

# RED ALERTS!



Keeping our Red Cross volunteer workforce engaged and informed



## ON THE HORIZON

■ **World Humanitarian Day,** Aug. 19. Visit [org/en/events/humanitarianaday/](http://org/en/events/humanitarianaday/).



**LOG YOUR HOURS AND WIN!** In July, we will have drawings for Red Cross apparel. Volunteers who have logged 20 hours will have four chances to win while those with 100 hours will have eight chances.



**15**

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



## MILESTONES

**KENNETH AKERS,** 5 years

**JOHN McGREW,** 5 years

**TONI TAYLOR,** 5 years

**CLAUDIA WARNER,** 5 years

**DAVE WARNER,** 5 years



Fourteen teens from across Montana took part in the Youth Action Council, a Red Cross program that teaches students about international humanitarian law and the rules of war. (Pictures were taken in November before the first COVID-19 case was reported in Montana).

# Rules of war, peace of mind

*Eager Montana teens learn that even on the battlefield, laws apply*

**W**ith a father in the Montana Air National Guard who has deployed seven times to places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, Madison Wilson is no stranger to military life and the dangers of combat.

But even she was surprised by many of things she learned through a Red Cross program that teaches young adults about international humanitarian law and the rules of war.

“Nobody ever talks about it,” the 17-year-old from Cascade said. “I like that (international humanitarian law) protects everyone. It’s not biased at all. I think that’s so important because that’s how you save lives.”

Madison and 13 other teens from across Montana recently participated in the Red Cross Youth Action Campaign, which covers the reality of armed conflicts and the measures in place to protect lives and preserve human dignity. They learned about neutrality, targets vs. nontargets and the treatment of prisoners of war.

Madison said she was surprised to see how strict those rules are, especially when it comes



Madison Wilson said she was surprised by many of the things she learned about the rules of war, and it helped give her peace of mind.

to areas that can and cannot be targeted during combat.

“If you see the bad guy that you’re trying to get but if they’re in one of those zones where

**SEE RULES, PAGE 2**

# What does sheltering look like during COVID?

As we move into hurricane and wildfire season we are hearing questions about what we expect sheltering to look like during COVID-19.

Let’s start by emphasizing that the safety of our workforce and the communities we serve remain our priority.

In many cases, instead of opening shelters, we’re prioritizing individual hotel rooms or dormitory-style rooms to make sure people have a safe place to stay if they can’t return home after a disaster. Congregate vs. noncongregate sheltering will be decided on a case-by-



## YOU WANT TO KNOW

Send in a question to [volunteerconnection@redcross.org](mailto:volunteerconnection@redcross.org)

case basis.

If hotels or dormitories aren’t a viable option, additional safety precautions have been put in place to allow us to more safely open emergency shelters at the request of local officials.

For example, we will work with local officials to set up a health screening process for everyone coming into the shelter, provide masks, add additional space between cots and use enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices.

Everyone in a Red Cross shelter — including shelter residents and staff — are expected to wear face masks.

If a person showing COVID-19 symptoms arrives at a Red Cross shelter, we will not turn away that person

**SEE SHELTER, PAGE 2**

# Roadblocks to transitioning from a shelter

*A note from Regional Disaster Officer Ted Koenig:*

There are few tasks more challenging than finding alternative housing in the aftermath of a disaster. For those who find themselves in shelters, the transition can be especially difficult and confusing.

As we have experienced far too many times, disasters destroy or damage the community's available housing stock — which was often scarce even before the disaster — and, as time passes, those remaining in shelters typically have challenges accessing benefits. That's why the effectiveness of our Shelter

Resident Transition process is so important.

SRT is a component of the Red Cross' sheltering program that enables shelter residents, the Red Cross and its partners to comprehensively understand and collaboratively overcome the recovery roadblocks limiting shelter residents from moving forward.

Everyone — not just caseworkers — has a role to play in helping shelter residents identify and overcome the individual barriers preventing their rapid transition from a Red Cross shelter to a more sustainable housing solution.

In preparation for an active wildfire and hurricane season, we encourage the following to help every Red Cross responder understand how they contribute to the Shelter Resident Transition process in a Disaster Relief Operation.

- Watch this six-minute video about Shelter Resident Transition (<https://vimeo.com/427762062/005fefe342>).

- Complete the following 11-minute EDGE course: Shelter Resident Transition for those working in a Shelter: <https://bit.ly/EDGE-SRT-volunteer>

Thank you for your time, attention and care for the clients in our care following a disaster.

# Shelter: Keeping clients, staff safe

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or his or her family.

Each shelter will work in coordination with local public health and Red Cross Disaster Health Services to help ensure symptomatic residents receive appropriate care.

During a disaster, the Red Cross is committed to ensuring that everyone who comes to us has a safe place to stay.

For more guidance on wildfire sheltering during COVID-19, please visit this document on the Exchange: [intra-net.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/](https://intra-net.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/documents/our_services/DisasterCycleServices/dcs-management/covid-19/WildlandFireEvacuationsCongregate-ShelterOperationsInCOVID-19Pandemic.pdf)

[documents/our\\_services/DisasterCycleServices/dcs-management/covid-19/WildlandFireEvacuationsCongregate-ShelterOperationsInCOVID-19Pandemic.pdf](https://intra-net.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/documents/our_services/DisasterCycleServices/dcs-management/covid-19/WildlandFireEvacuationsCongregate-ShelterOperationsInCOVID-19Pandemic.pdf)

Also, check out this video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/lkZ-YfPRtc8>.

**CULTURAL COMPETENCY SERIES:** We encourage you to participate in a monthly series focused on the unique cultural characteristics of diverse communities as well as overarching principles that support a culturally

proficient organization.

Attention will be given to effective communication and individual responsibilities.

Sessions usually occur on the second Friday of every month from 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. EST.

Webinar and call-in instructions will be updated on the Exchange and announced in Cross Connection.

If you missed the June 19 session, *Exploring Black Community Anger, Frustration and Hopelessness: From Covid-19 to George Floyd*, it will be posted in Edge sometime in the next couple of weeks.

# Rules: Sharing with their peers

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you can't shoot then what would you do? That really surprised me," she said.

Learning these rules are in place also brought comfort.

"Knowing the rules of IHL, I definitely feel my dad can be safer in a lot of situations and that brings a lot of peace of mind for me as his daughter at home waiting for him," she said.

The teens who participated in this Red Cross program are all part of the National Guard Youth Council, which provides training and teaches leadership skills to young adults who have a parent in the Guard.

All the Youth Action Committee participants have a parent who has deployed, some of them recently.

"It was phenomenal training," said Savanna Sill, the lead child and youth program coordinator for the Montana National Guard. "Everyone in the room walked away learning a lot and having a better understanding of IHL, including myself.

"We had six kids who experienced deployment within a year before the training, and we had one girl who is currently experiencing deployment. To understand the role IHL plays gives them a better idea of what IHL does to protect people and that's really important."

As part of the Youth Action Campaign, Madison and the other teens were encouraged to share what they learned about international law and the rules of war with others their age. The group designed a fun capture the flag-type game they planned to play with other military youth this summer at Camp Runnamucka, a Montana National Guard camp held at Camp Rotary near Neihart.

Before the game, they planned to do



The Youth Action Council planned a capture the flag-type game to teach their peers about the rules of war but the activity was canceled because of COVID-19.

a quick briefing with the campers about what they learned about humanitarian law, laying out the ground rules for the day ahead.

Those who were tagged during the game would be escorted from the playing field by a "Red Crosser" wearing an armband and taken to the out-zone. There they had to correctly answer questions about international humanitarian law before they could re-enter the game.

Scattered throughout the field were designated safe zones like a school, park or hospital where participants couldn't be tagged.

The group put a ton of work into planning the game and were looking forward to sharing what they learned in a creative, interactive way.

"We were super excited about this," Madison said.

Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, Camp Runnamucka was canceled and capture the flag never happened.

"It was disappointing because I feel like my team and I had a lot of really

good ideas on how we could reach out to people," Madison said. "We're still able to do that, but we just had to shift our plans."

Instead the teens launched a social media campaign through platforms like TikTok.

And despite the disappointment of not being able to complete the program like they had hoped, the group still learned lots and is excited to spread the word to others.

"I am proud of what they did," said Sara Cease, the Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces program manager who led the youth campaign. "I'm super proud of the kids — they're so smart and so welcome to learning new things and then applying them in their lives as military kids."

"Some of this stuff my dad didn't even know about," Madison added.

To learn more about international humanitarian law and the Youth Action Campaign, visit <https://www.redcross.org/humanityinwar.html>.

— Story by Matt Ochsner