



A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS

ONE MONTH AFTER IRENE AND LEE

With the 2011 hurricane season predicted to be of above-average intensity the American Red Cross prepared to meet the challenges of possible storms. Our more than 60,000 trained disaster volunteers, 56,000 pre-identified shelters and capacity to serve 1 million meals per day help ensure the Red Cross is ready to respond at a moment's notice. And in late summer, when two major storms—Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee—headed for the Eastern United States, the Red Cross sprang into action, mobilizing these resources.

These tropical systems struck in quick succession, causing massive flooding that displaced thousands of people in the South and Northeast. Throughout, the Red Cross was there to ease the fear and confusion triggered by the storms, offering dry



American Red Cross volunteer Carrie Smith gives Joyce Sledge a hand in carrying meals to her home in Kill Devil Hills on North Carolina's Outer Banks.

Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

refuge, warm meals and emotional comfort. Relief efforts for Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee continue today, with disaster assessment and cleanup marking the beginning of recovery for some, while many, still unable to return to their homes, continue to turn to the Red Cross for food and shelter.

Hurricane Irene Arrives

After pummeling Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with heavy rains and winds, Hurricane Irene made landfall on North Carolina's Outer Banks the morning of August 27. Moving northward, Irene left wind damage, widespread power outages and flooding along the Eastern Seaboard.

Ahead of the storm, the Red Cross mobilized a massive response and

urged residents to prepare for Irene's impact. Thousands of pre-packaged meals were distributed from North Carolina to Maine. In addition, approximately 250 emergency response vehicles, more than two-thirds of the Red Cross National fleet, were placed on alert and mobilized to support disaster relief operations in many of the coastal states. As Irene made landfall, more than 27,000 people found a safe haven in approximately 500 shelters.

In the aftermath of Irene, the Red Cross had relief operations as far south as Puerto Rico as well as stretching from South Carolina to Maine, supporting thousands affected by the storm to help residents. By September 7, alongside community and government partners, the Red Cross had provided 1.8



American Red Cross volunteer Lisa Savin listens to the concerns of a shelter resident in Binghamton, N.Y.

Chuck Haupt/American Red Cross



Residents of Washingtonville, N.Y., receive hot meals from a Red Cross volunteer emergency response vehicle.

million meals and snacks, opened 492 shelters, provided 22,000 health and mental health consultations, and distributed nearly 127,000 relief items.

Joe and Detra Mailhiot of Rochester, Vt., whose rural home suffered damage from Irene's flood waters, were grateful for Red Cross assistance as they began to repair their home. "I can't thank the Red Cross enough, for everything they've done here" Joe said after a Red Cross outreach team visited their remote home and provided them with food, drinking water, cots and blankets, and cleanup kits. To guide the Mailhiots further down the path of recovery, Red Cross caseworkers connected the couple to resources for additional assistance and were able to check on the family's medical and prescription needs.

Just as we have for the Mailhiots, the Red Cross continues to help families navigate the recovery process in the wake of Hurricane Irene. Our current best estimate is that Red Cross relief services for Irene could be \$10 million to \$15 million.

Tropical Storm Lee Forms in the Gulf

In early September, as Hurricane Irene moved away from the U.S. mainland and residents along the East Coast began repairs, the Red Cross monitored a tropical depression forming in the Gulf Coast. Later named Tropical Storm Lee, the system made landfall in Louisiana over Labor Day Weekend.

Moving at a slow rate, Lee caused flooding and spawned tornadoes in the South, affecting Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. For drought-stricken Texas, Lee brought wind, not rain, fanning wildfires that destroyed more than 1,500 homes. In the Northeast, Lee's heavy rains exacerbated flood levels caused by Hurricane Irene in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. In New York and Pennsylvania, the Susquehanna and Chenango rivers swelled to record levels, forcing thousands from their homes. Meanwhile, additional flooding of the Delaware River and its tributaries affected hundreds more in New Jersey.

In response, the Red Cross opened shelters in the South while continuing efforts in the Northeast where Irene had already shown her wrath. Food, water and other supplies such as toothbrushes, shampoo, gloves and mops were distributed to those affected by floodwaters.

After returning to their neighborhoods, some residents found homes that were damaged beyond repair. Red Cross shelters remain open in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and New Jersey to house those still displaced. As of September 27, more than 200 people were in eight shelters primarily located in Pennsylvania and New York, where flood damage was most severe. To help families begin the task of clearing their homes of debris and mud, the Red Cross is providing cleanup items such as bleach, garbage bags and rakes.

Patti Buckhiester of Columbus, Ga., was among the Red Cross volunteers canvassing neighborhoods, offering assistance to displaced families. A Red Cross volunteer of three years, Buckhiester says she felt compelled to help. "There are a lot of people hurting in the Northeast and I am happy I can help," she explained. Buckhiester was part of a Red Cross team that moved door-to-door in Harrisburg, Pa., assessing damages to homes to help determine the shelter, food and other basic needs of families.

As the hurricane season progresses, the Red Cross will continue to prepare for and respond to approaching storms. Responding to nearly 70,000 disasters per year, the Red Cross stands ready to provide comfort and hope to those affected by disaster, wherever and whenever it may strike. The generosity of our donors ensures that the Red Cross will be there when the call for help comes.

Facts at a Glance

In response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, as of September 27, the American Red Cross has:

- Deployed more than 8,000 Red Cross workers
- Opened nearly 600 shelters
- Provided more than 68,000 stays
- Served approximately 2.6 million meals and snacks
- Distributed nearly 56,000 cleanup kits
- Distributed more than 33,000 comfort kits

A Trio of Brothers Lend a Helping Hand in New York

Brothers Isaiah, Franky and Noel quickly moved from shelter residents to Red Cross volunteers during Hurricane Irene when they arrived at the Nassau Community Center Red Cross shelter with their mother, Nancy Santiago. "They simply got up and became volunteers," Santiago said of her sons, who understood the reality of the emergency and decided to help. "Suddenly I saw Isaiah helping an elderly person in a wheelchair, Franky offering water to some people and Noel handing out blankets," Santiago added.

Moved by her sons' actions, Santiago committed to following their lead. "When we return home we will become volunteers," she said. Santiago remarked on the swift and caring response of the Red Cross in the face of Irene. "When help was most needed, the Red Cross was there for us."



Talia Frenkel/American Red Cross

Isaiah, Franky and Noel Santiago stayed at the Nassau Community Center shelter in Long Island, N.Y., and became volunteers for the Red Cross.

The Support of Donors

You can help people affected by disasters like tropical storms, 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. To make a donation, visit redcross.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767). 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.

To learn more about the work of the American Red Cross in the U.S. and around the world, please visit redcross.org.