



Together, we can save a life

The Mission and History of the American Red Cross

Article submitted by Clinic Resource Group, Inc. Staff - www.ClinicResourceGroup.com

For more information on the American Red Cross visit their websites:

www.RedCross.org and www.AmericanRedCross.org

The American Red Cross was started in May 1881 by Clara Barton to provide relief efforts for war and natural disasters. *The American Red Cross* is also known as *The American National Red Cross*. Today The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization, governed by volunteers and guided by its congressional charter with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement. It is the mission of the American Red Cross to provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies both locally and nationally.

In addition to Domestic Disaster Relief Services, the American Red Cross offers services in these areas:

1. Local community chapter services to help the needy.
2. Armed Forces Emergency Services.
3. Communications services and comfort for military members and their family members.
4. Bio-med Services the collection, processing and distribution of blood and blood products.
5. Health and Safety Services – Educational programs on preparedness, health, and safety.
6. International Services – International relief and development programs.
7. Tissue Services – The collection and distribution of allograft tissue

Below are more details about American Red Cross services and the organization ...

American Red Cross Volunteer Heroes

What the American Red Cross does cannot be accomplished without our greatest resource—the people of the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross has many heroes historical and modern day throughout our Lines of Service. As mentioned above our most famous hero is Clara Barton, first president and founder of the American Red Cross. It was Clara Barton’s devotion and dedication throughout the American Red Cross early years that since 1881 organization is still serving Americans in wartime and in times of peace during natural disasters and national calamities.

The spirit of volunteerism and community involvement continues with the employees and volunteers that make up the American Red Cross. Modern-day heroes of the American Red Cross are making a difference every day in their communities and around the world. The American Red Cross is a nationwide network of over 700 chapters, 36 Blood Services regions, and in 6 divisions, dedicated to saving lives and helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. More than a million Red Cross volunteers and 30,000 employees annually mobilize relief to people affected by disasters, train almost 12 million people in necessary medical skills and exchange more than a million emergency messages for

U.S. military service personnel and their family members.

www.AmericanRedCross.org

American Red Cross Structure

Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross on the principals of the International Red Cross while volunteering during the Franco Prussian wars. Today The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are the largest humanitarian, volunteer organization in the world, with more than 175 member countries. There are seven principles that provide direction for the movement, and all Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies must adhere to them. These fundamental principles are as follows:

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

The American Red Cross is not a governmental agency

Funding for the American Red Cross is directly from the generosity of the American people in order to offer its services. Support comes in various ways such as community donations, income from health and safety training as well as their products, and income derived from bio-medical products The American Red Cross is required by its congressional charter to provide:

- Relief to victims of disaster
- Emergency communications and assistance to members of the Armed Forces and their families.

The American Red Cross Six Lines of Service:

- **Disaster Services**

Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting people’s immediate emergency disaster-caused needs. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs. In addition, the core of Red Cross disaster relief is assistance given to individuals and families affected by disaster by enabling them to resume normal daily activities independently.

- **Armed Forces Emergency Services**

American Red Cross emergency services are available to all members of the armed services, and to their families. Both active duty and community-based military can count on the Red Cross to provide emergency communications, emergency financial assistance, counseling, veteran’s assistance and aid in the field where Red Cross workers are deployed to serve with America’s military.

- **Biomedical Services**

Bio-Med services started as a war relief effort to provide lifesaving blood for soldiers during World War II, Red Cross Blood Services has grown to become an industry leader—collecting and distributing half the nation’s blood supply. In the 1940s, the American Red Cross began collecting plasma for medical research. In 1941, albumin produced by medical researchers from plasma collected by the Red Cross was sent to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for the treatment of injured American servicemen.

- **American Red Cross Tissue Services**

American Red Cross Tissue Services is one of the nation’s largest tissue gathering and distribution organizations providing human allograft tissue for transplantation. Since 1982, the American Red Cross has provided lifesaving and life enhancing tissue (heart valve, skin, ligament, tendon, bone, major blood vessel and fascia-muscle covering) to more than 600,000 people. They also operate a national dental program to provide bone powder materials that enhance new bone growth in a variety of periodontal procedures.

- **Health and Safety Services**

For more than a century, the American Red Cross has been saving lives with health and safety education programs. Red Cross programs range from first aid, CPR and AED training to swimming, water safety and lifeguarding; from HIV/AIDS education to caregiving programs like Babysitter’s Training and Family Caregiving. American Red Cross programs help people live safer and healthier lives. The Red Cross continuously strives to respond to the health and safety concerns of Americans at home, in school and in the workplace.

- **Community Services**—American Red Cross chapters provide locally relevant humanitarian services that help people within the community to be safer, healthier and more self-reliant. Local Community Chapters determine which programs to offer based on their community’s needs. Programs offered by Community Services are wide-ranging, touching the lives of young and old throughout neighborhoods across the country. The variety of services include home delivered meals, food pantries, rides to medical appointments, homeless shelters, transitional housing, caregiver education and support groups, friendly visitors, Lifeline®, hospital / nursing home volunteers, fuel assistance, Head Start, latchkey programs, language banks and many more. Last year, Red Cross chapter Community Services provided almost 22 million services to individuals.

International Services

The American Red Cross works with a global network of Red Cross, Red Crescent and equivalent societies to restore hope and dignity to the world’s vulnerable people. This International Red Cross Movement brings emergency relief to disaster victims, and improves basic living conditions of those in chronically deprived areas of the world. Guided by our seven Fundamental Principles—Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality—the American Red Cross partners with countless other organizations in the efficient and effective relief of human suffering and the empowerment of people with the skills they need to help themselves. Consistent with the seven guiding principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Volunteer leadership and guidance for Local AMR Chapters

Volunteer leadership and guidance is provided to national headquarters of the American Red Cross by a Board of Governors. National headquarters of the American Red Cross provides direction and materials to the local Red Cross Chapters. National headquarters reserves the right to control courses and use of materials to ensure quality and consistency with national goals and priorities. Approximately 900 local chapters are chartered by the American Red Cross and are responsible for providing American Red Cross programs and services within their assigned jurisdictions. Most chapters have paid employees. However, the chapter is governed by a local volunteer board of directors, and primary service delivery is accomplished by volunteers.

For additional information, visit the American Red Cross website at:

www.redcross.org.

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