



Home Fire Campaign

2018 Annual Update | March 2019



**American
Red Cross**



American Red Cross Home Fire Campaign at a Glance

Every day, seven people die in home fires, most in homes that lack working smoke alarms. That's why the Red Cross launched our Home Fire Campaign in 2014. Since then, we've accomplished so much—saving **more than 500 lives**.

To make communities and families safer, we have...



Installed **more than 1.5 million smoke alarms** in more than **14,500 cities and towns**



Reached **more than 1.2 million children** through youth preparedness and education programs



Served **more than 1.7 million people** through home visits in 50 states, 3 territories and the District of Columbia

This work was made possible by our committed financial donors and volunteers, fire departments, FEMA and more than 100 other partner organizations.

—Cumulative Campaign totals as of December 31, 2018.

Cover photo: Janette Washington and her son Timothy stand inside the charred ruins of their Georgetown, South Carolina home. They escaped thanks to free smoke alarms installed as part of the American Red Cross Home Fire Campaign. Photo by Mic Smith/American Red Cross.

Above: During a 2018 *Sound the Alarm* event, Red Cross volunteers Gregory Davidson and Carla Cruz canvass neighborhoods and install free smoke alarms in Long Island, New York. Photo by Marko Kocic/American Red Cross.

Making a Lifesaving Impact in Communities Across the Country



A Message from the President, American Red Cross Humanitarian Services

What a tremendous year for the American Red Cross Home Fire Campaign! Last spring, we continued to build momentum with the resounding success of our inaugural *Sound the Alarm* signature events. In just 16 days, we made the entire country safer, reaching 120 cities and towns nationwide, as more than 31,000 community volunteers visited homes door-to-door, installing over 100,000 free smoke alarms, replacing smoke alarm batteries and helping families plan an emergency escape route together.

These efforts continue to make a lifesaving impact. As I write, at least 520 lives have been saved through the Home Fire Campaign efforts of the American Red Cross and our partners—an extraordinary achievement.

Through the end of 2018, we made over 640,000 households safer in more than 14,000 U.S. cities and towns, and our work continues. This spring, Red Cross volunteers and our partners will once again install 100,000 free smoke alarms in more than 100 cities and towns during our second *Sound the Alarm* spring push, as we continue to help protect neighbors in some of our country's most vulnerable communities from the deadly threat of home fires.

As we work to prevent these daily disasters, thousands of people affected by home fires each year still need our help. The Red Cross responds to a disaster every 8 minutes—and most them are home fires. When a family stands on the sidewalk as their home and cherished memories go up in smoke, compassionate Red Cross disaster workers are often among the first people by their sides. We provide survivors with food, financial assistance to replace clothing and other necessities, a place to stay, and comfort in the face of heartbreaking losses.

In this year's update, I'm proud to share more details about the many ways supporters of our Home Fire Campaign are making a difference for people in communities like yours, along with some of the stories shared by people whose lives have been changed by this lifesaving campaign.

We couldn't do any of this important and impactful work without the generosity of our donors and the selfless commitment of tens of thousands of volunteers. On behalf of those we serve, thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harvey Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harvey Johnson



Making Children and Vulnerable Communities Safer

Each day in the U.S., seven people die and 36 more suffer injuries due to home fires, most in homes that lack working smoke alarms. Children, the elderly and lower-income families are most vulnerable to these disasters. To make families and communities around the country safer and better prepared for these too-common disasters, the Red Cross uses data and mapping technology to target areas where home fires pose the greatest threat.

Then, at *Sound the Alarm* events all over the country, local volunteers join fire departments and community groups to go door-to-door in these at-risk neighborhoods, providing residents with free smoke alarms, replacing dead smoke alarm batteries and helping families plan a home fire escape route together.

Knowing what to do when a home fire ignites can make a lifesaving difference, since families could have as few as two minutes to safely escape a burning residence. Working smoke alarms help ensure that residents are alerted to the danger, even if they're sleeping, reducing the risk of fatalities in a home fire by 50 percent.¹

“Now I feel more secure in my home, especially with my son.”

Elizabel Rodriguez, Miami Gardens, Florida

The Red Cross urges everyone to take simple steps to keep their household safe:



Install and maintain smoke alarms.



Talk with loved ones about fire safety.



Create and practice a home fire escape plan.

Today, **at least 520 people are still alive** because of smoke alarms and safety information provided by the Red Cross and our partners. This total includes more than 175 children, who are a special emphasis of the campaign's preparedness outreach and education.

Above left: Red Cross volunteer Elina Medina helps Elizabel Rodriguez and her son make a home fire escape plan during a *Sound the Alarm* home visit in Miami Gardens, Florida. Photo by James McIntee/American Red Cross. Above right: Red Cross volunteer Chengchen Li checks a smoke alarm she has just installed in a home in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Photo by John Amis/American Red Cross

¹National Fire Protection Association Smoke Alarms Fact Sheet. September 2015.



Saving Lives Around the Country

Across the U.S., we celebrated stories with a familiar theme in 2018—smoke alarms alerting families to evacuate safely; residents using home fire escape plans developed during in-home visits; and community collaboration through the Home Fire Campaign that made it all happen.

In cities and towns from Georgetown, South Carolina to Rochester, New York; Winona, Mississippi to Yankton, South Dakota; in Ferguson, Missouri; Cincinnati, Ohio; Dubuque, Iowa; Cascades, Oregon; and many more, survivors told us how smoke alarms and home fire preparedness planning provided by the Red Cross and our partners made a lifesaving difference for their families.

'All I could see was fire coming from the ceiling'

Janette Washington and her son Timothy were in church when firefighters from the Georgetown County (South Carolina) Fire Department visited. They spoke to the congregation about the importance of being prepared for home fires and said they had free smoke alarms to install from the Palmetto SC Region of the American Red Cross.

"Anytime we can get to a community event and talk about fire safety and smoke alarms, we're there," said Georgetown County Fire Chief Mack Reed.

Days later, firefighters visited to install free alarms from the American Red Cross and discuss escape routes with the family. Little did Janette know those alarms would soon save her and her son's lives. In April 2018, as she was falling back asleep after a passing thunderstorm, she heard the screech from those newly installed alarms.

"When I looked down the hall, all I could see was the fire coming from the ceiling," Janette recalled.

She screamed for Timothy to wake up, and the two escaped just as the power went out in their home. Red Cross disaster workers also were there for the Washington family in the days after the fire, providing financial assistance and helping them replace medications ruined by the fire.

"It was very scary, but I know for a fact, if it hadn't been for those fire alarms, I was going back to sleep," Janette said. "They saved our lives. We would have been gone, honestly."

**"They saved our lives.
We would have been
gone, honestly."**

Janette Washington, Georgetown,
South Carolina

Above left: Janette Washington and her son Timothy stand inside the charred ruins of their home in Georgetown, S.C. They were alerted to the fire by free smoke alarms provided by the American Red Cross. Photo by Cuthbert Langley/American Red Cross. Above right: Seven members of the Avenarius family escaped a fire in their Dubuque, Iowa, home thanks to new smoke alarms installed by the Red Cross during a *Sound the Alarm* event just 17 days before. Photo by Tyler Breitbach/American Red Cross



Bringing Relief and Comfort to Home Fire Survivors

In 2018, Red Cross disaster workers were among the first on the scene after tens of thousands of home fires. Day and night, in big cities and rural communities, trained volunteers and employees comforted survivors—sharing small comforts like warm blankets and coffee, offering emotional support and helping them begin to plan their next steps.

The Red Cross provided help with immediate needs, everyday necessities like toothbrushes, clothes, diapers and a safe place to stay the night. We also gave survivors financial assistance to help them pay for essentials like groceries or lodging. And Red Cross caseworkers stayed in touch in the days after the fire, helping survivors make recovery plans and locate available resources to rebuild their lives.

Home Fire Relief

Most Red Cross disaster responses—about 90 percent—are for home fires. During calendar year 2018, the American Red Cross:



Responded to **more than 58,000 home fires**



Opened **nearly 89,000 cases** for affected families, helping **over 255,000 people**

No other organization does this vital work on a national scale. Red Cross Disaster Action Teams stand at the ready 24/7 to bring immediate support to people facing the loss of their homes and possessions—whether it's a fire that affects a single home or a blaze in an apartment building that affects many families.

For home fire survivor D. Batiste of Detroit, Michigan, the blankets and monetary assistance were important, but just as important was knowing that someone was there who cared. “You all did me like a family and I really appreciate it,” she said. “Thank you.”

Above: When a fire in a New Orleans apartment complex severely damaged the building and injured one resident, Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteers responded immediately, offering support to displaced residents. Pictured, Red Cross volunteer Mustafa Jamal Faisal Al Lami speaks with one of the residents. Photo by Greg Roques/American Red Cross



Volunteers and Supporters Come Together to Sound the Alarm. Save a Life

During spring 2018, more than 135 enthusiastic employees from Delta Air Lines, a national sponsor of our *Sound the Alarm* initiative, joined events in Seattle, Atlanta and nine other cities across the country. They helped the Red Cross install nearly 12,000 lifesaving smoke alarms and make more than 4,600 homes safer against the deadly threat of home fires.

Delta employees, their families and friends joined participants from our other 2018 national sponsors—Almost Family and International Paper—along with local partners and more than 31,000 community volunteers nationwide to make our inaugural 2018 *Sound the Alarm* spring push a success, with over 100,000 smoke alarms installed in more than 100 cities and towns.

This was just one of thousands of events held around the country since the Home Fire Campaign began, reaching more than 1.7 million people with home visits in over 14,500 cities and towns.

Generous and compassionate support from the public enables the Red Cross to carry out our vital mission. We especially thank our dedicated Home Fire Campaign volunteers, financial donors and more than 4,500 coalition partners for selflessly supporting our mission and helping raise awareness about fire safety.

Their commitment makes a lifesaving impact for those we serve.



Red Cross volunteers around the country continue sharing our lifesaving message in communities like yours every day—home by home, family by family. In spring 2019, the Red Cross, our partners and tens of thousands of volunteers will again gather across the nation to *Sound the Alarm*. *Save a Life*. During this period of heightened emphasis, they will help install an additional 100,000 free smoke alarms and raise funds for lifesaving services in more than 100 cities in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We are profoundly grateful for the extraordinary support of our 2019 National Sponsors, **Airbnb**, **Delta Air Lines** and **Nissan**, along with many other regional sponsors, companies, organizations and individuals who are generously giving their time, talent and financial resources to this critical effort.

Above left: American Red Cross volunteer Tassiane Sampaio; Photo by James McEntee/American Red Cross. Above right: American Red Cross volunteer Lucas Dyson; Photo by Mic Smith/American Red Cross.



Thank you!

The American Red Cross gratefully acknowledges the following companies, foundations and partner organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to our Home Fire Campaign.²

Blue Cross and Blue Shield
of North Carolina

Delta Air Lines

FEMA

Grainger

International Paper

LHC Group

Nationwide

Southern California Edison



²Donations to Home Fire Campaign of \$250,000+ as well as special promotional partners from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018.

Photo: Marko Kovic/American Red Cross