

## **Lee County generosity allows for effective relief effort in Haiti**

**Thursday, January 21, 2010** — The American Red Cross Lee County Chapter continues to support Red Cross efforts in Haiti as is the generous Lee County community. The local chapter has collected nearly \$100,000 in financial donations. These funds have been donated through checks and cash sent or delivered to the chapter and through various fundraisers held across the county. This amount does not reflect the many donations made through mobile and online fundraising. Below is an update on how these funds are being distributed by the American Red Cross:

**In just the first week of the Haiti response effort, the American Red Cross already has spent or committed \$34 million (approximately 25 percent of what has been pledged or received) as of Thursday, January 21.**

- The infrastructure of Haiti is severely damaged-airports are clogged, roads are treacherous, and there is no large seaport available. This is causing bottlenecks and making it very difficult to get aid into the hands of survivors. Despite those problems, aid is starting to slowly make its way to those who need help.
- We want aid to move faster, too. But it's going to take government and relief agencies working together quickly to establish security and expand and repair, airports, roads and seaports to get the relief supplies moving.
- We know this relief effort will take place in two phases: The short term relief effort is underway now and will continue for many weeks. We are starting to plan for a long term recovery effort that will continue for months, if not years.
- In just the first week of the short term relief operation we've committed and spent funds in three basic areas: food and water, relief supplies and logistical and support services.
- 50 percent of what has been committed or spent is being used to bring food and water to earthquake survivors. The American Red Cross is providing more 3 million pre-packaged meals, more than 1 million water purification packets and thousands of jerry cans so people can collect and transport clean drinking water.
- 30 percent of what has been committed or spent so far is purchasing and distributing relief supplies. This includes items such as blanket, tarps, soap, hygiene supplies, kitchen sets and first aid supplies.
- 20 percent of what has been committed or spent is providing the logistical support and other items needed to keep the relief effort running. This includes the purchase of vehicles to deliver relief supplies, warehouse space, gasoline, transportation costs and the deployment of our relief specialists. This category also includes the costs associated with the training and deployment of nearly 70 Creole speaking volunteers to the USNS Comfort.
- The American Red Cross is one part of the international relief operation in Haiti. While many of these items are being distributed by our own workers on the ground, we are also providing supplies, food and logistical items to other Red Cross societies and groups, such as the World Food Program to assist in their efforts.

- This is only the beginning of the American Red Cross relief and recovery effort for Haiti. Over the next several days and weeks, as the international relief effort will grow so will the monetary commitment of the American Red Cross. Right now, it's important to get relief there as quickly as possible, but also be thoughtful and responsible in how we spend the funds the American people have entrusted to us.
- We want to ensure that we manage our money wisely so we can ensure that long term relief is available as well. We are already looking at how the American Red Cross can help meet longer term needs such as providing reliable shelter, water and sanitation systems.

*You can help the victims of countless crises, like the recent earthquake in Haiti, around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster, please do so at the time of your donation by mailing your donation with the designation to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013 or to your local American Red Cross chapter. Donations to the International Response Fund can be made by phone at 1-800-REDCROSS or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish) or online at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)*

American Red Cross, Lee County Chapter  
6310 Techster Blvd. #7  
Fort Myers, FL 33966  
[www.arclcc.org](http://www.arclcc.org)

Contact: Colin Downey  
(239) 278-3401 ext. 125  
[pr@arclcc.org](mailto:pr@arclcc.org)