



Together, we can save a life

AMERICAN RED CROSS PIEDMONT CHAPTER

Volunteer Connection

From the Volunteer Coordinator

Dear Volunteers,

It has been a busy month since the last Volunteer Newsletter was mailed out and that means that there is a lot to share about our Chapter services and volunteers.

I am especially grateful for the assistance of volunteer **Liz Williams**, who has written the feature stories in this newsletter. Liz has worked hard on these pieces, interviewing volunteers and researching our chapter. She has done a wonderful job of highlighting the dedication of our volunteers. Thank you Liz!

I hope this month's newsletter will inspire you to become more involved, try something new, share your talents, and help the Chapter prepare for Hurricane Season—it begins June 1st!

Amy Foreman

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Welcome New Volunteers!

We are delighted to welcome the following volunteers who joined our team in April:

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| James Barrett | Ree Henderson | Nicole Moriarty |
| Jayne Cash | Kathryn Henson | Andrew Snow |
| Christy Graves | Debra Huffman | Matthew Tripp |
| Stan Harris | John Lee, IV | Liz Williams |

DAT: Responding to Disasters

Lisa Patterson of Gaffney didn't expect to see trees the size of buildings in the middle of houses when she first trained to be a member of the Disaster Action Team (DAT). But that was just part of the devastation she witnessed in Abbeville County one weekend last month. On Friday night, April 10, a series of thunderstorms began their treks across the state and seven tornadoes touched down in their wake, according to the National Weather Service. An F2 tornado was confirmed near Abbeville. Lisa was one of seven Piedmont volunteers and

four employees to assist the Upstate Red Cross Chapter during the following week.

"As far as expecting [all that damage], you just can't imagine," Lisa said. "You can try, but you'll never be able to."

In Abbeville county alone, 261 houses were damaged to some capacity, 30 of those

completely destroyed. Lisa helped fellow volunteer **Joe Uldrick**, Cowpens, feed affected families from the chapter's Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV). Joe's wife **Janet** joined them the next day.

"[The ERV] handles mobile mass feeding in areas where there is no power, no water,"

Kelly Stafford, Director of Emergency Community Services, said. "They drive around the neighborhoods and pass out hot meals."

May's Volunteer of the Month **Robert Russell**, Roebuck, helped
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Abbeville Tornado April 2009

Piedmont Chapter Training and Event Calendar

You must **PRE-REGISTER** for all calendar events.
Please call the appropriate office:
Spartanburg (864) 583-8000 Cherokee (864) 489-6066

<i>May 2009</i>		
Tues	19	Disaster Assessment, Cherokee Learn how to collect and communicate disaster assessment information. This course has an online prerequisite. <i>5:30 pm to 9:30 pm</i>
Weds	20	Health & Safety Committee Meeting, Spartanburg <i>11:00 am to 1:30 pm</i>
Thurs	21	Shelter Operations, Cherokee Learn how to open and work in a local shelter and be prepared for national disaster response. <i>10:00 am to 12:00 Noon OR 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</i> DAT Member Meeting, Spartanburg Meet with other DAT volunteers, discuss the organization of our team, and learn how DAT will be working with Spartanburg 911. <i>6:00 pm</i>
Mon	25	<i>Memorial Day—OFFICES CLOSED</i>
Thurs	28	Shelter Operations, Spartanburg Learn how to open and work in a local shelter and be prepared for national disaster response. <i>6:00 pm to 9:00 pm</i>

<i>June 2009</i>		
Hurricane Season Begins! Make sure you are prepared to respond during Hurricane Season. Encourage your friends, family, and coworkers to volunteer too. The Piedmont Chapter needs to be ready!		
Mon	1	Shelter Operations, Cherokee Learn how to open and work in a local shelter and be prepared for national disaster response. <i>9:00 am to 11:00 am</i>
Weds	3	Volunteer Orientation, Cherokee Encourage others to join our team! <i>12:30 pm to 2:00 pm</i>
Thurs	4	Volunteer Orientation, Spartanburg Encourage others to join our team! <i>2:00 pm to 3:00 pm</i> Fulfilling Our Mission, Spartanburg Required training for all Disaster Volunteers. <i>3:00 pm to 4:00 pm</i>
Tues	9	Shelter Operations, Cherokee Learn how to open and work in a local shelter and be prepared for national disaster response. <i>6:30 pm to 8:00 pm</i>
Weds	10	Volunteer Orientation, Spartanburg Encourage others to join our team! <i>5:45 pm to 6:45 pm</i> Fulfilling Our Mission, Spartanburg Required training for all Disaster Volunteers. <i>6:45 pm to 7:45 pm</i>
Tues	11	Volunteer Orientation, Cherokee Encourage others to join our team! <i>12:30 pm to 2:00 pm</i>
Mon	15	Disaster Assessment, Spartanburg Learn how to collect and communicate disaster assessment information. This course has an online prerequisite. <i>6:00 pm to 10:00 pm</i>
Tues	16	Blue Star Mothers, Spartanburg Meeting for mothers who now have, or have had, children honorably serving in the military. <i>6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</i>
Weds	17	Health & Safety Committee Meeting, Spartanburg <i>11:00 am to 1:30 pm</i>
Sat	20	Chapter Disaster Exercise and Shelter Simulation Participate in our annual exercise to practice your disaster skills in a "real-life" simulation. <u>Strongly recommended for Disaster Volunteers in all 3 counties.</u> RSVP to Spartanburg office. <i>8:00 am to 12:00 Noon.</i>
Tues	23	Annual Meeting, Location TBD Open to all members of the Red Cross. <i>12:00 Noon</i>
Sat	27	Serving People with Disabilities Following a Disaster, Spartanburg Learn Red Cross policies and practices for serving people with disabilities. <i>9:00 am to 3:00 pm</i>
Mon	29	Disaster Action Team (DAT) / Client Casework, Spartanburg Learn how to respond to local disasters and provide clients with immediate needs. Experience needed for national deployment. <i>6:00 pm to 10:00 pm</i>

*Current volunteers can attend any training course or event, unless the event is listed as "Closed".
Training courses are free unless otherwise stated.*

What's in a kit? A *WHOLE* lot of Comfort

com·fort: ˌkəm(p)-fərt 1. to give strength and hope to 2. to ease the grief or trouble of.

We've all needed it; we've all given it. And it's a comfort to know that local organizations are aiding the Chapter's effort to comfort victims of disasters in a tangible way. Churches, student organizations, and employees within the workplace are just a few of the groups that have donated Comfort Kits to the Red Cross. These kits provide personal hygiene products to both adults and children, whose homes have been destroyed or heavily damaged by fire or natural disasters, such as tornadoes.

"The last things you are going to think about are a toothbrush and soap when you've lost everything," Kelly Stafford, Director of Emergency Community Service, said. "But when you get a Comfort Kit, you can say, 'I may not have anything else, but at least I feel clean.' And that is so important."

Groups find out about the chapter's need for kits mostly through word of mouth. **Jennifer Winstead** is a volunteer, who passed the word along to her mother, Janet.

"I knew this was a really worthwhile project, easy to do and inexpensive," Janet explained. "There's need for it really year around, but particularly this time of year because of the storms."

Janet knows the importance of the need personally. The home of an aunt was destroyed in 1994 when a tornado ripped through the community of Arrowood. The houses of two other aunts were

Adult Comfort Kits

Washcloth
Shampoo and Conditioner
Soap or Body Wash
Deodorant
Toothbrush and Toothpaste
Hairbrush or Comb
Razor and Shaving Cream
Tissues
Hand Sanitizer

Child Comfort Kits

Washcloth
Shampoo
Soap or Body Wash
Toothbrush and Toothpaste
Hairbrush or Comb
Coloring Book or Fun Pad
Crayons

damaged. So Janet passed the word to her **Truth Seekers Sunday School class at Chesnee First Baptist Church** and to employees of **Spartanburg Dermatology**, where she works in the insurance department. Both groups enthusiastically responded.

"I think that we never know when we might be in the same situation," class leader Gail Ezell said. "I have no idea what it would be like not to have a toothbrush and other necessities that you have to have immediately."

Red Cross volunteer **Maria Pirraglia** also rallied fellow members of the Catholic Student Association at USC-Upstate to put together kits for donation.

Comfort Kits are also donated as a simple way of saying "thank you." A victim of a recent house fire related the importance of the kit she received to

fellow members at **West View Church**. At least forty kits were assembled by the congregation and delivered.

The chapter provides kits for every member of a family involved in a disaster. Kits are even placed on each cot or bed when shelters are opened during larger disasters.

"When we receive kits [through donations], we really appreciate them," Kelly said, "because if we don't get them, we have to purchase them ourselves. To feel fresh and clean is *very* important, especially when you feel like smoke."

DAT Members Respond to Disasters

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in the ERV, but his biggest role was Disaster Assessment, which is a primary task for DAT.

"We have to identify every house affected," Kelly said. "Why is that important? With house fires, we can get confirmation from Fire Departments. But if it's a natural disaster, we don't have that luxury. And we can't actively help families until we confirm that they are eligible."

Husband-and-wife volunteer team **Jorge and Elaine Gutierrez**, Cowpens, helped with Shelter Operations in Greenwood several days after the storms. Meanwhile, **Sheila Jenkins**, Spartanburg, headed to Jonesville with Red Cross Employee Jane Morris to help with the initial DAT response. Another F2 had touched down in that area. The call for help came from Union County 911.

Volunteers interested in becoming members of the DAT are asked to train in areas of response that interest them, such as Shelter Operations, Disaster

Assessment, and DAT/Client Casework. Client Casework is the main component of the chapter's primary emergency response activity—house fires. Volunteers in Spartanburg County responded to six of those calls in April. Cherokee County responded to one.

"We like to say we saw to [families'] immediate emergency disaster caused needs, because some people might need a place to stay, some may need medicine," Jane Morris, Case Manager, explained. "If it was a small cooking fire then maybe they need a referral to Salvation Army for new cookware."

Assisting families immediately following house fires is the biggest job of DAT volunteers. The Chapter is currently spreading the word by way of churches and civic organizations,

hoping to train new volunteers for this much-needed Red Cross service. "These house fires or 'quiet disasters' are just as devastating as the large, natural disasters that take place," Jane stressed.

But regardless of the type of disaster, volunteers say a single theme emerges when they help.

"Everyone is so thankful," Lisa added. "It's amazing how many come up and say 'Thank you' and 'God bless.' It hits you in the gut. There's no experience like it."



Abbeville Tornado April 2009