



Together, we can save a life

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News Release

For Immediate Release

Digital picture is available at our website.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RED CROSS ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

WINSTON-SALEM, NC, October 28, 2005 – On January 20, 2006, Marcia Cole, executive director, will retire from the North Northwest North Carolina Chapter of the American Red Cross. This chapter is the third largest American Red Cross chapter in the state and serves the residents of Davie, Forsyth, Stokes and Yadkin counties.

Cole's main reason for retirement is to move on to something new and equally challenging. "The opportunity spending the last 12 years working with the American Red Cross has been a real privilege, and I have enjoyed every minute of this experience. But, as I look forward now, I realize that it is time for both the Red Cross and me to look for something new and different."

During her 12 years at the Northwest North Carolina Chapter, Marcia has learned firsthand the challenges of managing on a shoestring in a down turned economy. She has kept the organization afloat by searching for innovative ideas and moneymakers that fit both the organization's mission and local needs. For instance, the chapter has increased its revenue by offering youth classes, special events and a Heroes Campaign for top donors that Cole implemented within the last three years. Also under her leadership, the chapter membership campaign has increased by 155%, health and safety program sales have skyrocketed by 128%, and she created and implemented the only long-term housing program available in the American Red Cross system.

After more than a decade of dealing with natural disasters and man-made tragedies, it would be understandable if she threw up her hands and said "We're out of money. Sorry, we can't help you," but under her guidance, everything that can be offered to disaster victims in the way of Red Cross services continues to be available 24 hours a day/365 days of the year.

Marcia considers the Katrina/Rita aftermath among the worst disasters she has witnessed -- and she has seen more than her share. She receives a lot of satisfaction from the chapter's continued involvement in Project Welcome, a collaboration of human service organizations whose goal is to help Katrina/Rita evacuees settle in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. "Marcia is a very compassionate and ingenious person. Her involvement with Project Welcome just made sense. The board, staff and volunteers will miss her and we wish her only the best in whatever she decides to do next," said Paul Barnes, NWNC Chapter Board Chairman.

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Since taking the job with the Red Cross, she has volunteered her time as part of the American Red Cross's national disaster team and plans to continue volunteering after retirement.

She credits her staff and volunteers, both past and present, to her successes with the management of the chapter. "This organization is a good one. I knew each morning when I came to work that I was going to make a difference in someone's life that day. I don't feel as if I am moving on, but just moving to something different. I feel lucky that I will continue to be a part of the Red Cross...everyone in our community should feel as if they too are a part of the Red Cross," said Cole.

In 1995, Marcia was recognized with the Joel Weston Award for Excellence in Non-Profit Agency Management and was awarded the American Red Cross Manager of the Year in 2003 for the state of North Carolina.

She currently serves as a Career Services mentor at her alma mater, Wake Forest University, a volunteer job that she enjoys very much.

Governed by volunteers and supported by community donations, the American Red Cross is a nationwide network of nearly 1,000 chapters and Blood Services regions dedicated to saving lives and helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Led by 1.2 million volunteers and 30,000 employees, the Red Cross annually mobilizes relief to families affected by more than 67,000 disasters, trains almost 12 million people in lifesaving skills and exchanges more than a million emergency messages for U.S. military service personnel and their families. The Red Cross is the largest supplier of blood and blood products to more than 3,000 hospitals across the nation and also assists victims of international disasters and conflicts at locations worldwide.

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