



### **HIV/AIDS Education**

The Atlanta Chapter in 1986 formed an HIV/AIDS education program that set an example for a national Red Cross HIV/AIDS program. The American Red Cross is now a national leader in AIDS education. It brings fair, timely, and accurate information about AIDS and HIV to millions of people. Hundreds of Red Cross Chapters around the country have dedicated people who:

Distribute HIV/AIDS brochures and public service announcements,

Train family members and public health workers to care for people with AIDS, and

Work with health departments, employers, and civic agencies to educate the public about AIDS.

### **Hurricanes Hugo and Andrew**

Hurricane Hugo swept through the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands before slamming into the South Carolina coast in September 1989. By November 1989, the American Red Cross had provided relief in the form of emergency supplies and help with rent or temporary repairs to over 116,000 individuals and families. At the peak of activity, the Red Cross operated over 470 shelters. In the Caribbean, over 300 Red Cross paid staff and disaster specialists were assigned to help; while on the U.S. mainland, over 230 paid staff and disaster specialists were assigned to North and South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Virginia, and West Virginia. Hugo's force decreased in the northeastern United States, but it already had destroyed over 16,500 dwellings, damaged another 140,000, caused at least 65 deaths, and disrupted electricity and water supplies to thousands of homes, schools, and offices. In September, the American Red Cross announced a \$42 million disaster fund campaign to help storm victims, but by November, the cost of operations was up to \$64 million, more than any other disaster in Red Cross history. As a result of Hurricane Hugo and an earthquake that struck Northern California 30 days later, the Red Cross budget for disaster operations was depleted. The organization called upon the American public for help and, by the end of 1989, it had received \$139 million of which \$35 million were corporate donations.

On August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew roared into south Florida with sustained winds of 145 mph and gusts up to 174 mph. Forty-one people were killed and hundreds of thousands were left homeless. A twelve-foot tidal surge flattened homes, mowed down trees, and destroyed Homestead Air Force Base. Wreaking \$20 billion in damage in Florida, and ruining another 41 billion in buildings and crops in Louisiana and Mississippi, Hurricane Andrew was the costliest storm in U.S. history.

Prior to Andrew's arrival, the Red Cross prepared for the disaster by setting up shelters for evacuees. Following the storm, damage assessment teams helped the organization understand and respond to the unprecedented magnitude of the catastrophe. After surveying the devastation in Florida and Louisiana, President Bush addressed the nation from the Oval Office, praising the generosity of the American people and asking that those who sought a way to help contribute money to the American Red Cross. In less than 24 hours, \$4 million from over 53,000 Americans poured in. Four months after Hurricane Andrew struck, the Red Cross closed its last disaster service center in Homestead, but Red Cross workers continued to supply assistance for at least another year until the storm victims were able to stand on their own two feet. Some 14,800 Red Cross disaster workers were involved in the Hurricane Andrew operation. By 1993, the American Red Cross relief operation cost about \$84 million.

### **Hurricane Fran**

Hurricane Fran struck the coast of North Carolina near Cape Fear on September 6, 1996. Fran, with sustained winds of more than 100 knots, destroyed numerous vacation and permanent homes on the barrier islands. She was the third-costliest hurricane in U.S. history, behind Andrew and Hugo, with damage estimated at \$3.2 billion dollars. As always, the Red Cross responded with emergency services to comfort those left homeless by this natural disaster.

Visit the National Hurricane Center <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/> for more information about these and other storms.

### **Georgia Floods of 1994**

In July, 1994, Tropical Storm Alberto moved slowly through Georgia, dumping massive amounts of rain into the northern and central parts of the state. By July 5, central Georgia counties such as Henry, Monroe, and Coweta had massive flooding, leaving hundreds homeless. Water overran the High Falls Dam and many portions of I-75. The torrent of water moved from north to south. By July 6, levees along the Ocmulgee river were bursting and large portions of downtown Macon were underwater. There was no drinkable water in Macon. 30 counties were declared disaster areas.

The Georgia Emergency Management Agency, formed by the Georgia Department of Transportation, police agencies, and the Red Cross, established an operations center in Grant Park. By July 7, the Ocmulgee River had risen still higher and the city of Albany was flooded along the Flint River. By July 8, 500,000 people were without drinking water, 400,000 acres of crops were destroyed, and 23 people died. All four bridges across the Flint in downtown Albany were underwater, splitting the city in two. 15,000 people were evacuated from their home in Albany. The town of Montezuma was almost completely underwater. In parts of Bainbridge, near the Florida border, waters were 25 feet deep.

On July 9, the dam on Lake Blackshear burst, placing Bainbridge in more peril. The Vigoro fertilizer plant had a giant ammonia tank that was in danger of collapse from the flood waters. Construction crews worked feverishly to build a levee around the ammonia tank. If the tank burst, a giant cloud of poisonous ammonia gas would cover the Bainbridge area. The tank was eventually saved. By July 11, 23 square miles of Albany were underwater. By July 12, 300,000 acres of land were submerged.

The Red Cross set up service centers to meet the needs of the many people left homeless by the floods. Entertainment, games, and movies were provided to help children and adults pass the long days as they waited for the flood waters to recede. By July 15, many residents of Albany could begin to return to their homes. For many, though, this was just the beginning of their ordeal. For those whose homes were underwater, almost everything was lost. All clothing, furniture, pictures, and other personal possessions left behind were destroyed. Houses were ruined, as the floors were covered in mud and the sheetrock walls crumbled.

The Atlanta Metro Chapter, in partnership with WXIA television, formed an "11 Alive News Flood Force" to help with the massive cleanup after the flood. Thirteen bus loads of volunteers - over 1,000 people - left Atlanta on July 15 and 16 to help with the cleanup in towns like Americus and Albany. The volunteers went from house to house, removing debris for the grateful residents. As each house was finished, volunteers placed a red ribbon on the mailbox to indicate that the volunteers had been there.

The flood of 1994 was called a "500 year flood." Money damage was estimated to be in the \$100's of millions. Most of the victims had no flood insurance. 31 people died, and more than 35,000 were left homeless.

### **Atlanta Olympics - 1996**

At about 1:20 AM on July 27, 1996, during the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, an unknown terrorist set off a bomb during a concert in Centennial Olympic Park, injuring 110 people and killing two.

In response to the explosion at the Olympic Park, the American Red Cross urged all Olympic game attendees in the Atlanta area to call family members to reassure them of their well-being. Family members outside of Atlanta were encouraged to call their own local Red Cross chapter for information concerning their loved ones. The Red Cross deployed an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) to the Fulton County Emergency Operations Center to provide food for the various law enforcement officials. Red Cross trained volunteers provided first aid following the explosion. Also that day, Red Cross volunteers fanned out across the Centennial Park area, distributing leaflets that advised parents on how to help children cope with such disasters.

### **Atlanta Tornadoes - 1998**

On the morning of March 20, 1998, a tornado struck Hall and White Counties, Georgia, killing 12 and injuring hundreds of other victims. The storm developed so suddenly that the National Weather Service was not able to warn residents of the area to seek shelter. According to the National Weather Service, all of the people killed were in a mobile home or motor vehicle. The dollar amount of the damage was in the millions, including damage to two schools, and many homes and vehicles.

The Red Cross responded by opening two service centers in the area. At the centers, families met with Red Cross caseworkers who helped with their emergency needs. Examples of assistance given include vouchers for groceries, clothing, medicine, and household items; help with rent, home repairs, tools and transportation, mental health counseling, and referrals for recovery resources. The shelters served over 5,000 meals and snacks over a three-day period.

An intense group of storm cells struck the northern suburbs of Atlanta early on the morning of April 9, 1998. This was the same storm that spawned tornadoes killing over 30 near Birmingham, Alabama, the evening of April 8. Several businesses in the Windy Hill area of Marietta were extensively damaged or destroyed. By dawn, most streets and highways in the area were closed because of destroyed buildings and downed trees and power lines. Fortunately, the storm hit at night when the businesses were unoccupied. From Marietta the tornadoes struck commercial area during the day and dozens of people would have been injured or killed. From Marietta the tornadoes converged heavily wooded residential areas in Dunwoody and Dekalb County. One man was killed when a tree struck his home. An incredible number of downed trees and power lines brought traffic to a halt, and prompted local police to cordon off the damaged areas to prevent further injuries. Hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed.

The Red Cross opened disaster relief centers in Dunwoody and Norcross to provide immediate assistance to tornado victims.