

# REPORT BACK TO THE COMMUNITY ALBERTA 2017-18





UPPER LEFT: ABORIGINAL AWARENESS WEEK POW WOW; UPPER RIGHT: HEALTH EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM, CALGARY; CENTRE LEFT: WATER SAFETY, MEDICINE HAT; BOTTOM: BE READY TEAM, CALGARY STAMPEDE BREAKFAST

# MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT JENN MCMANUS



The last year has been one that again saw Canadians impacted by severe weather events. From flooding to fires, the spring, summer, and fall of 2017 were extremely busy domestically.

Hundreds of Alberta staff and volunteers assisted with Canadian Red Cross responses from west to east, and many continue to support the fire recovery efforts in B.C., Fort McMurray and the Wood Buffalo region.

One of those fires dubbed Kenow, spread into Alberta in September 2017 and impacted people living in the southwest section of the province. These continued events and resulting responses illustrate the importance of the work we do and the essential contributions of our trained volunteers. It is an ongoing effort as we work to add volunteers and build capacity to enable our continued ability to respond when communities ask for support.

Our disaster management teams are working hard and hosting numerous information sessions in communities across the province. Dedicated volunteers make the work of the Red Cross possible and play a critical role in delivering services to the most vulnerable individuals and communities across Canada, and around the world.

In addition to disaster management, Red Cross in Alberta continues to be recognized for excellence in a wide range of programming, including swimming and water safety, first aid, violence and abuse prevention, the health equipment loan program, Indigenous engagement, and international humanitarian law.

I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to our community, municipal, provincial and Indigenous partners for their continued support. It is the collaboration with all of you that allows us to best assist the most vulnerable in our communities and work together to prepare for the future.

Additionally, I want to acknowledge the ongoing support of our many donors, both corporate and individual. Without you, we would not be able to assist those impacted by emergencies and disasters, teach Canadians how to prepare for unexpected events, offer training and tools on violence and abuse prevention, or provide water safety and first aid courses. Our donors allow us to do the work that we do and I respectfully ask for your continued support.

Moving forward, I am honoured to work with the Provincial Advisory Committee and the hundreds of dedicated volunteers and colleagues across Alberta, as well as community partners, donors, governments, and citizens to build on these successes. Thank you for your ongoing support of our work and our teams.

**Jenn McManus**

Vice President, Canadian Red Cross,  
Alberta and Northwest Territories

## PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Diane Carter**

**Mary Jane Dawson**

**Chris Diamant**

**Justin Dunphy**

**Patrick Lichowit**

**John McCook**

**Jenn McManus**

**Ed Stevenson**

**Taylor Woo**

**Allan Works**

**Billy Wu**

**Muhammad Yaseen**

## RED CROSS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

**HUMANITY**

**VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

**IMPARTIALITY**

**UNITY**

**NEUTRALITY**

**UNIVERSALITY**

**INDEPENDENCE**

# DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN ALBERTA

## PREPARING, RESPONDING AND REBUILDING

 Canadian Statistics

 Alberta

  
over  
**2,977**



  
over  
**283**

responded to  
**disasters in Canada**

  
**132,472**



  
**1,852**

assisted  
**Canadians**

  
More than  
**6,000**



  
More than  
**600**

engaged  
**volunteers**

  
**8,019**



  
**722**

delivered disaster preparedness training to  
**Canadians**



# COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN ALBERTA

## SUPPORTING RESILIENCE, INDEPENDENCE AND WELL-BEING

**27,891 clients**  
served



**49,789 pieces of equipment**  
loaned

# PREVENTION AND SAFETY

## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS

 Canadian Statistics

 Alberta



learned first aid



attended Respect Education workshops



attended Red Cross Swimming & Water Safety courses

more than **160 Albertans** attended Indigenous Water Safety Program



# INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

## HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE



# ORDER OF THE RED CROSS PRESENTED TO TWO ALBERTANS



CENTRE: HER HONOUR, THE HONOURABLE **LOIS E. MITCHELL**, CM, AOE, LLD, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ALBERTA; RIGHT: **DIANE STORY**, RECIPIENT AND **DON MARENTETTE**, DIRECTOR, FIRST AID. LEFT: **TODD WEISS**, RECIPIENT AND **MELISSA FOUGERE**, SENIOR MANAGER, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

Diane Story thought she was going to a retirement party, but when she saw who was gathered at the Radisson Hotel in northeast Calgary, she realized something was up.

“I saw my husband who’s supposed to be in Seattle,” she says, “and all of my family, and the people that I’ve worked with, which is pretty amazing.” The real reason Story was there was to receive the highest honour of the Canadian Red Cross: The Order of the Red Cross Member Level, along with fellow recipient Todd Weiss.

The Order of the Red Cross recognizes people who have provided outstanding humanitarian service in Canada and abroad. Only 25 people receive the member level pin each year.

Story has volunteered with the Canadian Red Cross First Aid program since 1978, dedicating hours to training First Aid and Water Safety instructors, developing new programs and revising old ones, and travelling to Bulgaria and Paris to work with other Red Cross trainers.

Honouree Todd Weiss was also surprised by the award. The Edmonton firefighter drove to Calgary to have dinner with his parents. But when he saw his whole

family gathered, he put it all together. He was grateful to be able to accept the award in front of his sons.

“My two boys have seen me leave home throughout the years,” he says, adding that he missed his youngest son’s first birthday when volunteering in New York City after the September 11 attacks. “They’ve lived their lives with me volunteering, so I hope I’ve been a good role model to them.”

As a Red Cross volunteer, Weiss has taken on management roles in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, 2005 Hurricane Katrina, 2011 Northern Alberta Fires, 2013 southern Alberta Floods and the 2016 Alberta Fires. In 2012, he took on the job of deputy director of the response operation for Hurricane Isaac in Louisiana.

But it’s a small local disaster that sticks with him the most. Weiss recollects two men he met while responding to a house fire in Edmonton, and how appreciative they were of the Red Cross assistance.

“I remember, like it was yesterday, those two men sitting on that curb,” he says, “I was so grateful to help them... I get more out of this than I put in.”

The Honourable Lois Mitchell, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, was there to present the two honourees with their pins.

# EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW INTO TODAY'S CONTEXT



L TO R: CHENOA SLY, PROFESSOR JOANNA HARRINGTON, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SIOBHAN BYRNE, CRC SENIOR LEGAL ADVISOR JONATHAN SOMER.

“An absolute prohibition of war in an urban context is a hazard. Sometimes you need military forces in a civilian centre.” This quote from Christopher Penny, associate professor at the Normal Paterson School of International Affairs, framed the direction of this year’s International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Conference, hosted in March by the Canadian Red Cross and the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta (U of A). The panel session spoke about the realities, practicalities and difficulties of IHL in 2018.

Jonathan Somer, senior legal advisor with the Canadian Red Cross, presented an overview of international humanitarian law followed by questions and answers fielded by Dr. Siobahn Byrne, associate professor of political science at the U of A, Andrew Carswell, senior delegate to Canada for the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Joanna Harrington, professor of law at the U of A.

As the discussion proceeded, the focus landed on how IHL has changed and adapted in today’s context, especially when considering Syria. Carswell explained that “urban warfare isn’t something that’s new. What has changed over the last half century is that IHL norms have evolved.”

In traditional wartime settings, there are two sides, but in Syria, at times there are believed to have been between 1,000 and 5,000 groups involved in the fighting. Panellists were asked about the challenges that this development poses. Harrington said communication and accountability are big challenges. “We have to work on disseminating the rules and investigating credible violations. You can’t have peace without justice, and accountability is a big part of that peace.”

The overall message, though, was that in today’s changing context there are still tangible actions and steps that can be taken to improve adherence to IHL.

Byrne sees a role not just for governments or rebel leaders, but for the people, particularly women. “Women can organize and lead in peace talks precisely because they aren’t the leaders of these factions. A lot of the focus is on how to share power among rebels and government leaders, but we should consider how everyday people are going to contribute to rehabilitation.”

You can find more information on international humanitarian law at [www.redcross.ca/ihl](http://www.redcross.ca/ihl).

# THE RED CROSS SOCIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE: CANADIAN YOUTH EXAMINE THE REALITIES OF HUMANITARIAN AID

Creative thinking, innovation and ingenuity — those are the skills that teams of students and young professionals were encouraged to apply in the Canadian Red Cross [Social Innovation Challenge](#).

The challenge gave participants in Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto and online a chance to work in teams to find solutions to support the response in a humanitarian crisis like the Bangladesh Population Movement. Hosted by the Red Cross Youth Advisory Committee, about 100 Canadians aged 18 to 30 participated.

It was challenging when faced with a growing number of humanitarian concerns since violence has caused thousands of people to flee Rakhine state in Myanmar to seek safety in neighbouring Bangladesh.

Is the environment safe and clean? Is there enough food and clean water? How can shelter and supplies be provided for more than 688,000 displaced people? How can women and children – most of the displaced people – be kept safe from violence? Those were just a few of the questions participants in the challenge were asked to consider.

“The goal was to engage and educate youth on the complexity of international humanitarian assistance,” says Courtney Wilson, manager of Communications and Strategic Partnerships. “I was incredibly inspired to see so many young people passionate about humanitarian assistance and the work the Red Cross is doing around the world.”

Solutions were judged on innovative thought, understanding of humanitarian aid principles, cultural context, clarity, and communication within the framework of the [Fundamental Principles](#) of Red Cross. The Social Innovation Challenge engaged young Canadians and brought light to the challenges humanitarian aid organizations face around the world. It also introduced a fresh way of thinking to the work the Red Cross does internationally.

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“It’s not only about finding solutions to these problems, but, as well, incorporating the Red Cross’ fundamental values in each response,” says Val Heerema, humanitarian aid worker and one of the Calgary judges. “It’s about the humanitarian side of things.”



THE RED CROSS SOCIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE INSPIRED CANADIAN YOUTH TO THINK CREATIVELY AND UTILIZE THEIR INGENUITY TO PROPOSE VIABLE SOLUTIONS TO A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS. THE ALBERTA TEAM, [KATMANWEN](#), WAS ONE OF FOUR SEMI-FINALISTS CHOSEN IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE COMPETITION.



# YOUNG INDIGENOUS LEADERS MAKING A SPLASH

Young Indigenous leaders in Alberta are bringing water safety training and programming to their communities.

The Indigenous Water Safety Program began in Alberta in 2013. It has now expanded to Saskatchewan and is starting to take root in Ontario. There are also plans to begin work in British Columbia once funding is established.

In addition to water safety, the Canadian Red Cross provides training in Standard First Aid, Babysitting and Stay Safe programs, and offers a Youth Leader Workshop.

This new generation of leaders include 14 assistant lifeguards and instructors that will now teach in their own communities to increase awareness, prevention and safety education.

Program Coordinator Lesley-Anne Morley says the certification of the assistant lifeguards and instructors is one of the program's most important achievements.

"It's one of the most exciting things for us," says Morley. "It takes us from simply providing lessons to developing leaders in the community so they can teach others."

Morley explains the motivation behind the program was the high drowning rate among Canada's Indigenous population. The drowning rate is 10 per cent higher than the national average and 15 per cent higher in children under the age of five.



JOINT SWIMMING LESSONS FOR WHITEFISH LAKE AND SUCKER CREEK FIRST NATIONS

The remote location of many First Nations and Métis settlements and large number of bodies of water play a role in the increased rate. In addition, while many daily activities like hunting and fishing revolve around water, residents often lack access to water safety education.

But that is changing. Today, some of the communities are working towards becoming Red Cross training partners.

"Some communities want to take ownership of the water safety program and we are working with them to become certified to do that," Morley says. "They can then move forward and provide training opportunities in other Indigenous communities and increase the level of awareness and safety in the province overall."

As for the youth that have been through training, Morley says they are already starting to recognize and promote safe behaviors.

"The best part of it is that they are inspiring the younger generation, their younger siblings and cousins."

Now entering its sixth year, the program has reached 1,100 young people in 21 Indigenous and Métis communities in Alberta. You can find more information about Red Cross swimming and water safety courses on our [website](#).



CANADIAN RED CROSS SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY TEAM

# THROUGH THE ASHES



FOUND IN THE DEBRIS OF THE GILES' DESTROYED HOME IN 2016.  
PHOTO COURTESY: DENNINE GILES

"In that moment, everybody was terrified. We were all just trying to get out of the city and that was terrifying itself."

The memory of escaping the wildfire that became known as "The Beast" is emotional for Dennine Giles and her husband, Marty. The couple, who are business owners and community leaders, was among more than 80,000 people forced to evacuate their homes in the Wood Buffalo region in May 2016.

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**"I grabbed every single picture of my kids from when they were little because I didn't have digital copies," Dennine remembers.**

**"Then I quickly took a photo of every room in the house to capture the memory because I didn't know if I would ever see it again."**

Like many, Dennine and her husband had minutes to evacuate from Fort McMurray. Initially, they went in opposite directions, but reunited at their small cabin near Lac La Biche, almost three hours south of their home in the city.

The couple opened their cabin and property to any evacuees who needed a place to stay.

"We had 19 people that showed up because they needed a place to go after evacuating," Dennine recalls.

It would be weeks before residents would be allowed to return home, and they knew it was going to take a collaborative effort to take care of the affected people.

"I know for sure that the firefighters in our community saved the infrastructure of our community. But then I also know that it was the Red Cross that brought everybody home," says Dennine.

Now, residents in the region are two years into their recovery. Marty and Dennine know from experience it takes time. The couple's home was destroyed in the fire and they were also impacted by the 2013 southern Alberta floods.

"It is a marathon. It is not a sprint. It is different for everyone," Marty says. "We want to thank the Red Cross and all Canadians for their donations, help, and compassion."

Dennine's experiences of surviving two of Canada's worst natural disasters in three years inspired her to become actively involved with the [Tiffany Circle](#), a group of philanthropic women who support the Red Cross.

"When I walked back into Fort McMurray, the Red Cross was there and is still here. It is my privilege and my responsibility to pay it forward. Someone else is going to need help like I did and I want to support the Red Cross in its work and the ability to offer that help in our communities."

For more information on the recovery, you can view the [two year donor report](#) on our website.

The Red Cross remains in the community, meeting families and individuals for one-on-one assessments to assist them.



TOP: RED CROSS STAFF IN FORT McMURRAY, BOTTOM LEFT: AERIAL PHOTOS OF FORT McMURRAY, RIGHT: REBUILDING IN FORT McMURRAY, BOTTOM RIGHT: AERIAL PHOTO, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO



## OUR SUPPORTERS

The Red Cross would like to extend its sincere thank you to the corporate, major, and individual gift donors, institutions, governments, community groups and partners, and schools for their ongoing support and financial investment in Alberta programs with the Canadian Red Cross. Thank you for making it possible for the Red Cross to provide life-saving and life-changing services to the most vulnerable in Alberta. Our national annual report can be found on our [website](#).

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