



American Red Cross Chapters in Lee and Collier Join Nationwide Fundraising Drive

“Click, text or call” to support disaster readiness, relief and recovery across the U.S.

August 13, 2010 – With an extremely active hurricane season looming and local disasters such as tornadoes and home fires, the American Red Cross chapters in Collier and Lee Counties are launching a new disaster relief fundraising drive.

“The Red Cross spends about \$450 million a year responding to nearly 70,000 disasters across the country – floods, wildfires, tornadoes and home fires,” said Jim von Rintel, CEO of the Southern Gulf Coast Region (Lee and Collier Counties). “We’re asking people to click, text or call to support Red Cross disaster relief.”

Red Cross chapters across the state and country are taking part in the new disaster response fund-raising drive, kicked off just before the height of the hurricane season in August and September. As part of this effort, the Red Cross is airing national television ads, sending targeted fund-raising appeals, using social media and making public appeals for disaster donations.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts between 3 to 7 major hurricanes this year. Major hurricanes are those Category 3, 4 and 5 storms that do the most damage—such as Hurricanes Andrew, Katrina, Rita and Wilma—with winds in excess of 100 miles per hour.

These predictions bear an eerie resemblance to the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, when multiple major hurricanes, including Katrina, Wilma and Charley, struck the U.S. More than 35 million people live in regions vulnerable to Atlantic hurricanes..

“We’ve all seen the predictions for this year’s hurricane season, and it’s worrisome. We’re also aware that people might need to leave their homes for longer periods of time because of the oil in the Gulf,” said Heidi Ruster, Lee County Red Cross Executive Director.

Contributions for disaster relief will support response to the 70,000 disasters the Red Cross responds to every year, whether they are hurricanes that affect millions of people here or abroad, floods that affect thousands, or a house fire that drives one family from its home.

“We’ll be asking Lee and Collier County residents for donations to help support Red Cross disaster relief, and we hope people will respond,” said von Rintel. “Every single donation brings hope to people in need.”

Readiness is a big part of disaster relief. The Red Cross already has pre-positioned equipment and materials near areas that could be hit by hurricanes. In addition, the Red Cross frequently moves supplies and people closer to an area threatened by a hurricane so they can be ready to respond quickly. These preparations cost money, and those funds have to be available long before a storm strikes.

People who want to make a contribution to disaster response can visit www.redcross.org, call 1-800-REDCROSS to support American Red Cross Disaster Response or text REDCROSS to 90999 to make a donation.



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You can help people affected by disasters like floods, fires, tornadoes and hurricanes, as well as countless crises at home and around the world, by making a donation to support American Red Cross Disaster Relief. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for and provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance in response to disasters. Visit www.redcross.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS. Contributions may also be sent to your local American Red Cross chapter or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.

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