



Your Red Cross Meets Challenges of Hurricane Ike

Hurricane Ike's killer storm surge and winds devastated our community. Tens of thousands of people fled their homes. Many residents couldn't return home after the storm because their houses or apartments were damaged or destroyed. Millions had no power. In many communities, the water wasn't safe to drink. Our neighbors, friends and families were in desperate need.

The Red Cross responded by opening shelters, delivering meals and water in neighborhoods and providing emotional support. Our generous donors and volunteers made this critical relief effort possible.



Three days before Ike came ashore, the Chapter started opening shelters in Huntsville for people evacuating. Our National Organization had already positioned people and supplies in our area. After Ike made landfall, thousands of people needed shelter and our Chapter faced the daunting challenge of finding shelters that weren't damaged and still had no power. In spite of these challenges, your Red Cross sheltered and fed thousands of storm-weary residents for weeks.

There were 25 Red Cross Shelters in the Greater Houston Area, the majority were churches whose congregation members worked as shelter volunteers. The first shelter opened in Huntsville on September 10th and the last one, on Galveston Island, closed October 26th. More than four-million meals were served at shelters and from Emergency Response Vehicles delivering them to storm-damaged neighborhoods.

The Red Cross is one big family stretching across the country. When our residents needed help, it came from almost every state in the U.S. In addition to our dedicated local volunteers, more than 1,000 out-of-state Red Cross volunteers arrived to work in our shelters, deliver meals and provide hope. They delivered those meals in 160 Emergency Response Vehicles, sent from Red Cross Chapters nationwide. Red Cross mobile kitchens were dispatched to cook the food that was delivered to shelters and neighborhoods.

For many of our local residents, this was the first time they needed Red Cross Disaster Assistance. The sight of our Emergency Response Vehicles delivering food and water in their damaged neighborhoods, brought relief and comfort during this traumatic time. And many of our communities are still recovering.

On the back are first person accounts of the critical help Red Cross provided residents during Hurricane Ike.



VOICES FROM THE STORM

Residents Grateful for Red Cross Help

These emails were sent to the Greater Houston Red Cross from area residents and are printed with their permission.

Dayton

Noel Mauricio

I would just like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Red Cross for responding so quickly to the Dayton, TX area after hurricane Ike...My wife and I are so amazed at the numerous Red Cross vans that dot the Dayton, TX area, which has been badly hit. I was simply overwhelmed how the 2 member crew in the food van treated me with the utmost dignity and respect, and their genuine warmth and love shined through...

I will pray that God blesses us enough so that sometime in the near future, I will have enough funds left over...to make some sort of financial donation to the Red Cross for helping me, my wife, and the city of Dayton, TX in our time of need...Simply put, the Red Cross is no less than a major blessing from God. With love and many many thanks.

Houston

Barbara, Lloyd, Jr. and Lloyd Barbin, Sr.

This is to thank you and anyone else involved in the Port San Antonio Shelter at the old Kelly Air Force Base. My family lives in Houston and my husband needed dialysis on September 15, 2008. Since his center was inaccessible, I called 911 and was directed to the George R. Brown. After my husband's needs were assessed, we were directed to a bus headed for San Antonio...where they were sending the dialysis patients.

We were fed 3 hot meals a day and met many new friends. I can say this was an experience of a lifetime. Thank you for the superior part the Red Cross played for the 5 days we were there.

Northwest Harris County

Carolyn Armstrong

I wanted to let your organization know how grateful I am for your crew that brought food, ice and water to my Mom's elderly apartment complex everyday. The crew was most pleasant and brought joy to my Mom and her friends. Most are on social security and throwing all their food away after the power was off for a week and a half was most devastating to them all. Thanks again.

Galveston Island

David & Angelica Quintanilla

Dearest Volunteers, I am writing this letter to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation. To all those who have volunteered their time and efforts in our greatest hour of need. When entering Galveston we were overcome by the devastation and chaos that meet us head on...

We did not have utilities and were relying on meals out of a can. I can't tell you how ecstatic we were when we heard the first " Hot Meals , , , Get your Hot Meals" after hours of hard work. Well its been a little over a week and I would like to thank all of you for your generosity, not only the awesome meals, but also kind words of encouragement and sometimes just a smile...

Please know that your kindness and generosity will never be forgotten. I make sure I tell whoever will listen to me that there is no greater organization than yours. You all are my Guardian Angels. Please never underestimate the joy you bring to others even in its smallest form. I will always appreciate and rest assured I have a new charity. God Bless all of you.

Hurricane Ike Summary

<i>Shelters Opened</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Shelter Population</i>	<i>3,000 +</i>
<i>Overnight Stays</i>	<i>22,000 +</i>
<i>Meals Served</i>	<i>4.5 million</i>
<i>Mental Health Contacts</i>	<i>23,000 +</i>
<i>Health Service Contacts</i>	<i>21,000 +</i>
<i>National Volunteers in the Greater Houston Area</i>	<i>1,000 +</i>