



**American
Red Cross**

of Northeastern New York

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**NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF THE BUDGET
TOWN HALL HEARINGS
NOVEMBER 30, 2007**

American Red Cross
Northeastern New York Chapter
Gary Striar
Chief Executive Officer

When disasters happen firefighters put out the fires, the police maintain law and order but who takes care of the victims? Who provides them with health and mental health services and access to their medication? Who provides them with a place to sleep, food to eat, blankets to keep them warm, clothing to wear and shoes to keep their feet dry? Who provides their babies with diapers and baby formula? Who provides them with a shoulder to lean on? This is the role of the American Red Cross and a role we are proud of.

In New York State there is a network of 36 chapters that serve their neighbors in a variety of ways. The Northeastern New York Chapter serves to the counties of: Albany, Rensselaer, Columbia, Greene, Schoharie, Schenectady, Montgomery, and Fulton – as well as the town of Waterford in Saratoga County. This service area represents a population of over 870,000 people. In the last two years we have received our \$200,000 each year in State Funding from the Red Cross Statewide Appropriation. With these funds we were able to significantly

increase the level of assistance we provide to disaster victims. In addition, we implemented an intensive community preparedness program called “Get Ready – Be Safe”.

- We provided over 1,300 units of service to members of the Armed Forces and their families.
- We responded to 195 local disasters affecting 341 families.
- We trained over 32,000 people in CPR, First Aid, the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED), Child Care, Pet First Aid, Water Safety, and Care Giving courses.
- We developed and implemented the now widely recognized “Get Ready – Be Safe” program, training over 4,000 individuals, families, businesses, and students the basic steps that should be taken to prepare for emergencies.

Statewide the American Red Cross chapters:

- Responded to more than 5,000 disasters, many of them residential fires.
- Provided health and safety training, including aquatics, for more than 620,000 individuals.
- Provided more than 190,000 New Yorkers with basic preparedness training.
- Collected and provided blood for a major portion of New York State communities.

Each year, the need for Red Cross programs and services increases while our traditional sources of funding decrease. We have more disasters to respond to and we must do much more to prepare our Chapters to respond. We need more supplies and equipment, and more training for Staff and Volunteers. These efforts are increasingly costly.

While the American Red Cross in Northeastern New York once received over \$600,000 annually from the United Way undesignated funding – we now receive no undesignated funding. We have cut our expenses and increased our fundraising efforts but it is not enough to overcome our United Way loss. As a result, we must reach out to our partners in government for assistance. The American Red Cross is the only not-for-profit chartered by Congress to provide disaster relief, yet our chapters do not receive enough government funding.

This year the 36 chapters in New York State are requesting \$20 million in the 2008-09 State budget to help support the programs and services we provide for all New Yorkers. We are confident that funding our proposal will increase our ability to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of New York State.

In recent years we have seen the increasing development of a strong partnership between the State of New York and the local Chapters of the American Red Cross in New York State, we look forward to continuing that partnership in the common goal of a safer New York. On behalf of the other 35 chapters in New York State and on behalf of the citizens of New York whose needs have been met, are currently being served or who may need our services in the coming year, thank you for considering our request.