

American Red Cross: A Season of Giving Gets New Meaning



By Susan Burnell

Stories about disasters and emergencies move people to give to the American Red Cross. A family is housed after a fire. Survivors get help following a hurricane or tornado. Patients receive lifesaving blood. These are just some of the services that the Red Cross offers. The Red Cross is working to show donors that their donations have far greater impact than they may realize.

“Our donors need to hear how their support makes a difference in people’s lives after disasters and in many other ways,” says Neal Litvack, Chief Development Officer of the Red Cross. “For example, one donation of blood can help save up to three lives. The Red Cross collects and distributes about 40 percent of the nation’s blood. Donations help us train people in CPR, first aid, babysitting and aquatics safety, and lives are saved as a result of that training.”

The Red Cross launched its campaign, “Give Something That Means Something,” in 2011. Last year, monetary donations to the Red Cross during the holiday season were up by about 33 percent. “We believe that we’ve tapped into something very meaningful,” Litvack says. “Particularly during the holiday season, people feel a need to think differently about how they’re giving gifts.”

This year, the organization is expanding its holiday card program for military members and their families. “Receiving a handwritten note on a card really means something to service members who are unable to be with their families during the holidays. Last year, we collected 1.8 million holiday cards for U.S. troops and their families,” says Litvack. “This year, we’re incorporating social media. People can make a video greeting card, then post it to Instagram or Vine with the hashtag #HolidayMail. Those greetings will go up on our Red Cross blog so that any hospital, military base or veteran’s center can easily share the stream of videos with the military community.”

The Red Cross also seeks ongoing and reliable giving through its Annual Disaster Giving Program (ADGP) for corporate donors. Corporations have rallied around this program by committing to help the Red Cross prepare for and respond to disasters through an annual gift instead of giving episodically or after a disaster. The program has grown significantly, and 78 corporations now donate \$500,000 or more annually as ADGP members. Last year, the program maintained a 94 percent retention rate.

“Financial contributions are just one piece of the deep partnerships that the Red Cross has with corporations,” explains Litvack. “About a quarter of our corporate donors also host blood drives for us. They purchase Red Cross CPR and first-aid courses so that their employees know how to respond to emergencies at home or at work. Some corporations also help through programs in which they compensate employees for time spent volunteering for the Red Cross and other organizations.”

Corporations can also offer the Red Cross their ideas and expertise. “Loaned executives, for example, will help on an IT project or lend their expertise to help our organization run more effectively,” says Litvack.

The Red Cross works hard to make every donation count. “On average, 91 cents out of every dollar we spend is invested in our humanitarian services and programs,” says Litvack. “We work to ensure efficient use of resources—both paid and volunteer—and use our size and scale to make the most of every dollar our donors entrust with us.”

“Committed corporate partners are instrumental in helping the Red Cross deliver our mission,” Litvack says. ■

About Our Holiday Partners

The American Red Cross is grateful for the support of our corporate partners that generously contribute to our Holiday Giving Campaign. They include: Circle K and its customers in the West and Florida divisions; Community Safety Foundation, funded by CSAA Insurance Group, a AAA Insurer; Mazda and its dealers nationwide; and University of Phoenix. Thanks to the generosity of these and other sponsors, the Red Cross is able to carry out its mission of helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies every day here and around the world. Each holiday season the Red Cross gives everyone the chance to support our work by giving blood, signing a card for military heroes or buying a gift through our holiday catalog.

The first 50 readers to donate at least \$100 to the Red Cross through www.redcross.org/forbes between November 30, 2013, and December 31, 2013, will receive an iPad cover from Forbes.*

*Receipt of an iPad Cover may reduce the amount of a donor’s tax deduction for the donated amount.

Your gift of any size will support the lifesaving mission of the American Red Cross, whether it’s responding to a disaster, collecting lifesaving blood, teaching skills that can save a life, or assisting our military members and their families.

We lost everything in a fire.



The Red Cross
gave us hope.



On a cold morning, the Red Cross was there for Angelina and her family with shoes, warm clothes and shelter. Every 9 minutes, we help a family after a home fire.

*This holiday, give something
that means something, to someone like*

Angelina

American Red Cross

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