

## Unit Two

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# The History Of Disaster Relief Voluntary Agencies

### INTRODUCTION

**V**olunteering to serve the needs of others has existed for thousands of years, across many continents, and across many different cultures and faiths. For example, historical records show that as far back as 2000 B.C. an ancient Babylonian King wrote to his subjects that they must " . . . see that justice be done to widows, orphans, and the poor." Volunteerism has always been an important part of U.S. history, helping this country survive many wars, illnesses and plagues, social problems, and natural and manmade disasters.

In this unit, you will learn about:

- ◆ The history of volunteerism in the U.S.;
- ◆ The roles that disaster relief voluntary agencies have served in historical disasters; and
- ◆ The history of NVOAD member agencies.

In this unit, you will learn about the history of volunteerism in the U.S. and how volunteerism has helped make this country what it is today. You will also become aware of how this spirit of volunteerism in America spread and grew within the area of disaster relief.

## **VOLUNTEERISM IN THE U.S.: A LONG AND PROUD TRADITION**

Volunteers have contributed to and impacted the course of U.S. history for centuries. Unfortunately, all of their contributions cannot be discussed here. However, on the next few pages is a chronological presentation of some of the most important activities that volunteers have performed in the U.S. from the colonial period to the present day.

### ***The Colonization of America (1607-1781)***

Early European settlers in the American colonies all had the same priority of survival. Food, shelter, and defense were their primary concerns. Because of these conditions, voluntary cooperation often meant the difference between life and death. These are some examples of volunteerism during the colonial period.

- Illnesses contracted by individuals or families were treated through pesthouses — basic shelters built in remote areas for the purpose of quarantine. Medical and nursing care were administered on a voluntary basis. Clothing and food were donated by individuals or by the community.
- In 1736, Benjamin Franklin began the first volunteer firefighting company in Philadelphia.
- Women volunteered in every aspect of the Revolutionary War. They organized the Daughters of Liberty, boycotted British goods, collected funds, and published newspapers in support of the colonies' cause.

### ***New American Frontiers (1782-1850)***

After the Revolutionary War, the original colonies grew in size and the original frontier was pushed further west as more states joined the Union. Voluntary cooperation was still necessary for survival. Frontier families were dependent upon each other to reach their destination and then to form productive settlements. Voluntary land clubs and claim associations provided relief to poor farm families and helped protect them against foreclosures.

Another example of community voluntary action during this time period occurred during the Yellow Fever Epidemic in Philadelphia in which the community donated money, tents, clothes, food, and medical services to aid the sufferers.

### ***The Civil War Period (1851-1899)***

The period just before the outbreak of the Civil War was characterized by a high degree of citizen involvement. Many relief associations sprang up during this time to address the problem of rampant unemployment in the cities. Foster home placement of homeless children began at this time through agencies such as the New York Children's Aid Society, which was founded in 1853.

The most notable aspect of volunteerism during the Civil War was the involvement of women in the war. Soon after the Civil War began, women organized themselves into Ladies' Aid Societies for the purpose of making bandages, shirts, drawers, towels, bedclothes, uniforms, and tents. Some women volunteered in more dangerous ways, acting as spies, couriers, guides, scouts, saboteurs, smugglers, and informers.

The need for arms and ammunition was met by private volunteer efforts during the war. Huge amounts of money were raised, often from donated jewelry, to buy and construct gunboats and other necessary fortifications. In addition, charitable organizations in the North and South provided food, drinks, and spiritual comfort to the soldiers of the Civil War.



*The U.S. Christian Commission headquarters in Washington, D.C., "served hot coffee, prayers, and general good cheer" to Union soldiers.*

After the war ended, a number of voluntary organizations sprang up to attend to all types of social problems. Some of these organizations included the Salvation Army, the YMCA, the National Association for the Deaf, Volunteers of America, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

### ***Industrialization and the First World War (1900-1919)***

By the early 1900's, community involvement clubs, such as the Rotary Club (1910), the Kiwanis Club (1916) and the Lions Club (1916) had developed. By World War I, the Boy Scouts of America had become the preeminent boys' organization in the U.S. In 1905, the American Red Cross received a Congressional charter that mandated the organization to provide disaster relief in the U.S.

When World War I was officially declared, American women again mobilized extensive support systems. The National Woman's Committee quickly formed state organizations, which in turn developed local committees of volunteers in every county and city. In this war, some women even went abroad with the troops for the first time. Women volunteers from the Salvation Army served as chaplains and "Doughnut Girls" during World War I. The war brought unprecedented cooperative action between voluntary organizations. The YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic War Council, Jewish Welfare Board, Salvation Army, and American Red Cross all coordinated their efforts to assist the soldiers and the public.



*Women volunteers with the Salvation Army served doughnuts, pastries, and coffee to coastguardsmen during World War I.*

### ***The Great Depression and World War II (1920-1945)***

During the Depression, enormous changes took place in the social welfare field. Churches and local voluntary agencies were incapable of meeting the needs of the people they had helped in the past. With the launching of the New Deal, new Federal laws were enacted that offered pensions, maternity and dependency assistance, low cost housing, and subsidized school and health programs.

Many families during the Depression were aided by innumerable soup kitchens and bread lines established by charitable volunteers, as well as donations of clothing, food, and other goods by families who were able to give. For example, Volunteers of America mobilized all of its resources to assist the millions of unemployed, hungry, and homeless. Relief efforts included employment bureaus, wood yards, soup kitchens, and "Penny Pantries," where every food item cost one-cent.

Upon American entry into World War II, the American Red Cross recruited more than 71,000 registered nurses for military duty. The American people further supported the Red Cross through contributions of nearly \$785 million. During World War II, Adventist Community Services established warehouses in New York and San Francisco to process materials to ship overseas to Europe, North Africa, and parts of Asia. Volunteers of America organized community salvage drives collecting millions of pounds of scrap metal, rubber, and fiber for the war effort.



*The Depression elicited many charitable responses, including collections of used clothing and goods from almost every family able to give.*

### ***Post World War II, through the Vietnam War, (1946-1969)***

World War II heightened American willingness to aid other countries, especially by providing food to other nations in need. President Truman encouraged the American people and businesses to volunteer their time and resources to help other countries hurt by the war.

One of the most well-known voluntary health efforts during this time involved the Salk Vaccine against polio. From 1953 to 1955, more than 200,000 volunteers helped the vaccine tests proceed smoothly by moving youngsters through lines, dispensing lollipops and "Polio Pioneer" buttons, staffing recovery rooms, keeping records, checking supplies, and preparing press releases to keep rumors under control.

President Kennedy began the Peace Corps in 1961 to send dedicated and skilled American volunteers to help the world's developing nations. President Johnson initiated Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) to work on problems here at home.

*"If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."*

— John F. Kennedy

### ***Volunteering During the Past Three Decades***

Concerns over the past three decades have focused on hunger, homelessness, crime, drug abuse, education, and environmental issues. Many volunteer programs were initiated during this time and continue today. For example:

- The Nixon Administration launched a peacetime effort to stimulate a major American volunteer force. Over 24,000 full- and part-time volunteers in six existing programs were brought together to form ACTION. ACTION included the Peace Corps, VISTA, the Foster Grandparent Program, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Service Corps of Retired Executives, and the Active Corps of Executives. Two segments of the population that became actively involved in voluntary efforts during this time were students and senior citizens.
- President Carter helped establish and continues to sponsor Habitat for Humanity which has organized home building programs in more than 300 American communities.
- President Bush helped create the Points of Light Foundation, a non-partisan, non-profit organization devoted to promoting volunteerism. The Foundation believes that bringing people together through volunteer service is a powerful way of combating disconnection and alleviating social problems. *More information on the Points of Light Foundation is provided later in this unit.*
- President Clinton began AmeriCorps, a national service movement that engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to address the most critical problems in our nation's communities, in areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs. In exchange for a year of service, AmeriCorps members earn a living allowance and an educational award to pay back student loans or finance college, graduate school, or vocational training.

## THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN HISTORICAL DISASTERS

Clearly, volunteerism has had a very important place in American history. Volunteers have impacted every major social, political, environmental, and health issue for the past three and half centuries. It seems natural, therefore, that this American spirit of volunteerism has presented itself in the area of disaster relief.

For many decades, voluntary agencies have been on the scene of natural and manmade disasters to provide aid to individuals, families, and communities. Outlined below are brief descriptions of some historical disasters that date from the late 1800's in which voluntary agencies provided disaster relief services. In addition to these major

*"In communities devastated by mud slides, ice storms, flash floods, or tornadoes, volunteers have opened their hearts and homes to offer shelter, hot meals, building materials, and - most important - the hope and support that people desperately need to begin putting their lives back together. This spirit of citizen service has deep and strong roots in America's past, and by nurturing this spirit we can help to ensure a better future for our Nation."*

— President Clinton, National Volunteer Week, 1998

disasters, it is important to understand that voluntary agencies respond to disasters of all different sizes and scope. For example, the American Red Cross alone responds to over 64,000 disasters per year including many individual house fires throughout the country.

### ***The Johnstown Flood (1889)***

The deadliest flood in U.S. history broke loose on Friday, May 31, 1889, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. When an estimated six to nine inches of rain poured into the Conemaugh River basin, the river jumped its banks and the South Fork Dam burst. By late morning, water was rushing into factories, stores, and homes at 20 to 40 miles per hour. The final death toll was 2,209.

The Johnstown Flood was a major test for early disaster relief voluntary organizations, such as the American Red Cross. This disaster challenged their ability to deal with a large-scale, man-made disaster. Voluntary relief teams found "thousands dead in the river beds, twenty thousand without food but for the Pittsburgh bread rations, and a cold rain which continued unbroken by sunshine for forty days." The American Red Cross set up food and water stations, provided medical care, and established mass shelters to house the disaster victims.

### ***Hurricane and Storm Surges in Galveston, Texas (1900)***

On September 8, 1900, hurricane and storm surges began hitting Galveston, Texas. The storm killed 6,000 people, 15 percent of the area's population. It left an additional 5,000 injured and 10,000 homeless. The city burned fires day and night for weeks on

end to discard the debris and thousands of corpses and animal carcasses that made the streets impassable.

The American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other voluntary agencies set up a warehouse for the distribution of clothing, including one million donated clothing items. These agencies also established shelters for the homeless and provided relief to farmers by purchasing new plants and seeds. The Salvation Army sent officers from across America to go to the disaster site and provide spiritual counsel and assistance. Following the Galveston Hurricane, the Salvation Army developed local, regional, and national disaster service programs. The Galveston Hurricane was the last time that Clara Barton of the American Red Cross, then 78 years old, actively participated in a disaster relief project.



*This drawing depicts the devastating tidal waves that resulted from Galveston Hurricane. (Used with the permission of the American Red Cross.)*

### **San Francisco Earthquake (1906)**

A massive earthquake hit the city of San Francisco on the morning of April 18, 1906,



*The American Red Cross established massive relief operations following the San Francisco Earthquake. (Used with the permission of the American Red Cross.)*

leaving nearly 700 people dead, hundreds more injured, and 250,000 homeless. For San Franciscans, the earthquake marked only the beginning of the disaster. Minutes after the first tremors subsided, fires erupted and spread through the crippled city.

The U.S. Army, voluntary agencies, and citizens' relief groups collected, organized, and distributed contributions and supplies and set up soup kitchens and temporary shelters for the homeless. The American Red Cross set up tent cities for tens of thousands of disaster victims and kept them running for many

months. Volunteers of America ran a special train to take orphaned children to safety.

The aim of voluntary agencies was to "encourage self-reliance, and not provide service as an outright gift, to induce pauperization."

Following this disaster, the American Red Cross realized the importance of focusing on the solicitation of cash donations, rather than in-kind items, which were often times inappropriate for meeting the victims' needs. Based on this conclusion, the American Red Cross determined that from this point forward its donations would be in the form of grants.

### ***Mine Disaster of Cherry, Illinois (1909)***

On November 13, 1909, 256 people were buried in a coal mine explosion in Cherry, Illinois, including rescuers who were trapped in a fire on the second level of the mine.

Following this disaster, the Cherry Relief Commission was established to consolidate several voluntary organizations that provided relief to the victims of the mine disaster. This Commission provided financial assistance to the widows and orphans of the men who were killed, including pensions for widows, lump sum allowances for other dependents of men killed, and the payment of attorney expenses incurred in law suits against the mining company. The Commission had a national impact. Workmen's compensation laws were passed in many states to force industries to take more responsibility for the welfare of their employees.

### ***The Great Mississippi Flood (1927)***

During the 1920's and 1930's, voluntary agencies responded to many floods throughout the U.S. However, the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 was the most devastating of all. More than five million acres of farmland were ruined.

The American Red Cross set up 154 refugee camps to care for more than 325,000 people. Voluntary agencies spent millions of dollars on clothing, food, seed for planting, furniture, and vocational training, as well as for an immunization program that fought rampant smallpox, malaria, and typhoid fever. Dr. Robert R. Moton, President of the Tuskegee Institute, established the Colored Advisory Commission to promote interracial cooperation for flood relief.

### ***The Major Drought of 1930-1931***

During the summer of 1930 and into 1931, a major drought caused great damage to millions of people living in 23 southern, midwestern, and northwest states. During the "Year of the Great Drought," as it was called, voluntary agencies provided individuals and families with food, clothing, medical aid, shelter, and other assistance. The American Red Cross, alone, provided assistance to 2,750,000 people and distributed more than \$11 million worth of food, clothing, and seeds for planting. There were never fewer than 70,000 persons being aided by the American Red Cross at any one time. At the peak of relief work, more than 2,000,000 were being helped. Other voluntary agencies supplemented this assistance.

### ***Anchorage Alaska Earthquake (1964)***

On March 27, 1964, the strongest North American earthquake ever recorded hit Anchorage, Alaska, killing 115 people and causing millions of dollars worth of damage. Although collapsing buildings killed several people, the ocean claimed most of the 115 victims. Almost instantly after the quake, large waves triggered by landslides began to hammer coastal communities. The Alaskan quake had a magnitude of 9.2 and released roughly 5,000 times the energy of the 1994 jolt in Northridge, California.

The Federal Government and voluntary agencies rushed in to provide food, shelter, and clothing to disaster victims. This disaster marked the beginning of more Federal involvement in the costly rehabilitation phase of disaster work. For example, shortly after the disaster, Congress passed legislation making funds available to pay off mortgages still owed by many of the disaster victims.

### ***Hurricane Camille (1969)***

Hurricane Camille was the second strongest Category 5 hurricane in U.S. history. With winds in excess of 200 mph and tides of 20 feet, Hurricane Camille smashed into the Mississippi Gulf Coast on Sunday night, August 17, 1969, and continued its devastating path into Louisiana and Alabama until the early hours of Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. Hurricane Camille claimed the lives of 256 people and reduced buildings to rubble. The world's longest bridge, the 26-mile long Pontchartrain Causeway, was submerged from Camille.

During this disaster, criticism arose from especially hard hit minority groups that voluntary agency case workers were providing uneven assistance because of socio-economic biases. In response to these criticisms, the American Red Cross established standardized guidelines for providing equal and fair assistance to everyone, regardless of their race, religion, or socio-economic position.

Hurricane Camille led to the formation of NVOAD. After Hurricane Camille, it became clear that voluntary agencies were responding to the needs of disaster victims in a fragmented, uncoordinated manner. Representatives from several voluntary agencies began to meet on a regular basis to share their respective activities, concerns, and frustrations in disaster response. On July 15, 1970, representatives from seven voluntary agencies came together in Washington, D.C. to form NVOAD. See *Unit 4: Working Together* for more information on NVOAD.

***Hurricane Hugo (1989)***

In September 1989, Hurricane Hugo swept through the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and South Carolina. Hugo's force decreased as it moved over the northeastern U.S., but it already had caused at least 65 deaths, destroyed over 16,500 homes, damaged another 140,000, and disrupted electricity and water supplies to thousands of homes, schools, and offices. Estimated losses from Hurricane Hugo were \$4.2 billion, the first disaster to exceed \$1 billion.

Hurricane Hugo emphasized the importance of creating a system for managing unsolicited goods and unaffiliated volunteers, which became serious problems for local emergency managers and voluntary agencies during this disaster. Shipments of questionable donated goods required valuable warehouse space, labor, transportation, and other resources.

The emergence of the Resource Coordination Committee/Unmet Needs Committee, an avenue by which disaster victims apply for and receive additional assistance from voluntary agencies, developed during Hurricane Hugo. See *Unit 4: Working Together* for more information on the Resource Coordination Committee/Unmet Needs Committee.

***Hurricane Andrew (1992)***

On August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew roared through south Florida with winds of 145 mph and gusts up to 174 mph. Winds punched through windows, snapped trees, flipped trucks, and ripped roofs off homes. Boats and planes were dragged across fields and piled up on lawns. In Andrew's grip, mobile homes crumpled like tin cans. Forty-one people were killed in Hurricane Andrew. The storm also destroyed roughly 25,000 homes, damaged 100,000 more, and left 250,000 people temporarily homeless. Hurricane Andrew was the costliest storm in U.S. history, totaling \$20 billion in damage in Florida, and ruining another \$41 billion in buildings and crops in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Voluntary agencies set up shelters for evacuees. It quickly became evident that the sheltering requirements for tens of thousands of residents was beyond the capacity of the voluntary agencies. For the first time, voluntary agencies and the military worked together to provide temporary "life support centers" to accommodate large numbers of people. The problem of unsolicited goods also required significant military support in the receiving, storing, transporting and distributing of these goods. This lack of donations management planning on the part of emergency management at all levels and the voluntary agencies led to the first serious effort to address what had become known as "the second disaster."



*This is an example of the enormous waste of donated clothing after Hurricane Andrew. Poor donations management planning can lead to horrendous logistics and public relations problems. Ultimately, it results in poor service to both the donors and the community in need.*

### ***The Midwest Floods (1993)***

The torrential rains that hit the Midwest in June and July of 1993 defied the efforts of volunteers who placed sandbags in front of the relentless waters. During the floods, more than 14,500 people took refuge in shelters set up by voluntary agencies. In all, some 47,000 families were affected.



*Streets were flooded for weeks in Vinton, Ohio during the Midwest Floods.*

The concept of the Resource Coordination Committee/ Unmet Needs Committee was implemented to a point never seen before during the Midwest Floods. Over 400 groups were organized through a collaborative effort of the American Red Cross, FEMA, the Church World Service, and the affected states. An unmet needs handbook, providing information and guidelines for this process,

was also developed and later adopted by NVOAD.

The Midwest Floods marked the first time that a comprehensive unsolicited donations coordination effort was introduced. FEMA, based on lessons learned from Hurricane Andrew, introduced the concept of a Donations Coordination Team complete with a Coordination Center, State-based donations hotlines, proactive press releases, intensive field logistics, donations intelligence, and effective coordination with the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison and other key emergency managers. As a result, much of the public in-kind contributions were found to be helpful to the overall relief effort, rather than causing the types of problems experienced in the recent past.

*"We salute those who built fortresses from sand, plastic, and snow fence. Those who spread straw, filled bags, fought heat, sun, rain, and insects. Those who loaned boats and vehicles, time and expertise. Those who manned telephones and command posts, cut string, made headbands, scrubbed laundry, and drove the trucks. Those who baked brownies and pies, fried chicken, made sandwiches, hauled water and ice. Those who gave shots, socks, coolers, sunscreen, towels, pasture, storage, and babysitting. All those who gave up a piece of their lives with compassion, leadership and reassurance. You have been true to your heritage."*

— Full page ad run in Quincy Broadcasting Company paper after the Midwest Flood of 1993.

It was also during the Midwest Floods that it became abundantly clear to FEMA that mitigation should be a continuous process that exists independent of disaster declarations and as an integral part of all programs, including individual assistance, public assistance, and response programs. The voluntary agencies showed a strong interest in mitigation and proved to be important advocates in this area.

### ***The Oklahoma City Bombing (1995)***

On April 19, 1995, around 9:05 am, just after parents had dropped their children off at day care at the Murrah Federal Office Building in Oklahoma City, the unthinkable happened. A massive bomb inside a rental truck exploded, blowing half of the nine-story building into oblivion. A stunned nation watched for nearly two weeks as the bodies of men, women, and children were pulled from the rubble. When the smoke cleared and the exhausted rescue workers packed up and left, 168 people were dead in the worst terrorist



*The Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City after a massive bomb inside a rental truck exploded in front of the building.*

attack on U.S. soil.

The Oklahoma City bombing required the counseling skills of many voluntary agencies on a long-term basis for both disaster victims and disaster relief workers. Following this disaster, several voluntary agencies such as Church World Service and the Salvation Army, began to more closely examine their roles in providing pastoral care following acts of terrorism in the U.S.

The private sector worked closely with voluntary agencies and made extraordinary donations in the aftermath of the bombing. For example, the Oklahoma Restaurant Association donated between 10,000 and 15,000 freshly prepared meals a day to the large number of response workers. The United Parcel Service donated countless hours of intra-city transportation services in support of the local government, the voluntary agencies, and all of the rescue workers.

### ***Hurricane Marilyn (1995)***

During the hurricane season of 1995, 21 hurricanes battered the Florida and Alabama coastline forcing many residents from their homes. Hurricane Marilyn which struck the Caribbean on September 14 and caused damage to Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, and St. Croix was the most costly storm of all. The total cost of damage from Hurricane Marilyn was over \$1.5 billion.

During Hurricane Marilyn, there was a unique level of government/voluntary agency coordination. For example, two weeks into the disaster, Adventist Community Services took over the coordination of warehousing and the distribution of some Federal relief supplies. Mennonite Disaster Services, Church of the Brethren, and Christian Reformed World Relief Committee began tent platform building and installation on disaster victims' properties to reduce the shelter populations. FEMA supported this effort by providing ground transportation, building supplies, and equipment. For example, FEMA provided air transportation for the leaders of several voluntary agencies into the disaster area.



*Volunteers from Christian Reformed World Relief Committee provide clean-up and rebuilding assistance in St. Croix following Hurricane Marilyn.*

## THE HISTORY OF NVOAD MEMBER AGENCIES

The voluntary, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and church groups who provided assistance in these historical disasters, as well as in smaller disasters and everyday emergencies, are innumerable. Unfortunately, to discuss every disaster relief voluntary agency and group that is active in the U.S. is beyond the scope of this course. Therefore, for the purpose of this course, this next section will provide a brief history of the voluntary agencies who are members of the NVOAD. Each member agency of NVOAD has a unique history in disaster relief work in the U.S. The specific roles and services provided by each NVOAD member agency will be discussed in the next unit.

*"The support voluntary agencies provide to our fellow citizens in times of disasters is hard to overestimate. Volunteers tackle the toughest, nastiest jobs and do so with good grace and humor. They provide critical services quickly, efficiently, quietly, and with little publicity. I would hate to manage a disaster without them. Truly these agencies are the unsung heroes of disaster management. Without their support, the cost to governments would probably double, possibly even triple. And, to watch the individual volunteers in action is to reaffirm one's faith in the innate goodness of the American People"*

— John McKay, Superintendent of FEMA's Emergency Management Institute

### **Adventist Community Services (ACS)**

ACS is a national, humanitarian agency involved in relief and community action programs. ACS's roots go back nearly 80 years. In 1918, just after World War I, the Seventh-day Adventist Church established ACS to assist church workers, missionaries, and members in need as a result of the war. Among the first countries and areas to receive aid were Belgium, France, Germany, Turkey, Egypt, the Middle East, Russia, and China. During World War II, ACS established warehouses in New York and San Francisco to process materials to ship overseas to Europe, North Africa, and parts of Asia.

Since that time, ACS has grown in magnitude, commitment, and dedication to development and disaster relief issues. Today, it is the policy of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the North American Division to respond to the needs of people in time of disaster through the volunteer network organized by ACS. ACS disaster response is organized into a network of state disaster coordinators, who lead teams of trained volunteers. These coordinators make use of more than 350 ACS social services centers and inner city programs operated in the U.S., Bermuda, and Canada. All of these centers and programs are coordinated by the North American Headquarters of ACS.

## **American Radio Relay League (ARRL)**

Public service communication has been the responsibility of the Amateur Radio Service since 1913, when several radio amateurs in the Michigan/Ohio area successfully bridged the communications gap surrounding a large isolated area left by a severe windstorm in the Midwest. In those early days, such disaster work was spontaneous and without organization of any kind. ARRL was founded in 1914. Since that time, disaster work has become highly organized and is implemented primarily through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service and the National Traffic System, both sponsored by ARRL.



*Amateur radio in action following Hurricane Marilyn.*

Today, ARRL consists of approximately 170,000 licensed amateurs who volunteer their qualifications and equipment for communications when disaster strikes. The operational leadership of ARRL consists of approximately 2500 local and district emergency coordinators, along with the section Emergency Coordinators.

## **The American Red Cross**

Approximately 64,000 times a year, the American Red Cross volunteers and staff respond to an emergency or disaster in the U.S. The American Red Cross disaster response dates back to 1886 when Clara Barton organized a relief effort for thousands of families whose homes, farms, and small businesses were wiped out by a great forest fire in Michigan. During the next 25 years, the American Red Cross provided disaster relief at the Johnstown flood, the Charleston earthquake, the Galveston and Sea Island hurricanes, Ohio and Mississippi River floods, the Florida yellow fever epidemic, and other major catastrophes. On January 5, 1905, the American Red Cross received the following Congressional Charter that mandated the organization to relieve persons suffering from disaster.

*"to continue and carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise*



*Clara Barton, Founder of the American Red Cross. (Used with the permission of the American Red Cross)*

*and carry on measures for preventing the same."*

### ***Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT)***

AMURT is a short-term relief and a long-term development program of Ananda Marga, Inc. Ananda Marga, Inc., is an international yoga and social services movement with origins in India. Incorporated in the U.S. in 1985, AMURT is one of the few U.S. voluntary agencies of Third World origin. AMURT is a global organization with service efforts on all continents and a structure in North America with sixteen regions. The USA is divided into ten regions with most regions covered by an AMURT coordinator. AMURT's objectives are to aid the poor and under-privileged through disaster relief, redevelopment programs, and community service.

### ***Catholic Charities USA Disaster Response***

Before the founding of this nation, Catholic missionaries and religious orders provided charitable care for sick, widowed, and orphaned settlers. These caregivers were the first Catholic charities. Catholic Charities USA, established in 1910 under the name "National Conference of Catholic Charities," was formed to unite the social service agencies operated by most of the 175 Catholic dioceses in the U.S. The name was changed to Catholic Charities USA in 1980.

In 1968, Catholic Charities USA was commissioned by the U.S. Catholic Conference to monitor disaster response of Catholic communities around the country. In 1990, Disaster Response became a full-time department of Catholic Charities USA. The department director is assisted by a seven member National Advisory Committee. Currently, there are 110 bishop-appointed diocesan coordinators representing 46 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These coordinators serve as the official liaisons between their diocese and Catholic Charities USA for pre-disaster planning and post-disaster response.

### ***Christian Disaster Response (CDR)***

In the event of domestic disaster, CDR works in cooperation with the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and Church World Service in providing valuable volunteers for assignment in local and out-of-state disasters.

### ***Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)***

CRWRC was founded in 1962 as a service agency of the Christian Reformed Church. Its principal mandates lie in the areas of community development and disaster response. The agency's Disaster Response Services has the overall goal of assisting churches in the disaster-affected community to respond to the needs of persons within that community. Its specific emphasis is on helping those churches provide trained volunteers to communities during long-term recovery.

CRWRC's disaster response occurs primarily through trained volunteers who are available for a variety of recovery-related tasks. These volunteers are located in the 46 regional divisions of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. In smaller disasters and local emergencies, these volunteers are organized through Disaster Response Services (DRS) Area Managers. In case of major disasters, the volunteers are coordinated, as needed, through the Grand Rapids Office.

### ***Church of the Brethren Disaster Response***

The Church of the Brethren had its origin in Schwarzenau, Germany, a tiny village located on the Eder River, where eight people were baptized in 1708 to form a new community of believers. The first Brethren congregation in America, the Germantown Congregation, was founded in 1723.

Today, the Church of the Brethren is organized into 24 districts within the U.S., and has disaster response coordinators in each district who assist in recruiting volunteers for debris removal and long-term rebuilding. There is also a regional child care coordinator in each of the ten FEMA regions who assists in the recruitment of child care volunteers. The Church of the Brethren Disaster Response is managed by the Emergency Response/Service Ministries Unit of the Church of the Brethren General Counsel.

### ***Church World Service (CWS) Disaster Response***

CWS Disaster Response is the disaster relief, refugee, and development unit of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and its 32 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox member communions. Organized in 1946, CWS has provided aid for emergency disaster response, rehabilitation, and development programs in more than 45 countries.

Since 1972 CWS has responded to disasters in the U.S. Through a network of trained volunteer disaster response consultants, CWS works to facilitate and organize preparedness, response, and recovery activities through faith-based organizations that focus on those that are most vulnerable to the effects of disaster. These consultants are assigned to cover each of the fifty states and territories.

### ***The Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief***

In 1940, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church officially organized the Presiding Bishop's Fund for the World Relief to be the church's channel for responding to worldwide human need. During this 50-year period, the fund has become the major disaster relief area of the Episcopal Church. The fund responds to domestic disaster principally through the Church's network of nearly 100 U.S. Dioceses and over 8,200 parishes. Diocesan bishops provide a vital communication link through their first-hand assessment of the scope of need and priority of response. The fund's principal ecumenical channel for domestic disaster response is the Church World Service.

### ***Friends Disaster Services (FDS)***

FDS was organized in 1974 in response to the increasing number of disasters in the U.S. FDS draws its volunteer work force from pre-registered and organized units from Friends Churches throughout the Midwest, Southern, and Eastern U.S. FDS has 15 trailers stationed across its working area. These trailers are stocked with tools and equipment pertinent to disaster response and rebuilding. FDS derives its financial support from an annual auction and donations from caring supporters.



*Friends Disaster Service help clean up flood debris after a 1996 winter flood in Williamsport, PA.*

### ***International Association of Jewish Vocational Services (IAJVS)***

IAJVS was founded in 1937 and, today, is an affiliation of 26 U.S., Canadian, and Israeli Jewish Employment and Vocational and Family Services agencies. These agencies have a long history of providing exemplary vocational and rehabilitation services to a wide constituency. Because of the unique range of services and activities provided by IAJVS affiliates, they are well-qualified to provide a broad spectrum of human services and training and employment initiatives that are frequently needed in times of disaster. Recently, IAJVS signed a Statement of Understanding with the American Red Cross so that both organizations may explore wider areas of cooperation and may provide the best service in time of disaster.

### ***International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF)***

IRFF was founded in 1975 by the Reverend and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon for the purpose of conducting relief programs, assisting other humanitarian agencies in their relief efforts, and educating society about the problems of poverty, social injustice, and catastrophic events. IRFF not only conducts its own projects but also works cooperatively with other efforts to better serve those in need. During times of disaster, IRFF has the fundamental goal of assisting those agencies involved in responding to the needs of the community when disaster strikes.

### ***Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)***

LDR was founded in January 1988 as a cooperative effort of two Lutheran church bodies: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. LDR was founded to carry out the mission of helping people recover from disasters.

### ***Mennonite Disaster Services (MDS)***

MDS began to take shape in 1950 at a picnic of young married couples from the Pennsylvania (now Whitestone) Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kansas. Living in an area plagued by drought, tornadoes, and floods, these individuals looked for a practical application of their Christian faith, not only in time of national crisis, but also in time of peace. During the following weeks, they shared their ideas for disaster service in a joint meeting with members of a corresponding Sunday school class of the Hesston. The newly formed organization named John Diller as the first coordinator.

MDS' first call for assistance did not come until May, 1951, when the Little Arkansas River flooded and Wichita called for help. For the next several years, the disaster committee mobilized at least once a year to help in major disasters in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. In 1993, MDS was incorporated as a non-profit organization separate from the Mennonite Central Committee. Today, MDS is organized into four regions in the U.S. and one in Canada. Within the five regions, there are 40 local MDS units. These units have the primary responsibility to represent MDS in a disaster response within their own



*Volunteers from Mennonite Disaster Services provide clean-up services after flooding in Pennsylvania.*

geographic boundaries and regions.

### ***National Emergency Response Team (NERT)***

NERT is a grassroots, family-oriented, disaster relief organization. The organization was formed by four brothers in direct response to the loss of life, property, and homes following Hurricane Andrew in 1992. NERT's core goal is "People Helping People" — helping families get their lives back together again when natural disaster strikes. NERT now has offices in New York, Maine, Washington, D.C., and Colorado.

### ***National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)***

Founded in 1975, NOVA is a private, non-profit, umbrella organization working on behalf of victims of crime and disaster. NOVA is guided by four purposes: to serve as the national advocate in support of victim rights and services; to provide direct services to victims; to be an educational resource and support to victim assistance professionals; and to be of service to its members.

NOVA has one office located in Washington, D.C. However it has connections with more than 8,000 victim service-providing agencies in the U.S. NOVA's National Crisis Response Team consists of more than 400 trained crisis responders dispersed around the country who respond on short notice during disaster. In addition, NOVA has a corp of trainers and crisis intervenors who can be called on in times of extraordinary need.

### ***Nazarene Disaster Response (NDR)***

NDR is a national network of volunteers who respond to victims of natural and man-made disasters. NDR is a part of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, which started in 1991 as a charitable organization, chartered and sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene. The need for an organized disaster response team representing the Church of the Nazarene became apparent during major disasters in recent years. In January 1994, a group of leaders met in



*Nazarene Disaster Response volunteers assist with clean up, restoration, and rebuilding in a Virginia flood.*

Washington, D.C. to organize NDR as an officially recognized disaster response agency. While NDR is a new voluntary agency, members and friends of the Church of the Nazarene have been active in responding to disasters in the U.S. for many years.

### ***Northwest Medical Teams International***

Ron Post founded the Northwest Medical Teams International in 1979 after watching a horrific news story where he saw thousands of people fleeing the "killing fields" of Cambodia only to suffer disease and death in Thai refugee camps with inadequate healthcare. This news story compelled him to put his Christian beliefs into action and make a difference for the Cambodian refugees. Within two weeks he had enlisted 28 medical volunteers who comprised the first of several Northwest Medical Teams. Since Mr. Post began the mission, over 500 volunteer teams have been sent around the world to help in time of disaster and famine. The mission has provided medical care, medical supplies, and equipment to over 70 countries.

### ***The Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors***

Since 1972, the Phoenix Society has been helping burn survivors and their families cope with and overcome the unimaginable and difficult challenges they encounter following a burn injury. Founded by Alan Jeffrey Breslau, a burn survivor, the society is the nation's longest standing and largest organization of burn survivors and care providers dedicated to helping burn survivors and their families. The society takes its name from the legendary bird of rare beauty that lives for 500 years and is consumed by flames, yet rises, reborn from its ashes, more brilliant than before.

Most services are provided by volunteer area coordinators who are burn survivors themselves or relatives of burn survivors. Area coordinators respond to requests for help from burn survivors, their loved ones, and burn care professionals. Services are provided on a regional basis free of charge. Area coordinators reach out and offer positive peer support and companionship to patients and their families under the direction of medical professionals. The society has representatives throughout the U.S. and many foreign countries.

### ***Points of Light Foundation***

Points of Light Foundation was founded on May 21, 1990, to further promote volunteerism in the U.S. Recognizing the good work already being accomplished by many volunteer and nonprofit organizations, the Foundation's initial efforts centered around the identification and recognition of outstanding volunteer activity. The Foundation also focused on the development of new programs to help promote volunteerism in corporate and other community organizations.

The Foundation became involved in disaster preparedness through a partnership with The Allstate Foundation in 1993 and initiated a new program, "Volunteer Centers - Partners in Disaster Response." The most fundamental aspect of this program is to have Volunteer Centers throughout the country become proactive members of local disaster response plans. Volunteer Centers in turn work with existing disaster response experts and agencies and support them in providing relief to disaster victims. Today, the Foundation supports a national network of 480 Volunteer Centers throughout the country.



*Vice President Gore visits the volunteer center in Fargo, North Dakota, after the Red River Floods and talks on the telephone to disaster-affected homeowners.*

### ***Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)***

PDA enables congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to witness the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is one of the three programs supported by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. It is part of the World Wide Ministries Division of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is administered under the direction



*The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Team, Louisville, Kentucky, 1997.*

of the Global Service and Witness work area.

### ***REACT International***

The idea of using CB radio in an organized way for emergency communications was born in a Chicago snowstorm where a CB was used to get help for a young family stranded on an expressway with a very sick child. On January 23, 1962, REACT's founder, Henry B. "Pete" Kreer, convinced Hallicrafters Company to sponsor the REACT program. In 1967, REACT led a movement to convince the Federal Communications Commission to designate channel 9 as the CB emergency channel.

Today, REACT International is a non-profit, public-service organization presently comprising 8,500 volunteers who are organized into 600 local REACT teams. REACT teams are trained in disaster preparedness and are encouraged to become proficient in communications in time of disaster.

### ***The Salvation Army***

In 1865, William Booth, an ordained minister with the Methodist New Connection, along with his wife Catherine, formed an evangelical group that preached to unchurched people living in appalling poverty within London's East End. Booth's ministry, originally known as the Christian Mission, became the Salvation Army in 1878 when that organization evolved on a quasi-military pattern. Booth became "the General" and officers' ranks were given to ministers. The Salvation Army has functioned successfully within that structure for more than a century. Its outreach has been expanded to include 103 countries and the Gospel is preached by its officers and soldiers in 160 languages.

The Salvation Army has been providing disaster relief assistance since 1900. On September 8, 1900, when Galveston Hurricane occurred, the Salvation Army sent officers from across America to go to the disaster site and provide spiritual counsel and assistance. Since that time, the Salvation Army has developed local, regional, and national disaster service programs.



*Catherine and William Booth, founders of the Salvation Army.*

### ***Second Harvest National Network of Food Banks***

Second Harvest National Network of Food Banks was founded in 1979 by John VanHengel, the Executive Director of the country's first food bank in Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. VanHengel created Second Harvest to provide technical assistance to community groups in other cities who were attempting to replicate the food bank concept in their own areas. The organization has grown to 187 certified affiliates which distribute more than a billion pounds of donated grocery products to 90,000 charitable feeding programs in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Second Harvest first became involved with disaster relief in 1989 during Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta Earthquake. In disaster response, the Second Harvest network capitalizes on its warehousing and distribution expertise. Second Harvest works cooperatively with other voluntary agencies to act as a conduit for donated food and other essential grocery items. The agency's efforts are typically "behind the scene" in that it does not engage in direct client services.

### ***Society of St. Vincent De Paul***

Since 1845, the Society of St. Vincent De Paul has been providing volunteer services to those in need after disasters. Today, they operate stores, homeless shelters, and feeding facilities that are similar to those run by the Salvation Army. Each local Society of St. Vincent De Paul engages in preparedness discussions with the American Red Cross, state VOAD groups, and other key groups in the local community.

The primary organization of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is in connection with Catholic parishes. There are 4,338 parish conferences in the U.S. City-wide or area-wide coordination of activities occurs through local and central councils, which are organized on a diocesan basis. There are 355 area wide councils in the U.S. Councils are further united into eight regional groupings. The national coordinating body is the Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent De Paul.

### ***Southern Baptist Disaster Relief***

When Hurricane Beulah ravaged the Rio Grande Valley in 1967, Baptist relief efforts were sporadic and unorganized. The Brotherhood Commission, along with state Baptist Brotherhood leadership, took the lead in organizing Southern Baptists to respond to disasters. At that time, some Texas Baptists decided that Baptists needed organization and cooperation in the face of disasters. From that beginning, cooperation among Baptists in times of disaster has blossomed into a well organized, highly cooperative effort. Southern Baptist Disaster relief is now part of their North American Mission Board. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief efforts are divided among the 38 state conventions (covering all 50 states) and have more than 15,000 trained volunteers.

### ***UJA Federations of North America***

UJA Federations of North America partners three premier American philanthropic organizations to form the dynamic, efficient core of a continental system serving hundreds of Federations and independent communities. For the better part of this century, United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations, and the United Israel Appeal have helped the Federation system raise an unprecedented amount of dollars to meet the needs of Jews, regardless of whether they are in Toledo, Tel Aviv or Tbilisi.

Now in Partnership, these three organizations are committed to continuing the proud history of treasuring and acting on traditional Jewish values. UJA Federations of North America's goal is to build a stronger Jewish community worldwide. Its combined strengths will enable the new organization to seamlessly offer strategic direction and assistance to communities even more effectively than in the past; particularly in areas of developing the leadership and financial resources essential to addressing the needs of Jewish people in the century to come.

### ***United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)***

UMCOR traces its origins to the General Conference of 1940, when Bishop Herbert Welch asked for an offering to assist Chinese war refugees. His listeners responded generously and UMCOR was set up to administer the funds. In 1972, at the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, UMCOR was given the following mandate to respond in the U.S. to human suffering created by natural disaster.

*The response of the United Methodist Committee on Relief in the United States shall include only the meeting of human needs growing out of natural or civil disaster. This response shall be made at the request of the appropriate body of the United Methodist Church. Repair and reconstruction of local church property and other church-related property shall be included in the appeal made for funds or the advance special gifts made for this purpose.*

Each annual conference or Episcopal area has a disaster response coordinator who is appointed by the Bishop of the conference. The disaster response coordinator works in direct relationship with the executive of UMCOR and the executive of the National Division, who have responsibility for disaster response. The first responsibility of the disaster response coordinator is to assess the destruction and suffering resulting from the disaster and to give an initial report to UMCOR on the victims' emergency needs.

### ***United States Service Command***

The United States Service Command is incorporated as a non-political, non-profit, charitable organization of patriotic Americans who want to serve their country and actively help others during disasters and other crises.

### ***Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA)***

For 33 years, VITA has been helping people in developing countries improve the quality of their lives by providing technical information. For over a decade, VITA has offered information management courses at its Virginia headquarters and various overseas sites. In 1992, VITA created its Disaster Information Resource Program to provide telecommunications and management information systems support to the emergency assistance community. In the U.S., VITA has worked closely with FEMA and NVOAD as a clearinghouse for public offers of goods, services, and financial support for emergency response incidents.

### ***Volunteers of America (VOA)***

VOA is one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive charitable non-profit human services organizations. VOA was founded in 1896 by Christian social reformers Ballington and Maud Booth as a broad spiritual movement to "reach and uplift" the American people. As commanders of the Salvation Army, the Booths had led various human service programs since 1887. The immediate corps of VOA came from the ranks of the Salvation Army. Like the Salvation Army, VOA was originally structured along military lines. Military rank and titles continued until 1981, when VOA adopted a corporate form of governance.

For much of its history, VOA had a disaster response unit. In the 1972, the unit was disbanded rather than duplicate efforts of organizations like the American Red Cross. Still the tradition of helping during crisis continues. In 1993, for example, VOA provided family counseling services for the victims of Hurricane Andrew. Today, VOA is active in more than 220 cities and towns in 37 states. The organization's services are different in each community because each community's needs are unique.

### ***World Vision***

World Vision was founded in 1950 by Bob Pierce, a Christian evangelist and war correspondent, who was compelled to respond to the needs of children and families in the Korean peninsula and China. Today, World Vision responds to natural disasters as part of its ongoing work in more than 100 countries around the world. World Vision's domestic disaster response effort began informally in the late 1980's as communities in the U.S. were impacted by various disasters. World Vision's more formal U.S. disaster response efforts began in 1993 when it joined NVOAD and engaged in operations in Des Moines and St. Louis that year.

## **SUMMARY**

America is a country of volunteers. Our voluntary efforts span from the colonial period when community spirit was essential for survival to voluntary computer user groups of the 1990's. The widespread involvement of volunteers in disaster relief, therefore, is in keeping with our nation's historical spirit of giving. Since the 1800's, voluntary agencies have helped individuals, families, and communities get back on their feet after the devastating effects of disaster. Without these agencies, local, State, and Federal disaster relief organizations would be unable to meet all the unique needs of disaster victims.

Unit Three will describe the specific roles and services that voluntary agencies provide throughout the emergency management cycle. This unit will provide you with an appreciation of the vast scope of services provided to disaster victims by voluntary agencies.

## CHECK YOUR MEMORY

Once you have completed the questions below, check your answers on page E-2.

1. President Nixon launched which of the following volunteer initiatives?
  - a. The Peace Corps
  - b. ACTION
  - c. Habitat for Humanity
  - d. Points of Light
  
2. Which historical disaster marked the last time that Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, actively participated in a disaster relief project?
  - a. The Johnstown Flood (1889)
  - b. The Mine Cherry Disaster of Illinois (1909)
  - c. The San Francisco Earthquake (1906)
  - d. Galveston Hurricane (1900)
  
3. During which historical disaster was the concept of a Donations Coordination Team first fully implemented?
  - a. Hurricane Camille (1969)
  - b. The Midwest Floods (1993)
  - c. Hurricane Andrew (1992)
  - d. None of the above
  
4. Which voluntary agency's roots lie in caring for the sick, widowed, and orphaned settlers of Colonial America?
  - a. Adventist Community Services
  - b. The American Red Cross
  - c. Catholic Charities USA Disaster Response
  - d. Society of St. Vincent De Paul
  
5. Which voluntary agency was founded to promote volunteerism in the U.S. and today has a national network of 480 volunteer centers?
  - a. Points of Light Foundation
  - b. Lutheran Disaster Response
  - c. Mennonite Disaster Services
  - d. Christian Disaster Response