

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



### ON THE HORIZON

- April, [Month of the Military Child](#).
- April, [National Volunteer Month](#).
- April 4, [National Public Health Week](#) begins.
- April 7, [World Health Day](#).
- April 7, [Easter](#).
- April 17, [National Volunteer Week](#) begins. Watch for special recognition and fun on our [Montana](#) and [Idaho](#) Facebook pages.
- April 22, [Earth Day](#)
- April 24, [World Immunization Week](#) begins.



## 24

**Disaster responses** in March.  
**Clients helped:**  
**69**



### MILESTONES

- LEWIS SAVIK, 15 years
- KATHRYN McBEE, 10 years
- CHERYL JAMES, 10 years
- BLAKE BERTOLINO, 5 years
- JOANN BROSTEN, 5 years
- JOEL CLEARY, 5 years
- KAYE JOHNSON, 5 years
- TRACY OLSON, 5 years
- JAMES PATTON, 5 years
- LINDA RACICOT, 5 years

# Giving back by going back



Joaquin Lemus, seen here with his mom, joined the Red Cross collections team in 2010. Joaquin recently started a new role with the Red Cross as a fleet coordinator but graciously moved back to collections for a month to help out during the nationwide blood crisis.

## Man makes personal sacrifice to help

Things have come full circle for Red Crosser Joaquin Lemus. A phlebotomist since 2010, Joaquin recently began a new position as a Red Cross fleet coordinator, helping maintain the organization’s Boise-area vehicles and facilities.

He was enjoying this new role, but not long after he started that position, the omicron variant began its steady march across the country, making it much more difficult for the Red Cross to collect lifesaving blood.

Blood drives were being canceled and the Red Cross – like so many other organizations across the country – struggled with staffing shortages.

Phlebotomists were in short supply, and the nationwide blood inventory was at its lowest point in a decade. Joaquin knew he needed to do something to help.

So with little hesitation, he raised his hand to move back into his old position for a month or so and help his biomed teammates collect the blood products that hospitals desperately needed.

For Joaquin, blood collection is extremely personal after two close family members received transfusions.

### POSITIONS AVAILABLE

We still need more collections staff in the Pocatello, Lewiston and Bozeman areas. Red Cross offers competitive pay, paid training, health benefits and the opportunity to build your career. A high school degree or equivalent is required.



Those interested in the **Lewiston** opening are encouraged to apply here: <https://bit.ly/3JGTgSv>.

Click here to apply for the **Pocatello** position: <https://bit.ly/3IHefD7>.

Click here to apply for a **Bozeman** opening: <https://rdcrss.org/3r7VkkT>.

“My aunt ruptured an artery and required six units of blood, an emergent need,” he said. “After (knowing) her diagnosis, I had new

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# Schoolkids raise funds for fire victims

In December, when Great Falls sixth-grader Katelyn Nix heard about the Gibson Flats grassfire burning south of town, she knew she wanted to do something to help the families who had lost their homes.

“I love to give back to others, and I love to see how that makes them feel,” the 12-year-old said.

She thought about it all day at school, and that afternoon as she road home with her friend Sophia Nelson, the two began to form a plan.

With the help of their parents, teachers, principal, the PTA and their Valley View classmates, Katelyn and Sophia gathered goodies for four baskets each with a different theme -- like movies or sports. They then raffled the baskets at their school, raising an amazing



Sophia Nelson, left, and Katelyn Nix present Montana Red Cross Executive Director Diane Wright with a check to help families who lost homes in a recent Great Falls fire.

\$875 for the Great Falls families.

“I thought it was going to be like \$100 – that’s it,” Katelyn said. “Almost a \$1,000 is pretty wild.”

In March, Katelyn and Sophia presented

Vaughn schools also send aid / Page 2

a check to the Montana Red Cross during a special event at their school. Katelyn said it didn’t take long to decide where she wanted the money to go.

“I was talking with our principal, and the Red Cross is the first thing that comes to mind that can spread the money and help people,” Katelyn said.

And she’s grateful to everyone who gave them support along the way.

“I’m very happy that everything worked out,” she said. “I’m very appreciative of everyone who helped out and helped make this what it could be.”

# Welcome our new employees

We are excited to announce a couple of new hires in our region.

Courtney Wilson is the new executive admin for our region and is based in the Boise area.

With a strong desire to help others, Courtney comes to the American Red Cross after six years of working as an administrative assistant in higher education.



**Courtney Wilson**

In her free time, she enjoys going on adventures with her husband and daughter, exploring the great Idaho outdoors, reading, dancing and writing.

Courtney replaces Angela James, who has retired after almost nine years with the Red Cross. Angela will remain as a volunteer helping with the inventorying of mission cards and client assistance cards.

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Rick Baker has joined the operations

team and is working out of our Great Falls site. Rick will be responsible for our fleet and facilities in Great Falls, Helena and Bozeman. He served in the military for 22 years and has extensive experience in fleet, security and facility management.



**Rick Baker**

He enjoys the outdoors and loves to fish and hike. Welcome, Courtney and Rick. Angela, thank you for your service.

## Spots open on disaster response teams

Learn how to be the Red Cross in your community by volunteering as part of a disaster team. Also, take the survey and let us know how you want to receive breaking Red Cross news, and learn how you can help us tell our stories online.

**POSITION OF THE MONTH.** Do you want to be part of a team assisting those recovering from disaster events? If so, we can put you to work.

**Title:** Disaster Action Team Volunteer

**Location:** Anywhere in Greater Idaho, Montana, and East Oregon.

**Tasks:** As a **disaster action team** volunteer, you can be a source of refuge and support when it's needed most. Fires and storms are unexpected, but you can get trained today to be ready to help in an emergency. Join your local disaster action team today and help your neighbors when they need it most.

**Time commitment:** Less than 5 hours per week pending unforeseen disasters.

Questions? Contact Gini at [IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org](mailto:IDMT.Recruiting@redcross.org) or by phone/text at 406-493-8778 for more information.

**RED CROSS IN THE NEWS.** Red Cross of Idaho and Montana CEO **Nicole Sirak Irwin** recently appeared on Boise State Public Radio with Idaho

### IN THE KNOW



RED CROSS NEWS & HAPPENINGS

Black History Museum Director Phillip Thompson where they discussed the blood shortage, our partnership with the Black History Museum and the need for blood donors from all ethnic groups. Great coverage on an important topic. Listen to the entire interview [here](#).

In Montana, Executive Director **Diane Wright** has cultivated a strong partnership with Gov. Gianforte's office that has paid big dividends. A few weeks ago, Gov. Gianforte issued a [proclamation](#) declaring March as Red Cross Month in Montana. As part of the governor's office [12 Days of Giving Campaign](#) in December, Gov. Gianforte encouraged Montanans to roll up their sleeves and donate lifesaving blood. And the governor proclaimed January as [National Blood Donor Month](#) and also visited our shelters during wildfire season to thank our volunteers.

This all led to positive media coverage in communities big and small across the state.

**TALK TO US.** War, COVID-19 ... we know the world is constantly changing right now, and we want to make sure we are communicating these

changes and updates with you in the ways – and at the pace – that you prefer.

Below is a link to a survey asking how we should best communicate these breaking news updates with you – i.e. through Volunteer Connection, RED ALERTS, email, etc. – and how often you would like to receive this information.

We stress this survey is focused on those big breaking news items – like changes to the mask policy.

Please take a few minutes and fill out this quick survey. [https://volunteerconnection.redcross.org/?nd=vms\\_load\\_form&form\\_id=10958](https://volunteerconnection.redcross.org/?nd=vms_load_form&form_id=10958)

### KETCHUP WITH FRIENDS.

Please join fellow volunteers at our social time, Tuesday, April 15, from 7:30 - 8 p.m.

One winner will receive a prize.

Click [here](#) to join the meeting.

If you join and are having trouble getting access, please send a message to [Na-](mailto:Na-)



[than.Gilbert@RedCross.org](mailto:than.Gilbert@RedCross.org) and we will see what we can do to help. Hope to see you all there!



### TO DONATE BLOOD

Visit online [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org).

Or you can call 800-RED-CROSS

## Going back: ‘Strong team player’ praised

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meaning to my job.”

Joaquin’s mother also required blood transfusions for an illness.

“She is A-OK now,” he said.

“Working in collections was a ‘job’ when I started but now it is more like a calling. It is so rewarding.”

Now the father of two, Joaquin originally came to the Red Cross in 2010 after working at Micron Technology, where many of his friends and co-workers had donated blood. Things came full circle for him there as well when he worked a Micron blood drive shortly after he became a phlebotomist.

“I even stuck my old engineering buddy there, then two more at Micron,” he said.

Since this winter’s blood crisis, the Idaho Red Cross has been able to hire and train several new phlebotomists, and the COVID surge has slowed dramatically. After personally helping collect 200 units of lifesaving blood during his temporary stint with the collections team, Joaquin has returned

His hard work is an inspiration to everyone around him.

— Dawn Brossart, regional chief operating officer

to his fleet and facilities position.

His flexibility and commitment to helping others hasn’t gone unnoticed.

“Joaquin’s willingness to assist with collecting lifesaving blood is a testament to his values,” said Dawn Brossart, regional chief operating officer.

“Once again he went above and beyond the call of duty and demonstrated what a strong team player he is. His hard work is an inspiration to everyone around him.”

— Amy Joyner Red Cross writing team volunteer

### Vaughn students also send money for fire victims

Students at Vaughn Public Schools also did their part to help families impacted by the Gibson Flats fire with a fundraiser of their own. Students



who brought in a donation were allowed to wear their hats at school.

Their efforts tallied more than \$120 for Red Cross relief efforts.

Great Falls middle school sent assistance / Page 1