses include—

Providing Health Services in Disaster, designed to help chapters meet the health needs of their communities most effectively in time of disaster.

Vital Signs modular courses, which teach how to take temperature, pulse, respiration, and blood pressure.

Health in the Home, which teaches skills in caring for family members who are ill or injured, as well as the aged and the handicapped.

Preparation for Parenthood, which covers the prenatal period and teaches expectant parents how to care for the new baby during the first year.

12 Mother's Aide, designed to teach teenagers and preteens how to care for younger children.

Good Grooming, which teaches basic grooming, health, and hygiene.

Multiple Sclerosis/American Red Cross Home Care Course, de-



veloped in conjunction with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, designed especially to teach skills to the family or caretaker of Multiple Sclerosis patients.

All of these courses may be—and are—modified to meet the needs of special groups such as migrant workers, Spanish-speaking persons, American Indians, or handicapped people.

Other community agencies use Red Cross courses to train home health aides, persons employed in private homes to care for the ill, and aides in nursing homes.

Through the Red Cross, registered nurses, practical or vocational nurses, and nursing students serve in disasters; in the Blood Program; in immunization, hypertension, drug, or venereal disease clinics; in emergency aid stations; in sight, hearing, speech, or glaucoma clinics; and in other community health-care and health-maintenance projects.

Last year, 1,317 nurses served on national disasters; 9,344 registered nurses, 598 licensed or vocational nurses, and 866 nursing students were assigned to chapter disasters. More than 70,300 nursing volunteers provided a wide variety of chapter and community services for 4,479,157 individuals, and 528,144 certificates were issued to persons completing nursing and health education courses.

## **MEMBERSHIP AND FUND RAISING**

For the past 95 years, the American people have given generously to sustain the service activities of the American Red Cross. Their spirit of volunteerism—in terms of financial support and hundreds of thousands of hours of time contributed each year—have enabled the Red Cross to be The Good Neighbor to the nation.

Membership in the American Red Cross can be obtained by the contribution of one dollar; however, there are several classes of membership for higher contributions. As a member, a person may vote at the annual meeting of the local chapter and participate in the election of officers. Members also receive information of value throughout the year.

Of the organization's more than 3,000 chapters, approximately 1,600 (including all of the larger ones) raise funds in partnership with the United Way or other cooperating groups. During these fund campaigns, Red Cross chapters provide volunteers, staff, resources, and equipment to help make the United Way drive a success.

Other chapters not in partnership conduct membership campaigns during March, which annually is proclaimed Red Cross Month by

the President of the United States, who is the Honorary Chairman of the Red Cross. Some chapters that have not received sufficient funds through cooperative efforts to meet their requirements also have March campaigns.

Unusually frequent or large-scale disasters and other national emergencies sometimes require the Red Cross to conduct special fund drives in order that it can give the services to disaster victims called for by its congressional charter.

Depending upon the magnitude of the disaster operation, each chapter may be assigned a fair share quota to be raised.

Although most of the funds for support of the Red Cross come from individual contributions from the American people, some income is derived from legacies, trusts, and similar gifts. The Red Cross receives some grants from foundations and the government and enters into contracts with government agencies to achieve mutually beneficial objectives.

Financing for the American National Red Cross and all of its chapters is done collectively, since Red Cross services offered to the American people are all interrelated and must be consistent. The national organization develops campaign materials and supplies, training courses, and informational brochures and provides professional guidance to assist chapters in raising funds and enlarging their Red Cross membership.

Funds shared with the national organization enable it to represent the interests of all chapters in the programming and planning of the nation-wide United Way or other federated fund-raising efforts in which the Red Cross is a partner.

The expenditure of Red Cross funds is managed by its volunteer leadership—at the national level by the Board of Governors, at the chapter level by volunteers who serve on boards of directors.

The Red Cross charter and bylaws provide that its financial transactions be audited annually by the Department of Defense as well as by a recognized firm of certified public accountants. The audit report of the Department of Defense is submitted to the Congress of the United States.

The strength of the American Red Cross comes from three important areas—the unity of the entire organization, the willingness of its volunteers to serve, and the financial support from the American people. These factors, combined with 95 years of experience, enable the Red Cross to continue its only mission—to serve the people of the United States not only in disasters or war but also in day-to-day pursuits that make this country a better place in which to live.