



# Bringing Help, Bringing Hope

The American Red Cross Response to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma





### **Our Mission Statement**

The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, will provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.

### **Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement**

Humanity ▪ Impartiality ▪ Neutrality ▪ Independence ▪ Voluntary Service ▪ Unity ▪ Universality



# Your Help Brought Hope

Some images do not fade.

There was a house in an intersection in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans the first time I was there after Hurricane Katrina. A whole house. In the road. A block away from its foundation.

About 12 miles away, in St. Bernard Parish, I saw swamp grass scattered on the roofs of two-story homes. Swamp grass on rooftops, block after block.

And about 60 miles away, in Pass Christian, Miss. I saw sets of concrete stairs leading nowhere, silent reminders of porches that no longer welcomed people to homes that no longer existed.

At the same time, I saw Red Crossers loading feeding vans with hot meals for people who had no way to cook. I talked with people who had just returned from Red Cross shelters in school gyms and community centers across the country.

Help was there.

A few months later, I stood in the kitchen of an elderly, disabled man. Other than the fresh paint, there was no evidence of the tree that Katrina had driven through his roof. It had been repaired through the persistence of a Red Cross case manager and generous local partners.

Help was there, too.

A few years later, I sat in a high school classroom and listened to a counselor funded by the Red Cross give students tools they needed to cope with the trauma they had experienced.

Help was there, as well.

As the 2005 hurricanes unfolded, nearly a quarter of a million people dropped what they were doing and came to help people they did not know. Millions of people gave money—a record of nearly \$2.2 billion—to help.

Thanks to this record-breaking support, survivors of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma could feed their families, buy essential medications, and have a safe, dry place to ride out the storm. Thanks to that support, survivors received the care necessary to rebuild their homes and communities, and to restart their lives.

Thanks to you, help was there.

And thanks to your help—despite the devastation—hope was there. Hope was there for the people of New Orleans... for the people of St. Bernard Parish...and for the people of Pass Christian. From Texas to Florida, hope was there for all of the people whose lives were turned upside down by the 2005 hurricanes.

In these pages, I am proud to share other images that will not fade: portraits of families and Red Crossers whose stories illustrate the power of help and of hope.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Paulsen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Russ Paulsen  
Executive Director  
Hurricane Recovery Program  
August 2010

Cover photo, top: Children participate in VIET afterschool program. Bottom: A mural in Broadmoor, a New Orleans neighborhood affected by Hurricane Katrina, serves as a symbol of hope. Inside cover: After Hurricane Wilma, residents near Davies, Fla., line up for food.

# The Storms: Devastation and Response

*“If it wasn’t for the Red Cross, I would not have had any food, water, a place to sleep or a place to take a shower. I wouldn’t have had anyone to talk to in the middle of the night, when I needed to.”*

– Myron Johnson, New Orleans, La.

## An Unparalleled Challenge

Since 1881, the American Red Cross has been at the forefront of disaster relief, serving as the nation’s leading independent, nonprofit humanitarian organization. In a typical year, the Red Cross is called upon 70,000 times in the United States to help a family in need after a disaster.

But nothing has tested the ability of the Red Cross to serve the American people more than the 2005 hurricanes.

Hurricane Katrina was unprecedented in its size and in the scope of the response required by the Red Cross. Simply put,

it reset the bar on what a “big” disaster looks like in the United States:

- Katrina was the first storm to force residents of an entire metropolitan area to evacuate and be unable to return home for months;
- It was the first disaster to result in disaster victims dispersed to nearly every state, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands;
- Never before had disaster survivors been served more than 1 million Red Cross meals in a single day; and
- It marked the first single disaster after which more than 1 million families received emergency assistance from the Red Cross.



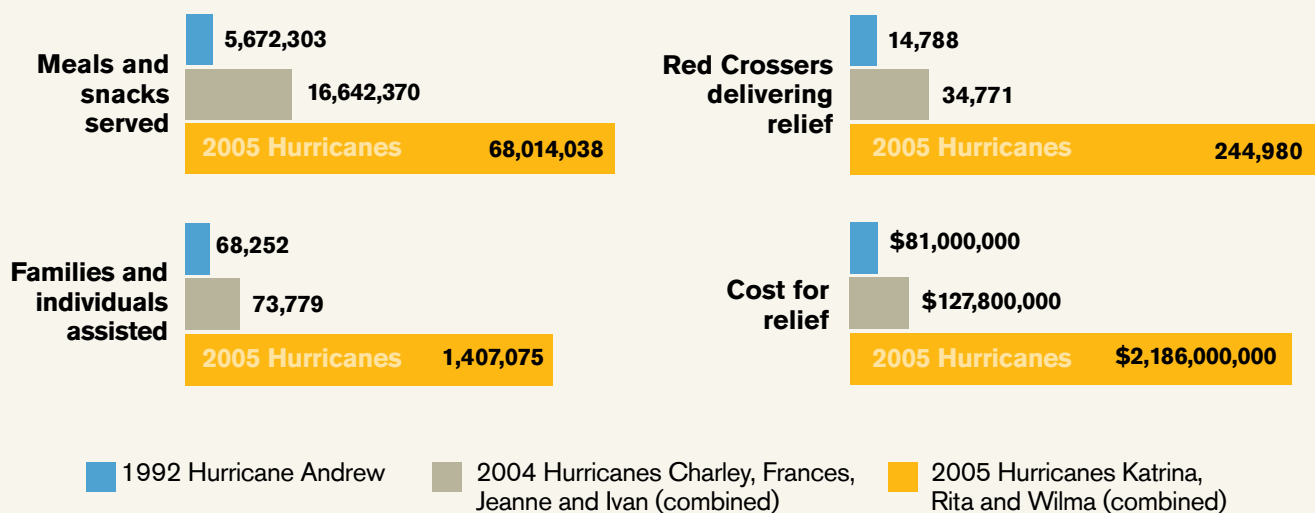
Red Cross volunteers in the Houston Astrodome prepare for the arrival of Katrina evacuees.

Daniel Cirna/American Red Cross

## Before Landfall

At the earliest sign of a tropical disturbance, the Red Cross began closely monitoring what eventually became Hurricane Katrina. The Red Cross National Disaster Operations Center in Washington, D.C., operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Using cutting-edge technology, the center’s staff monitors disaster activity around the country, serves as a point of contact for the federal

## The Red Cross Response to Major Hurricanes



government and coordinates the organization's response to a disaster. Even before Hurricane Katrina made landfall, hundreds of trained Red Cross disaster teams moved swiftly to ready shelters and emergency supplies. As part of its preparations for the storm, the Red Cross dispatched nearly 200 emergency response vehicles (ERVs) from 48 states, pre-positioned several mobile kitchens to prepare hot meals and opened hundreds of shelters for evacuees.

### Meeting Critical Needs

The hurricanes of 2005 destroyed or severely damaged approximately 350,000 homes within 90,000 square miles from southeastern Texas to the Florida Keys—an area the size of Great Britain. They were the costliest hurricanes in U.S. history, with more than \$81 billion in damage. Hurricane Andrew, in 1992, previously held the record at \$26.2 billion (in 1992 dollars).

During the initial response phase to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, hundreds of thousands of people turned to the Red Cross for help. The sheltering needs were the largest that the Red Cross had been asked to face in its history. In a massive, coordinated response, the Red Cross—

- Opened more than 1,400 shelters in 31 states and the District of Columbia, with overnight stays totaling more than 3.8 million;
- Sheltered nearly 450,000 evacuees;
- Served more than 68 million hot meals and snacks to evacuees and responders;
- Provided emergency assistance to more than 1.4 million families—about 4 million people—to purchase urgently needed items such as food, clothing, diapers and other essentials.

## Help From Around the World

The American Red Cross received generous help from other Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies after the storms. Two such generous sister societies were the Kuwait Red Crescent and the Canadian Red Cross. Each worked closely with the American Red Cross to develop plans for using their gifts to augment existing disaster response capacity in the devastated region.

These donations have been used to station additional disaster professionals in the region, purchase equipment and vehicles, and construct five new chapter headquarters/response centers so that the Red Cross can continue to serve the communities and families of the Gulf Coast region.



A volunteer from the French Red Cross serves meals in Louisiana.

Bradley Hague/American Red Cross

*“When I arrived in New York City, all I had was a little green bag that I carried all the way from New Orleans. The Red Cross gave me money for food and clothing, as well as emotional support. This experience opened my eyes to the fact that people have compassion in their hearts for people in need. I give blessings, love and thanks to the Red Cross.”*

— David Montana, New York, N.Y.

# The Path to Recovery



NOAA

## August 23, 2005

Tropical Depression 12 forms southeast of the Bahamas.

## August 24, 2005

Tropical Depression 12 strengthens and becomes Tropical Storm Katrina. A Tropical Storm Watch—later upgraded to a Hurricane Watch—is issued for south Florida.

## August 26, 2005

Hurricane Katrina, now a Category 1 storm, hits south Florida and moves into the Gulf of Mexico. The Red Cross responds in Florida and prepares for additional landfalls.

## September 3, 2005

The Red Cross provides nearly 1 million meals on this day alone and will maintain this pace for several days.

## September 6, 2005

The Red Cross shelters nearly 144,000 evacuees.

## September 24, 2005

Hurricane Rita strikes southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana as a Category 3 storm.

## October 4, 2005

The Red Cross serves more than 20 million meals to date.

## October 7, 2005

More than 1 million individual assistance cases have been opened for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The final figure would include another 400,000 families.

## October 19, 2005

More than 200,000 national and international Red Crossers have mobilized to assist survivors.

## January 16, 2006

The Red Cross establishes the Hurricane Recovery Program (HRP).



Gene Dailey/American Red Cross

## February 15, 2006

Hurricane relief operations, while still active in many places, begin the transition to the recovery phase.

## March 26, 2006

Red Cross long-term case management and recovery planning for survivors begins in Red Cross chapters from Houston to Miami.

## June 1, 2006

The Youth Enrichment Activities Program runs through the summers of 2006 and 2007, providing grants that enabled a total of 15,200 youth to participate in summer activities.



Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

2005

2006

2007

## August 28, 2005

Katrina strengthens into a Category 5 storm. A Hurricane Warning is issued from Morgan City, La., to the Alabama/Florida border.

## August 29, 2005

Katrina strikes southeast Louisiana and southwest Mississippi as a Category 3 storm. The Red Cross responds with sheltering, feeding and health services.



Gene Dailey/American Red Cross

## October 24, 2005

Hurricane Wilma strikes Florida as a Category 3 storm.

## November 8, 2005

Nearly 335,000 evacuees have reported their status on our [www.KatrinaSafe.org](http://www.KatrinaSafe.org) registry to notify friends and family of their well-being.

## December 2, 2005

The last shelter for Katrina closes in Mississippi; feeding operations continue until late March.

## September 30, 2006

The Means to Recovery program is established to rebuild homes and lives.

## September 30, 2006

The Emotional Support Program is formed to remove financial barriers to mental health treatment for hurricane survivors living across the nation.



Quentin Hunstad/American Red Cross

## May 5, 2007

The Building Community Resilience Program requests proposals to help local communities rebuild ties and foster resilience through outreach, skill-building and youth programs.



# Unprecedented Disaster

When nearly 4.5 million people needed help in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, millions of people, foundations and corporations stepped forward to help. In just a few months, the nonprofit sector was entrusted with more than \$3 billion for relief, with the American Red Cross receiving nearly \$2.2 billion in monetary contributions. More than 87 percent, or \$1.9 billion, was spent within the initial response phase, sheltering and giving assistance to millions of survivors.

The sheer numbers behind the 2005 hurricane relief efforts are impressive just standing alone. However, the numbers listed here have people behind them. Each number is shorthand for the families who pulled together to overcome the tears, the fears and the struggle to find hope. Each number is multiplied by those who encouraged others to go down and help. Each number was enabled by those who opened their hearts and sent a donation, decided to give blood or volunteer. Thank you.

## Scope of Devastation

- More than 1,800 people lost their lives.
- There was more than \$81 billion in damage.
- Eighty percent of New Orleans was submerged.
- Thousands of victims were forced to rooftops, and hundreds of thousands scattered to shelters around the country.
- Survivors dispersed to nearly every state, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Approximately 350,000 residences from southeastern Texas to the Florida Keys were destroyed or severely damaged.

## Red Cross Emergency Response

- More than 1,400 emergency shelters in 31 states and the District of Columbia were set up, with overnight stays totaling more than 3.8 million.
- More than 68 million hot meals and snacks were served to evacuees and responders.
- More than 1.4 million families—about 4 million people—received emergency assistance to purchase urgently needed items such as food, clothing, diapers and other essentials.

- Nearly 250,000 Americans volunteered to support disaster survivors.

## Red Cross Hurricane Recovery Program

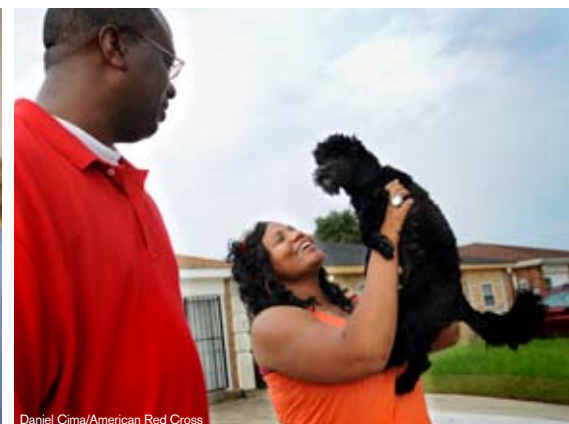
- More than 13,200 families received long-term recovery planning and advocacy services from trained Red Cross case managers.
- More than 22,500 people received mental health or substance abuse treatment.
- 16 behavioral health programs were awarded grants to increase their capacity enabling them to provide services to more than 165,000 adults and youth.
- More than 150,500 people were involved in community activities that aimed to rebuild community ties and build resilience.
- More than 200 organizations in more than 30 states received HRP funding for recovery-related needs.
- More than 8,200 families received recovery financial assistance that enabled them to return to home or work.



Looking past the boat in front of her neighbor's home in Mississippi, Holly Graham sums up the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina: "That pile of rubble was my house."



As Hurricane Rita approaches, dinner is served to shelter residents in Texas.



Darnell and Wylona Fogan enjoy their new life.

# Unprecedented Generosity

## Donor Dollars at Work

(All Figures as of June 30, 2010)

**Emergency Assistance:** More than 1.4 million families—more than 4 million people—received emergency assistance from the Red Cross. This helped hurricane survivors purchase urgently needed items such as food, clothing, diapers and other essentials. **Cost: \$1.521 billion**

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**Food and Shelter:** When hurricanes threatened the Gulf Coast, Red Cross disaster staff and volunteers prepared hundreds of evacuation shelters. The organization pre-positioned supplies including kitchens, prepackaged meals and emergency response vehicles and provided millions of people with food and shelter. **Cost: \$229 million**

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**Physical and Mental Health Services:** The Red Cross provided both physical and mental health services to hurricane survivors. Trained mental health professionals were available at Red Cross shelters and service centers to help survivors cope with stress, loss and trauma. Red Cross health care professionals delivered emergency first aid and attended to other health-related needs such as assistance with obtaining prescription medications to replace those lost in the storm. **Cost: \$4 million**

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**Long-Term Case Management:** Red Cross case managers worked one-on-one with survivors to develop recovery plans and match needs with community resources. The Red Cross also made funds available to meet survivors' recovery needs like housing and work-related transportation. **Cost: \$110 million**

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**Long-Term Emotional Support:** The Red Cross provided three behavioral health programs to help vulnerable individuals and communities in distress. One benefit program and two large grant programs assisted individuals in accessing treatment as well as reestablishing community ties and building resilience. **Cost: \$72 million**

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**Long-Term Recovery Information Sharing:** Relief is complex and requires coordination among various entities. Up-to-date client and resource information was shared via the Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) with participating agencies nationwide. **Cost: \$3 million**

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**Additional Red Cross Support:** These funds enabled the Red Cross to provide response and recovery resources to disaster survivors including coordinated damage and community needs assessment; deployment of trained workers and supplies; technology support for logistics, communications and information; and support of the disaster welfare inquiry system that helps families reconnect with one another. **Cost: \$107 million**

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**Donor Directed Capacity Projects:** The American Red Cross received generous gifts from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the Canadian Red Cross Society to build disaster response capacity specifically in the Gulf region. These donations are being used to purchase equipment and vehicles, construct five new chapter headquarters/response centers, and station additional disaster professionals in the region. **Cost: \$33 million**

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**Fundraising Cost/Management and General Expenses:** The Red Cross has managed an unprecedented number of contributions from generous donors who are helping meet the needs of people in this record-setting relief operation. These costs are associated with raising the funds that enable the Red Cross to respond to these and other disasters and to fulfill its mission. They include expenses such as finance and accounting, legal and auditing fees and public information outreach, which are all essential services in support of the Red Cross disaster relief effort. The fundraising costs/management and general expenses will be less than 6 percent of the total budget. **Cost: \$99 million**

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### Funds Raised: approximately \$2.186 billion

#### Expenses (in millions)

Emergency Assistance	1,521
Food and Shelter	229
Physical and Mental Health Services	4
Long-Term Case Management	110
Long-Term Emotional Support	72
Long-Term Recovery Information Sharing	3
Additional Red Cross Support	107
Donor-Directed Capacity Projects	33
Fundraising Cost/Management and General Expenses	99
<b>Expenses to Date Total</b>	<b>\$2,178</b>

#### Remaining Funds:

The approximately \$8 million dollars remaining will be used to continue helping survivors through Red Cross services and to complete the Donor Directed Capacity Projects described above.

# All Hands on Deck

***“It is pretty awesome what we as the American Red Cross were able to do...together.”***

— ***Kay Wilkins***  
***Chief Executive Officer***  
***Southeast Louisiana Chapter***

The hurricanes of 2005 demanded an unprecedented relief effort, and the Red Cross responded. Across the nation, Red Cross employees and volunteers—from chapter chief executive officers to volunteer ERV drivers—answered the call for help. It was all hands on deck.

As Hurricane Katrina bore down on New Orleans, Kay Wilkins, chief executive officer for the Southeast Louisiana Chapter, and her 42 employees sprang into action, opening 26 shelters that would exceed 5,000 residents; staffing local emergency operations centers; and coordinating with partners to meet the needs of 1.2 million residents within the affected area.

Many Red Crossers were on the front lines, even while they themselves suffered loss and tragedy. “With more than 80 percent of the metropolitan New Orleans area under water, many of our Red Cross employees and volunteers helping evacuees also found themselves concerned about their own homes and families,” said Wilkins. “Katrina changed our landscape forever, and during those first days after the levee break, there were times our staff felt overwhelmed with stress and worry. It was at one of these lowest points that our own Red Crossers from across the country came to our aid.”

Some of those Red Crossers were from the American Red Cross of the National Capital Region in Washington, D.C. Linda Mathes, the chapter’s chief executive officer, recruited, oriented and sent Red Crossers to help in regions



affected by Katrina. “When I remember our work after Katrina, I remember the collaboration, the teamwork among community partners and the joy over any comfort we could bring,” said Mathes. “You never know who will need help. But, what we do know is that people will always be there to help other people through the Red Cross.”

For more than 125 years, this sense of community is what makes the Red Cross invaluable and special. “We’re a large family,” said Wilkins. “When one of our own is in need, we pack up and help that team member through his or her difficulty. Just as our chapter had done for others many times before, Red Cross volunteers from across the country and world came quickly and were generous of their time and skills during that very difficult time. When I look back over these past five years and see all the good work that has been completed in our area, I know it is pretty awesome what we as the American Red Cross were able to do... together.”

Kay talks more about how Katrina changed how the American Red Cross prepares for disasters.

[Click here](#) to watch.

# Working Together: Partnerships

Hurricane Katrina was bigger than any single organization. While the Red Cross has always partnered with traditional disaster-response organizations, Katrina (followed by Rita and Wilma) required new thinking. To best serve the survivors, the Red Cross launched an unprecedented collaboration. Today, many of the partnerships born of necessity during the crisis have become the standard way of serving clients after a disaster.

As the scope of the rebuilding task became clear, the Red Cross pulled together leaders from key nonprofit and faith-based groups such as The United Methodist Committee on Relief, Catholic Charities, The Salvation Army, Katrina Aid Today, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Lutheran Disaster Response, Boat People SOS and many others

who would be active in the recovery, so we could coordinate our efforts.

Together, the Red Cross and partners developed software to make it easier to track clients who moved from place to place on their journey home, and the Red Cross made it available free to all agencies. Using this integrated system across agencies streamlined the casework process, reducing frustration for clients and caseworkers, and minimizing duplication of services.



Red Cross caseworker Shasta Butler worked with Laura Bostic to get the resources she needed to rebuild her home.

Quentin Hunstad/American Red Cross

Beyond sharing tools and expertise, the Red Cross shared the generous donations that were entrusted to the organization.

More than 45 percent of Red Cross funding during the recovery phase was channeled through partner organizations. Grants to provide emotional support totaling \$30 million went to more than 120 groups, ensuring all segments of the population were served. Financial assistance was available to clients of other agencies, not just to survivors working with a Red Cross caseworker.

This strengthened network of community agencies was put to the test in 2008, and it did well. When Hurricane Gustav struck Louisiana, the Red Cross chapter in New Orleans evacuated to their alternate headquarters, inviting other agencies to join them. Representatives from a variety of agencies shared space and coordinated the response face-to-face. Faith-based groups operated 26 percent of the shelters funded by the Red Cross.

## Meeting Diverse Needs

For decades, the Red Cross and the NAACP have had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), but the relationship was revitalized by the 2005 hurricanes. Both parties updated our historic MOU and conducted state meetings to help coordinate efforts across the Gulf states. More than 700 NAACP members became certified Red Cross shelter workers.

As the Reverend Nelson Rivers, vice president for stakeholder relations at the NAACP, wrote one year after Katrina, "If we practice together effectively, we play together well in the big game."



# Giving Back

My life has been in New Orleans. I grew up in Pontchartrain Park in the Upper Ninth Ward. Away from downtown, this section of New Orleans is rich in history. Pontchartrain Park was one of the first suburban-style neighborhoods in New Orleans designed by and for African-Americans in the 1950s during the Jim Crow era.

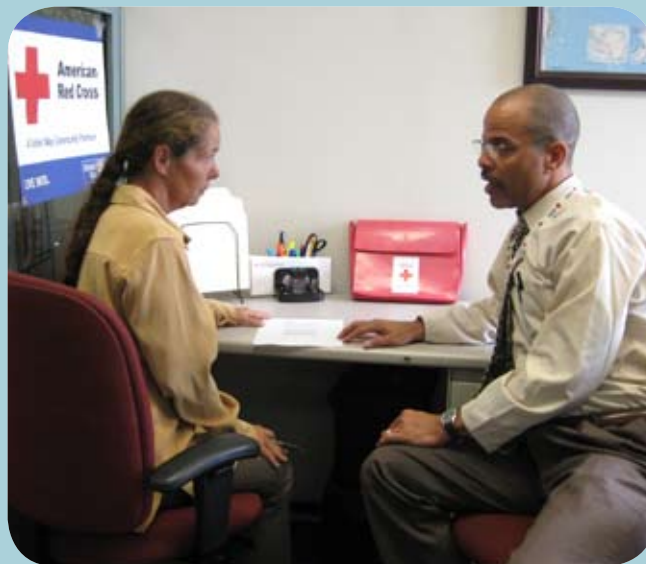
My neighborhood flooded badly after Hurricane Katrina when the levees broke. There was about five feet of water in my home. Devastation to my home and my neighbors was severe. Over the years, however, about 90 percent of my neighbors have returned to restore and rebuild their homes, and although it has been difficult, I, too, am rebuilding. My family and I plan to return home in fall 2010. But it has been a long five years to get here.

***“My work enables me to put my problems aside in order to assist others.”***

Before Katrina, I had retired as a social studies teacher and began working as a case manager with the Volunteers of America, helping federal offenders put their lives back together. After Katrina, I needed this help, and the Red Cross was there.

My family and I evacuated ahead of the storm to Texas—Houston for two days, Athens for eight days and then to Dallas. Taking three hours to go one mile that first day, it was 26 hours before we reached Houston.

I returned to my home in New Orleans in October 2005 to salvage what I could. I found complete devastation. Suddenly, the tables were turned. I recognized that my family and I needed help getting our own lives back



Marvin Henry counsels a client at the Red Cross chapter.

together. The Red Cross provided \$1,500 in food, clothing, and financial assistance to jumpstart our recovery.

Today, I work for the Red Cross as a client outreach coordinator, providing the same assistance to others that I received after Katrina. I provide information and referrals for individuals who are seeking assistance. In addition, I also do community disaster education presentations. At times, it's difficult to look beyond my own needs, but my work enables me to put my problems aside in order to assist others with their recovery from disasters.

Before the storm, I lived the American dream. Now, my life is like a puzzle, but I am putting all the pieces back together again; stronger than before, and armed with faith, hope, prayer, employment and exercise.

— Marvin Henry  
Client Outreach Coordinator  
American Red Cross Southeast Louisiana Chapter  
Hurricane Katrina Evacuee

Thomas North/American Red Cross



# Returning Home

On November 12, 2009, a modest home located on Forum Boulevard in the eastern part of New Orleans was abuzz with people. Family, friends and neighbors all joined the American Red Cross and other local agencies to dedicate the newly rebuilt home of the Fogan family. This day marked the end of a long, difficult four-year journey the Fogans will not forget.

Like thousands who have spent their lifetime living in New Orleans, Darnell and Wylona Fogan had weathered many storms living in a city with an annual hurricane season. And like many, they planned to deny the storm predicted for late August 2005 the power to drive them from their home, choosing instead to stay put.

Eventually, on August 28, at the insistence of Darnell's mother, the couple and their three children packed their car and traveled to the house of Darnell's aunt in Donaldsonville, a small town on the banks of the Mississippi River 65 miles west of New Orleans. They planned to stay until the storm blew over.

***“It’s a blessing.  
I’m ecstatic.”***  
— ***Wylona Fogan***

What they thought would be a couple of days turned into two months.

They returned to a house flooded by four feet of water, and it would be four years before they moved back in. In the meantime, they went to Pensacola, Fla., where the Red Cross provided financial assistance for them to stay temporarily in a local hotel. The family lived in Florida for two years, but they always felt the strong pull to return to New Orleans. They worked with the Federal Emergency



Management Agency (FEMA) and requested a trailer be set up on the front lawn of their damaged home.

When they moved into their trailer, the Red Cross welcomed them with meals and cleanup and comfort kits. The Red Cross was one of the first agencies they called for help. Kim Coles, a Red Cross case manager, identified their needs and found the resources to meet those needs. She reached out to other agencies to leverage funding to rebuild their home and connected the family with the United Church of Christ, which provided volunteer labor. Finally, she applied on the family's behalf for Red Cross recovery financial assistance to help purchase building materials.

Like thousands who fled after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina almost five years ago, their road to recovery has not been easy. However, the family's journey culminated with a ceremony to celebrate their restored home and rejuvenated lives.

“It’s a blessing. I’m ecstatic,” Wylona said during the home dedication ceremony. “We plan to stay here for a long time.”



**The Fogans' belongings piled in their yard after Katrina.**

# Beginning Again

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Shena Batiste's life was turned upside down. While she and her family were able to evacuate from their suburban home in New Orleans to stay with friends in Mississippi, they would soon be devastated

***“They actually held my hand and walked with me the whole way.”***

— **Shena Batiste**

with a personal tragedy that compounded the damage and loss they would suffer from the storm. Days after the worst of Katrina struck New Orleans, Shena's husband suffered a fatal heart attack.

Just hours before the incident, they had watched from the safety of their friends' home the images of people stranded on rooftops or wading through the flooded streets of the city. They watched and talked about their plans to help. “We are going to have to help some of these people,” her husband told her. “We're going to have to bring them into our homes. There are going to be people who don't have anyplace else to live.”

But they never got the chance.

Shena was alone, caring for her five children and picking up the pieces as she returned to New Orleans to find her home damaged and her business destroyed.

Shena and her husband bought a truck for their new catering business just before the storm. However, Katrina destroyed the catering truck on which her business depended. Worse, her insurance company said her policy was canceled and, therefore, Shena had very little money to cover repairs and debts.



Her home damaged, her husband and livelihood gone, she was at a loss for what to do next. At a friend's suggestion, she contacted the Red Cross and connected with Thomas North, a client recovery manager.

“She was caught up in a whirlwind from Katrina,” said Thomas upon first meeting Shena. “She had lost her partner, her home and her livelihood. But she was resolved to get back on her feet.”

Over the course of a year, Thomas helped her organize her finances, negotiate a new mortgage and arrange funds to repair her home. She steadily led her family toward recovery.

“They actually held my hand and walked with me the whole way,” said Shena. “I felt like I could just breathe. Thomas kept reassuring me that the Red Cross is really going to help—and he did. Because of the help from the Red Cross, we're really doing good, everything is going along fine. We're stable, the house is fine and we have insurance now. Everything is going great.”

For more from the Batiste family, [click here](#) to watch.

# Matching Needs With Resources: Hurricane Recovery Program

Even as they were providing relief to hurricane survivors, it was clear to Red Cross disaster workers that some of those affected by the 2005 hurricanes would need support for years to come. Thanks to the generosity of the American people, the Red Cross could commit to long-term recovery efforts through the Hurricane Recovery Program—a national recovery initiative tailored and implemented locally—to restore and improve the lives of those who had endured unimaginable losses.

The Hurricane Recovery Program, which was based in 28 different locations during its peak, not only assisted people within the immediate vicinity of the storms' impact, but also made assistance available to evacuees still living in cities distant from areas where the storms occurred.

Working with individuals, groups, foundations, corporations, faith-based organizations, civic, educational, service and neighborhood groups and others, the program focused on three areas where the need for help was greatest:

- **Case management**—assisting survivors to develop sound recovery plans and connecting them with all of the resources of their communities;
- **Emotional support**—providing behavioral health and community

resilience programs for vulnerable individuals and communities in distress; and

- **Information sharing**—providing survivors, case managers and partners with effective and timely information to aid in recovery efforts.

The funds entrusted to the Red Cross for Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma disaster relief enabled us to sustain this support long after the storms faded from the headlines.



Children participate in summer activities provided by the Uptown Theatre Program in New Orleans.

## Case Management

During the longer-term recovery, the Red Cross strives to meet the individual needs of those who have not been able to recover on their own. Red Cross case managers spend time with each person or family, working together on a plan for recovery.

Means to Recovery was a case management initiative through which survivors and caseworkers worked together to formulate a recovery plan and tap into all available resources. The initiative focused on the three most pressing needs that survivors had: (1) housing; (2) job-related needs, such as occupational training; and (3) transportation, to get to jobs when no public transportation is available. If an identified recovery need was not met by other resources, then a Red Cross or partner agency caseworker applied for Means to Recovery funds.

## Information Sharing

Managing complex client data across multiple agencies—locally, regionally and nationally—requires a framework of tools and data standards for collaborating in real time. The Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) is a network of people, information and tools supporting year-round collaboration among nonprofit agencies. Through CAN, participating agencies and users across the nation are helping survivors navigate the redundant intake

processes and leverage resource data to more effectively fulfill specific unmet needs.

Currently, through participation in CAN, up-to-date client and resource information is shared across 1,380 participating agencies across the country. By facilitating community leadership and emphasizing collaboration, CAN has grown to be recognized by leading disaster relief organizations as an accepted tool for client recovery services.

# A Home Rebuilt



Daniel Cirna/American Red Cross

The day before Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast, four generations of Swaniers—Miss Emma, her daughter Miss Margaret Walker, granddaughter Alisha, and great-grandchildren Deonte, Reonte, Taliah and Alijah—evacuated to Delisle, Miss., 30 miles north of their home in Pass Christian. They would return only to find the broken pieces of the home and memories they so dearly loved.

***“You’ll make it happen for me and my family.”***

***— Miss Emma Swanier***

Miss Emma and her family infused their temporary, 750-square-foot trailer with love, hope and optimism.

Taking after their great-grandmother, the children were always quick to laugh despite missing the school and friends they left behind. Miss Emma used to say to me, “Miss Genia, I’ll be okay; you’ll make it happen for me and my family.”

I connected the children with programs and resources that give them a sense of normalcy. They participated in the Red Cross Youth Enrichment Activities Program that enabled them to attend a summer camp called Camp NOAH. On their first day of school, they boarded the bus wearing new clothes and carrying backpacks filled with notebooks and pencils.

Above all else, Miss Emma wanted to provide her family with a home in Pass Christian. To rebuild their home, we estimated \$50,000 in materials, not including labor. Together, we set out to get the resources.

In those long days after Katrina, all of the nonprofits active in recovery would meet together as the Harrison County Long Term Recovery Committee. Case managers like me would present family needs, and the nonprofits around the table would pledge resources. Along with the Red Cross, organizations including Lutheran-Episcopal Disaster Services, United Way, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and The Salvation Army pledged funding for materials. Restoration Point Foundation provided the labor. Anonymous businesses and individuals also answered the call for help.

On April 1, 2008, a little over a year after I met the Swaniers, they moved into their new house. Sadly, Miss Emma passed away one month before, but she was comforted knowing that her family would soon have a home in their beloved Pass Christian community.



Amie Card/American Red Cross

The family in front of their trailer with Genia Crane in 2006.

Today, the Swaniers have not only recovered—they are thriving.

The children are involved in school sports and activities in their community. Deonte plays on his school’s football team, and the girls are active in their church community and sing every third week at the services. Their mother completed her associate’s degree, works full-time and continues to make a wonderful home.

— Genia Clay Crane  
Client Recovery Supervisor  
American Red Cross of Mississippi Gulf Coast

[Click here](#) to meet the Swanier family and see more of their story.

## Emotional Support

Surveys repeatedly showed that the hurricanes of 2005 had caused a significant increase in mental health problems for survivors. “Any disaster that forces you from your home is traumatic, but a disaster that takes away not only your home but your church or temple, your kids’ school, your grocery store, your whole neighborhood—that’s more than most people are built to handle on their own,” said Russ Paulsen, executive director, Hurricane Recovery Program.

The distress caused by the storms—compounded by the evacuation of mental health professionals and, consequently, the closing of clinics and other facilities—needed to be addressed. In response to this need, the Red Cross created three complementary programs to deal with the complex nature of emotional wellness needs during the recovery phase:

- 1. Behavioral Health Grants Program** strengthened existing providers of behavioral health services in southern Louisiana and south Mississippi as they coped with a sharp increase in demand for their services.
- 2. Emotional Support Program** provided financial assistance for those who sought behavioral health treatment.
- 3. Building Community Resilience Program** provided grants to Gulf Coast grassroots organizations engaged in rebuilding emotional wellness and resilience in their communities.

## Behavioral Health Grants Program

# Overcoming Emotional Consequences

I can remember the sadness I felt when Joshua,\* 17 years old, and his family walked into the Child and Adolescent Joint Enhancement Network (CAJEN) General and Specialty Child Psychiatry Clinic burdened by his struggle to deal with Hurricane Katrina. Even more so, I remember the relief I felt as they left renewed with hope for a better tomorrow. Joshua had been paralyzed by depression and anxiety that had flared during a stressful evacuation from his home prior to Hurricane Katrina. He and his family had nowhere to turn for help until the CAJEN Clinic opened its doors to them and other families in similar situations. Armed with a better understanding of mental health, techniques for handling stress that may trigger depression or anxiety, and effective communication skills, the family is much stronger today.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, communities in the greater New Orleans area struggled to address the unmet

mental health needs of thousands of children like Joshua. The CAJEN Clinic is grateful for the funding from the Red Cross that enabled us to open a specialty adolescent mental health clinic to address these needs. Through this behavioral health grant, we provided services such as 2,000 clinic visits as well as 1,500 additional support activities, including consulting with schools, the justice system and others involved in young people’s lives.

Our partnership with the Red Cross has been instrumental in the lives of young people and their families battling the emotional consequence of such a life-changing disaster.

— Dr. Humberto Quintana  
Louisiana State University Health Services  
CAJEN Clinic

\* Name changed for confidentiality



# Confident in the Future

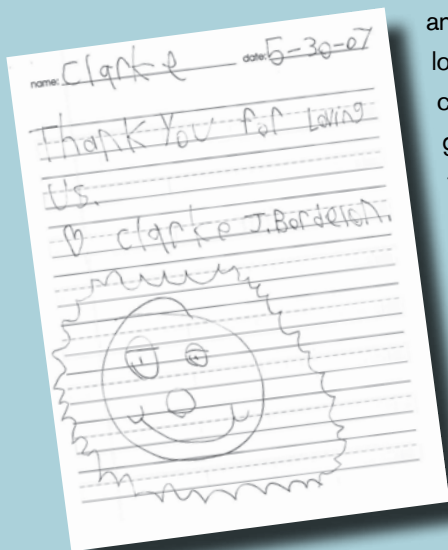
Laughter is back in the life of 16-year-old Clarke Bordelon. When Clarke and his family returned home after evacuating from Hurricane Katrina, he was not the happy child his mother, Sue, knew him to be. His “carefree world had become a scary place,” Sue wrote in a thank-you letter to the Red Cross. Like thousands of other young survivors of Katrina, Clarke began to have a difficult time emotionally, and he developed a severe anxiety disorder. Sue needed help, and she found it in the Red Cross Emotional Support Program.

***“He could go places again, be with friends and be an active part of our community.”***

— Sue Bordelon

Three years after the storms, Clarke was enjoying life again. Thoughts about Katrina no longer crippled him and kept him indoors. The program helped him to channel those thoughts in productive and creative ways. Now, he expresses himself through writing and music. “Slowly but surely the

anxiety disorder began losing its grip on my son,” continued Sue. “He could go places again, be with friends and be an active part of our community.”



Their story doesn't end there. While caring for her son, Sue herself had overwhelming feelings of anxiety to the point where she was afraid to drive, particularly crossing bridges and being near water. Having seen the difference the Red Cross program made for her son, Sue also reached out to the Red Cross for help.



Clarke Bordelon and his aunt, Dee, enjoy the day near their home in New Orleans.

“Without the program,” Sue said in August 2009. “I could not have gotten help and don't know what would have happened.” She went on to say that as others were helping to rebuild the levees, houses and other structures, we [the Red Cross] were “rebuilding people.”

Because of the tremendous support from donors, the Red Cross was able to provide the resources to assist more than 22,500 people like the Bordelons surmount not only the physical burdens, but also the emotional turmoil, caused by the 2005 storms.

# Rebuilding Community Through Partnerships



## Strong Families, Strong Communities

The Red Cross helped our organization provide emotional support, education and resources for 85 grandparents who stepped in to care for their 180 grandchildren after the hurricanes of 2005 divided families. We were also able to offer a unique program focused on girls between the ages of 7-16 who benefited from positive guidance and peer

influences, and left the program feeling empowered to make healthy personal choices.

— Sylvia Forster, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Pinebelt Association for Families

### Community Resilience Programs

**Awesome Girls:** To see how the Red Cross helped at-risk teens returning to New Orleans after the storm, [click here](#)

**Anthony Bean Community Theater:** The American Red Cross also helped children affected by the flooding use performance art to share their stories and vent their fears. [Click here](#) to watch a video of their work.

**Summer Waves:** [Click here](#) to see how the Red Cross used swim lessons in New Orleans to save lives and increase recreational opportunities for children and adults.



Daniel Cirna/American Red Cross

## Skills Shared, More Helped

The Red Cross enabled local clergy and mental health professionals to come together to care for those reeling in the aftermath of the storms. Through group training sessions, they educated one another on their unique skills and came to a mutual understanding of the critical roles each played in the emotional health of those seeking their care after disasters strike.

— John M. Hosey, M. Div.  
Clergy/Mental Health and Response  
Coordinator  
Mississippi Coast Interfaith  
Disaster Task Force

## Happy Children, Hopeful Futures

Our organization reestablished after-school programs that gave children a safe, positive place to go after the last school bell rang until their parents came home from work. Through the Red Cross, we not only kept our doors open, but we increased our capacity from 250 to 330 students.

— Cyndi Nguyen  
Executive Director  
Vietnamese Initiative  
Economic Training



Daniel Cirna/American Red Cross

# Offering a Helping Hand

Five years ago, I watched the news reports about Hurricane Katrina and was compelled to help. Five years ago, I heard a radio announcement about volunteering with the Red Cross and signed up. Five years ago, I found myself behind the wheel of an emergency response vehicle (ERV)—a vehicle used by the Red Cross to distribute food and drinks to disaster victims—on my way to Biloxi, Miss. I haven't looked back since.

My official job was to serve meals, snacks and water to residents of Biloxi, but it quickly became more than that. The people I met needed to tell their stories about their lives before the hurricane leveled their communities. So, as I delivered food, I listened.



Diann with her ERV team.

One man told me about the large, home-cooked family dinners he hosted before Katrina. When the storms damaged his kitchen, he could no longer bring his family together around the dinner table and he missed this routine until our ERV drove through his neighborhood. In partnership with the Southern Baptist

Convention, we were able to serve good home cooking for which his family could gather.

As I listened, I also learned. In the face of such tragedy, the people of Biloxi were gracious and grateful. They were bound as a community and proved resilient and hopeful. I learned about the kindness of strangers towards others, and the humanity of the response from all relief organizations. As for the volunteers I served alongside, they were from all over the country, from all walks of life and had many skills to offer. I am humbled by the generosity of their gifts of time and talent.



Theresa Fusco/American Red Cross

***“Trained, ready and able to offer a helping hand.”***

When I returned home, I realized that my local Red Cross chapter, the American Red Cross of the Mohawk Valley, which served Herkimer and Utica, N.Y., had been there all along, helping families who lost their homes to fire and other emergencies. I joined the chapter's Disaster Action Team—a group of volunteers who provide 24-hour emergency response to local disasters, particularly house fires, ensuring that those affected have basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing—and I became a CPR/first aid instructor.

Five years ago, I watched on TV as people struggled to overcome the aftermath of the devastating hurricanes. Today, I am trained, ready and able to offer a helping hand.

— Diann Fischer  
Volunteer, American Red Cross  
of the Mohawk Valley

# Preparing for Tomorrow With Lessons Learned

The hurricanes of 2005 presented many challenges for the Red Cross, but also served as an impetus for many changes in our readiness and response strategies. For the past five years, the Red Cross has taken important steps to learn from those challenges and improve our ability to help those in need.

By day six of our response to Hurricane Katrina, we were serving nearly 1 million meals per day. Today, the Red Cross is prepared to reach that same capacity of 1 million meals within 72 hours—half the previous time. The Red Cross is more ready to respond because we have—

- Increased our number of trained disaster volunteers to more than 90,000, nearly four times the level from 2005;
- Established a nationwide warehouse system and pre-positioned supplies to support 350,000 shelter residents—more than two Katrina's worth;
- Developed strategic relationships with more than 150 partners;
- Improved coordination with local and state governments, as well as with the federal government and FEMA;
- Created and implemented the National Shelter System, which includes more than 56,000 pre-identified shelters; and
- Improved the Red Cross **safeandwell.org** website to help reconnect loved ones during and after disasters.

The Red Cross is proud of the work accomplished, but there is still much to do to build more resilient communities.



Case managers receive training.

Through more than 650 chapters, the Red Cross improves citizen preparedness community-by-community, offering courses in first aid and CPR, and teaching people how to prepare for emergencies. More than 5 million people every year learn lifesaving skills from the Red Cross.

We call upon our corporate partners involved in Ready When the Time Comes, a corporate volunteer program that taps the human resources of corporate America and mobilizes a strong force of responders when disaster strikes. This program has more than 10,000 trained volunteers and nearly 450 businesses and organizations in 40 communities across the country.

“You always think that a disaster like this could never happen to you and your family, but it can,” said Donna Carter, who lost her home and belongings to Katrina. “When it happens, you have many mental and emotional adjustments to make in your life. Preparedness is the key.”

The Red Cross has people, systems and plans in place to respond to disasters before they happen. Such investments in preparedness today can save lives and livelihoods tomorrow.



One of five Red Cross warehouses placed strategically across the nation, this warehouse in Hattiesburg, Miss., is stocked with cots, blankets and other shelter supplies.

# Thank You

Throughout the five years since Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma made landfall, the American Red Cross has leveraged its experience, partnerships, human resources and compassion to help rebuild communities along the Gulf Coast. With the help of partners, donors and volunteers, the Red Cross embarked on a journey to restore lives, homes and hope amidst incredible tragedy and loss. Along the way, spirits were emboldened, futures were inspired and unity was fortified because of your support.

For more than 125 years, the Red Cross has served as one of the world's most recognized and trusted symbols of disaster relief. Because of donors like you, those affected by disaster know that in their darkest hours, they can turn to the Red Cross for help. Your support enables the Red Cross to be engaged in disaster relief 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, down the street, across the country and around the world. We are the first on the scene with a meal and cleanup supplies, and last to leave once we ensure needs are met. To learn more, please visit us at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) where you can find our Disaster Online Newsroom, or at your favorite networking sites such as Flickr, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and SocialVibe.

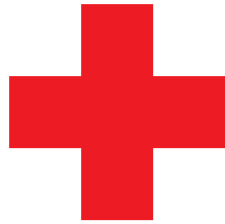
Throughout the years, you have proven the awesome power of generosity, perseverance and optimism. You have helped to create the inspiring images of hope illustrated in this report. On behalf of those served by the collaborative and philanthropic efforts of this partnership, Thank You.

**The “You Delivered Hope” poster was created to thank our many volunteers and supporters for their very generous help during the 2005 hurricane season. The helping hands represent the thousands of caring individuals who brought hope and comfort to those in need.**





Children participate in a VIET program.



**American  
Red Cross**