

REPORT BACK TO THE COMMUNITY ALBERTA 2018-19





UPPER LEFT: ORDER OF THE RED CROSS RECIPIENT **BERNICE KITCHIN** WITH HER HONOUR, THE HONOURABLE **LOIS E. MITCHELL**, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ALBERTA; MIDDLE LEFT: RED CROSS VOLUNTEER **JOSH KOKE** (FAR LEFT) RECEIVED THE ORDER OF RED CROSS, PICTURE WITH **KEVIN PAES** (CENTER) AND **LAURA KEEGAN**; UPPER RIGHT: **MERYL MAKINSON**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KIDSPORT WOOD BUFFALO IN FORT MCMURRAY; BOTTOM LEFT: **REBECCA BLACKBURN**, RED CROSS RESCUER AWARD RECIPIENT; BOTTOM RIGHT: 2018 CANADIAN RED CROSS WATER SAFETY CONFERENCE.

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT JENN MCMANUS



The Canadian Red Cross has been working collaboratively in the last year with local, Indigenous and provincial municipalities, governments and emergency services to increase volunteer capacity in rural and urban areas. Together, we have also been building resiliency in communities with disaster risk reduction initiatives. Rocky View County was part of a pilot project in the spring of 2019 which saw Red Cross volunteers speak with homeowners in several communities, including Langdon, Beiseker and Bragg Creek, to provide information about flood preparations for their homes and properties.

In the last year, we have been working collaboratively with Indigenous leadership in the province to develop and provide culturally appropriate and relevant programs that recognize the diversity of their communities. We will continue this work with our team and Indigenous leadership and communities.

Our emergency management volunteers continue to host information sessions in communities across the province and encourage Albertans to spend some of their valuable time helping their neighbours, friends and families. Dedicated volunteers make the work of the Red Cross possible and play a critical role delivering services to the most vulnerable people across Canada and around the world.

We want to offer sincere congratulations and thanks to two long-time Alberta volunteers who each received the Order of the Red Cross in November 2018 for their extraordinary contributions and unwavering commitment to the fundamental principles of the Red Cross. Lieutenant Governor Lois Mitchell presented the prestigious award to Joshua Koke with Swimming and Water Safety and Bernice Kitchin with Emergency Management.

We are grateful to our community, municipal and provincial partners and our many corporate and individual donors. Your continued support allows us to assist those impacted by emergencies and disasters, work collaboratively with communities on disaster risk reduction strategies, and provide courses and information on water safety, first aid, abuse prevention, the Health Equipment Loan Program and international humanitarian law.

We are honoured to work with hundreds of dedicated volunteers across Alberta, as well as colleagues, partners, donors, governments, citizens and the Provincial Advisory Committee, as we continue to build on these successes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenn McManus".

Jenn McManus

Vice President, Canadian Red Cross,
Alberta and Northwest Territories

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mary Jane Dawson

Taylor Woo

Justin Dunphy

Allan Works

John McCook

Billy Wu

Jenn McManus

Muhammad Yaseen

Ed Stevenson

RED CROSS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

HUMANITY

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

IMPARTIALITY

UNITY

NEUTRALITY

UNIVERSALITY

INDEPENDENCE

HELPING ALBERTANS BE READY AND RESPOND TO DISASTERS

From increased volunteer recruitment to sharing flood prevention tips, a range of emergency management activities this year helped Albertans deal with potential disasters in their communities.

More Canadian Red Cross volunteers are ready to respond to emergencies in the province, thanks to an ongoing recruitment drive. As well, some volunteers are now trained to offer emotional support to people affected by disasters, as part of the Safety and Wellbeing program which grew significantly in the past year.

Another Red Cross initiative had volunteers going door to door in the spring, sharing flood protection tips with residents in Rocky View County for a national pilot project to raise awareness about disaster risk

reduction. A blog excerpt about this initiative is displayed below.

The Red Cross also continues to support the recovery of people affected by the 2016 wildfires in the Rural Municipality of Wood Buffalo, which includes Fort McMurray.

Melissa Fougere, senior manager of Emergency Management in Alberta, says developing strong community relationships has enabled the Red Cross to support these important initiatives.

“Establishing relationships is one of the most important elements of our work. We’re always so thankful for our partners and look forward to further strengthening essential ties that help support Albertans before, during, and after disasters.”

REDUCING THE RISK

By James Morneau (*blog excerpt*)

A few small steps go a long way in preventing significant water damage to the home. That’s why Red Cross volunteers walked through several flood-prone communities in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario to spread the word about easy ways to reduce the impacts of flooding.

I was part of a volunteer team that walked between homes in Bragg Creek, Langdon and Beiseker, speaking to residents. These communities were chosen because they have experienced severe flooding in the past.

This door-to-door effort is part of a pilot project launched by the Disaster Risk Reduction program developed in partnership with the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo. The purpose is to determine if one-on-one conversations with Red Cross volunteers can increase flood risk awareness and encourage cost-effective and practical action at the household level to reduce and prepare for flooding.

Recent research has shown that, on average, only six per cent of Canadians are aware of the flood risks in their area. But simple actions inside and outside the home can have a big impact when flood water is suddenly threatening.

When we think of flooding, it’s easy to imagine a muddy, overflowing river, but often, overland flooding can occur where there are no significant bodies of water, and grey water backup can still accumulate in home basements. Installing a backwater valve will prevent this backflowing from the sewer system.

Together, my team members and I shared many tips to lessen the flood risk and impact.

[Learn more](#) about emergency preparedness and understanding the potential risks in your community.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VOLUNTEER **JAMES MORNEAU** SHARED HIS EXPERIENCE SPEAKING TO RESIDENTS .



VOLUNTEERING IN RURAL ALBERTA



ANDREW DEGRUCHY, RED CROSS VOLUNTEER

Andrew DeGruchy is so passionate about volunteering that he wants to recruit more people willing to help their friends, families, and neighbours in an emergency.

For four years, DeGruchy has volunteered on an Emergency Management team for the Canadian Red Cross in his hometown of Cold Lake. He knows the important role local volunteers play in emergency situations, so now he's encouraging others to join Red Cross and assist rural Alberta communities before, during, and after disasters.

"In these smaller communities, when something happens, everybody knows about it and typically tries to band together to help people out," DeGruchy says. "Having Red Cross visit them and provide assistance in person; that builds a huge relationship."

DeGruchy speaks from experience. He is also a volunteer firefighter in Cold Lake. "I knew through the fire service that we were assisting people when there was a need for it, but I knew there wasn't a Red Cross team here, so after I saw that I signed up and it's been great."

For example, as a volunteer, DeGruchy assisted during the devastating Alberta wildfire in 2016. He operated a Red Cross reception centre for families evacuating from Fort McMurray and other areas within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. DeGruchy has also helped families during local disasters, such as house fires and flooded basements. In these cases, volunteers provide emergency 72-hour care that may include shelter, food, and clothing.

Emergency Management volunteers not only assist during and after a disaster, they help communities to be better prepared and more resilient before disasters happen. Volunteers attend community events to teach people about disaster preparedness.

"By increasing the number of volunteers in rural regions of the province, we are supporting those communities in their time of need," says Carmen Werbowetsky Provincial Manager, Emergency Management.

The Red Cross holds regular volunteer recruitment and training sessions in collaboration with local municipalities and emergency services.

You can find more information about volunteering with the Red Cross at www.redcross.ca/volunteer.

OUR STRENGTH


822
active volunteers




More than
12,000
active volunteers


More than
2,300
employees in Canada
(including casual staff and delegates)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT


Assisted
1,466
people who experienced
a disaster




Assisted over
57,000
Canadians who
experienced disaster


Responded to
308
personal disasters




Over
3,000
responses to
personal disasters

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RISK REDUCTION


1,364
people participated
in Disaster
Preparedness
workshops




More than
12,700
Canadians
participated in
Disaster Preparedness
workshops


66,779
Albertans
participated in Respect
Education workshops




More than
642,000
Canadians attended
Respect Education
sessions

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS


52,587
pieces of
health equipment loaned




More than
291,000
pieces of equipment loaned


29,277
clients served

PREVENTION AND SAFETY


140,210
people attended
swimming
and water safety
courses




More than
1.2M
Canadians attended
swimming
and water safety
courses


127,912
people learned
first aid




577,000
people learned
first aid


239

people participated in the Indigenous Water Safety Program in Alberta.



INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

more than
2.3 million people
reached internationally

1 field hospital
Emergency Response Unit
(ERU) and cholera treatment centre
deployed to Mozambique

Ongoing support for
1 field hospital ERU
in Bangladesh

Support for
1 public health ERU
in the Democratic Republic of Congo

more than
100 humanitarian experts
deployed to
35 countries

ALBERTA DOCTOR VOLUNTEERS DURING INTERNATIONAL DISASTERS

When disaster strikes far from home – whether it’s an earthquake in Nepal or cholera outbreak in Mozambique, Patricia Connick is eager to help.

A Calgary doctor, Connick says she is always honoured to answer the call when the Canadian Red Cross asks her to join an emergency response unit (ERU) team of nurses, midwives, technicians, administrators, pharmacists, and other experts ready to assist overseas. Currently, 28 people from Alberta are on the Red Cross international delegate roster. While ERU delegates generally work overseas, they may also be asked to assist during large-scale Canadian disasters like the Alberta wildfires in 2016.

“For me, it’s a huge privilege any time I get picked for a Red Cross ERU response,” she says. “It’s so thrilling to have the opportunity as a team to take our skills and supplies to people who really need help and together, make a difference.”

Connick studied tropical medicine and was always interested in international work, but says it is “very humbling and challenging” in a disaster when hospital buildings, equipment and basic services like electricity are often damaged. “Of course, these places may not



DR. PATRICIA CONNICK IN MOZAMBIQUE

have all the specialists, machines and resources that we have in Canada, but you bring gear, clinical skills and critical thinking abilities and it’s huge what you can do for people. Even little things can make a big difference.”

Most recently, Connick joined an ERU team after Cyclone Idai swept through Mozambique and a cholera outbreak followed. “At first, it was a bit intimidating. People would come in so ill, but we would give IV (intravenous) fluids and soon they would be so much better.”

In past years, Connick worked on Red Cross teams in Jordan, Nepal and Ecuador. Along with the challenging work, she particularly enjoys other team members who are salt of the earth professionals equally willing to pitch massive hospital tents or wade through mud to help isolated people during a Nepalese monsoon.

“But I would always go back in a heart beat. I totally love the work. It is so rewarding.”



DR. PATRICIA CONNICK IN NEPAL

RED CROSS CLIENT COMES FULL CIRCLE AS VOLUNTEER

When Sonja Aspelund had hip replacement surgery, she needed help during her recovery. Now she enjoys offering the same help in return.

After her operation, Aspelund first learned about the Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP) operated by the Canadian Red Cross. The program provides short-term loans of medical equipment to individuals dealing with illness or injury.

Aspelund was surprised to discover she could borrow a walker, cane and other assists during her recovery. “To be able to make one stop essentially and get what I required and have it on a lending basis was something that I greatly appreciated. I was so grateful.”

The experience prompted the former health care worker to join the Red Cross as a **HELP** volunteer in Edmonton. “I felt that I wanted to give back and this seemed like the perfect fit.”

Bukmeier is thankful to have Aspelund as part of her volunteer team. “We help community members preserve their dignity and independence by providing health equipment, but we do that through our amazing volunteer base. Without our community members coming forward as volunteers, we would not be able to assist the people we do and meet the needs of the program.”



SONJA ASPELUND, RED CROSS VOLUNTEER

In Alberta last year, HELP supported more than 29,000 clients from six locations across the province. Client Services Manager Diane Bukmeier is proud of the accomplishment. “The reach is significant because it makes a difference in their life and you feel it and you see it when you’re interacting with those clients.”

Aspelund agrees. “I just can’t say enough about how invaluable this service was for me.”

Aspelund is happy to help. “A service that enables someone to function at a higher level and maintain independence in their home and community is huge. It certainly was for me.”



HELP EQUIPMENT IN CALGARY

WORKING WITH ALBERTA'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

In partnership with Indigenous communities, the Canadian Red Cross is working to provide culturally appropriate programming in Alberta.

The Red Cross is consulting with more than six Indigenous communities in the province to create memorandums of understanding that will build capacity with local volunteers, training and self-sufficiency before, during and after disasters.

Reynold Medicine Traveller, senior advisor, Indigenous Peoples, with Red Cross emergency management in Alberta, says: "The Canadian Red Cross continues to build relationships with Indigenous communities across the province guided by their invitations and by our fundamental principles. Our ongoing Alberta 2016 wildfire recovery operation is important to continue the momentum in building capacity and our volunteer base as identified by Indigenous communities and complimented by Red Cross expertise."

The Red Cross works with Indigenous communities by invitation and we are continuing to build relationships across the province.

"Our teams are gaining experience alongside local leaders, Elders and community members. We continue to engage and support communities as they build their own resiliency," says Medicine Traveller.

In addition to emergency management, Alberta continues to offer first aid, swimming and water safety, and babysitting courses to Indigenous communities in the province.



REYNOLD MEDICINE TRAVELLER



TOP LEFT: INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW CONFERENCE, EDMONTON; TOP RIGHT: MEDICINE HAT TIGERS MASCOT WITH RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS; MIDDLE RIGHT: WALMART CAMPAIGN, CALGARY; BOTTOM: FORT MCMURRAY 2018.



OUR SUPPORTERS

The Red Cross could not do its work without corporate, major, and individual gift donors, institutions, governments, community groups, and schools. Our sincere thanks for your 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.

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS:

Graeme Burns

Shelly Makrugin

Diana Coulter

James Morneau

Keith Howie

Abby Sherstan