



*Together, we can save a life*

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## ***News Release***

### **For Immediate Release**

#### ***AMERICAN RED CROSS REMINDS TRIAD RESIDENTS... TO PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED BY TAKING ACTION NOW*** *National Preparedness Month is an Ideal Time to Put Your Plans in Place*

**WINSTON-SALEM, September 12, 2005** — The devastation Hurricane Katrina caused across the Gulf states is a strong reminder on the importance of being ready for emergencies. This is also National Preparedness Month and the Northwest North Carolina Chapter is reminding Davie, Forsyth, Stokes and Yadkin County residents that this is a good time to make sure you and your family feel ready for any potential emergency or disaster.

Working to make preparedness a priority for every household, workplace and community, the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security are co-sponsoring the second annual National Preparedness Month, a nationwide coordinated effort that encourages Americans to take steps to be better prepared for disasters and other emergencies where they live, learn, and work. "There are five simple things each of us can do to be prepared: (1) make a family emergency plan; (2) build an emergency preparedness kit; (3) get trained; (4) volunteer; and (5) give blood," says Ebony East, Associate Director of Preparedness. "If we all were to take those proactive steps, it'll be a healthy move toward making our communities safer and minimizing the impact disasters and emergencies have on our lives."

Because it encompasses other aspects of what being prepared means, making a plan is the first and perhaps most important part of a family's emergency preparedness. As a family, determine what disasters may occur in your community and how you may be impacted. Use that information to plan how you would contact each other if at home, work or school. Gather supplies necessary for sustenance and comfort; this will help you both follow the plan and stay safe during and after a disaster or other emergency.

#### **Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Including the Following Items:**

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least three gallons of water per person.

**-more-**

## **AMERICAN RED CROSS – Add One**

- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members.
- Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on.)
- Identify two places—right outside the home and outside the neighborhood—in case you cannot return home to meet after an emergency occurs.

After a disaster, local telephone lines may be busy and overloaded so it's often easier to call out of the affected area,” points out East. “Many people overwhelm telephone lines when emergencies happen. Family and friends who do eventually want to reach out sometimes need to remain patient if telephone lines and email are not working and try again later. Sometimes e-mails go through when calls cannot. That’s why putting a Family Communications Plan together ahead of time helps ensure your ability to connect with loved ones during and after an emergency.”

## **Create a Family Communications Plan**

- Plan ahead for the possibility of becoming separated from family and friends.
- Designate a contact that each family or household member can expect to hear from by phone or email should a disaster occur. He or she should be aware of this. All friends and family should share contact information.
- Agree that those in the storm area will call or email the point of contact as soon as possible after the hurricane to let them know about their whereabouts and well-being. The contact person will then email or call family members and friends with this information.

Throughout National Preparedness Month, nearly 900 Red Cross field units will participate, support and host a variety of events geared toward bringing the preparedness message home to the communities they serve. For more information, visit [www.nwnc-redcross.org](http://www.nwnc-redcross.org) or contact the Northwest North Carolina Chapter at (336) 724-0511.

*The American Red Cross is where people mobilize to help their neighbors—across the street, across the country and across the world—in emergencies. Each year, in communities large and small, victims of some 70,000 disasters turn to neighbors familiar and new—the nearly 1 million volunteers and 35,000 employees of the Red Cross. Through almost 900 locally supported chapters, more than 15 million people gain the skills they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their homes, communities and world. Some 4 million people give blood—the gift of life—through the Red Cross, making it the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the United States. The Red Cross helps thousands of U.S. service members separated from their families by military duty stay connected. As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, a global network of 181 national societies, the Red Cross helps restore hope and dignity to the world's most vulnerable people. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work. Marsha J. Evans is the President and CEO of the American Red Cross.*