

# Red Cross Helps Pennsylvanians Get Back On Their Feet

**Monday, September 26, 2011** — The American Red Cross is providing shelter, food, clean-up supplies and emotional support to thousands of people across northeastern and central Pennsylvania still cleaning up their homes damaged by the devastating flooding which inundated the area two weeks ago.

More than 1,550 Red Cross volunteers have come from all over the United States to help. Since the onset of the flooding, they have provided a safe place to stay to more than 7,450 people in 69 shelters, and have served almost 338,000 meals and snacks, distributed by volunteers on board almost 100 Red Cross emergency response vehicles.

The Red Cross has also distributed more than 114,900 relief supplies like shampoo, toothpaste, soap, rakes, shovels, garbage bags and other clean-up items. Meals are being prepared through a partnership with the Southern Baptist Convention. Red Cross volunteers have also provided more than 3,500 health and disaster health consultations such as assisting with replacing prescriptions and eyeglasses and helping people who have lost everything they own plan their next steps.

When flooding strikes, homes are filled with water and mud and the clean-up is a Herculean task. While families try to get their lives back to normal, they are grateful for the Red Cross support in Pennsylvania.

Red Cross emergency vehicles have been visiting Shamokin, Pa. twice a day, reaching as many people as possible with food, snacks and water. Other vehicles are on hand to distribute cleaning supplies. Sue Wiseman, a Red Cross volunteer from Grand Junction, Colorado, and her two team members have been serving the people of Shamokin. Wiseman and her team members often leave the vehicle to help people carry a stack of meals or a case of water to their vehicles. With tears in her eyes, she describes a recent conversation she had with a woman who comes for meals each day for herself and her six grandchildren. The woman said, “Susan, when I get sad and I start to cry, I just think about you and your smile, and I know I can get through.”

In Laceyville, Pa., Cindy Chmel, a Red Cross volunteer from Pittsburgh, visits everyday to serve food and water and Will Wylie is grateful for her help. His home was damaged when water from the Susquehanna River almost reached the second floor. Now the waters have receded and Wylie is fixing his home during the day and working his full-time job at night. He has no electricity or heat in his home and depends on the Red Cross for drinking water and two hot meals a day. He is also grateful for the cleaning supplies the Red Cross has provided to help deal with the debris and mold.



***Tom DeMartini (left) from Hendersonville, NC was part of an ERV team delivering meals in Hazelton, PA, 9/12-25/2011***



**(excerpt from email from our PA-deployed volunteer, Tom DeMartini)** “Mike—they expect a total of 90 ERV’s-- the area effected is so spread out that a lunch ERV cannot get back in time to load and do supper hence they need double the ERV’s .....we are also getting 2 more counties to serve.....yes have seen destruction...water had been up to roof tops so everything inside is a total loss....wet, mildew, etc.....tons of stuff on the side of streets and roads.....mud everywhere.....They are using ERV’s as EAS as we did in Al.....so it’s a combination of feeding and supplies.....The water has receded but are not really in their normal banks.....but it is better.....tonight we did 70 meals.....tomorrow we will be switched to the noon meal on the same route...it’s to balance out and give all of us a chance on both times on the same route...., Tom”



**Laceyville, Pa. resident Will Wylie is visited daily by Red Cross volunteers who bring him drinks and hot meals as he cleans up his home.**

Ellie Berman is a volunteer Red Cross nurse helping people in Tunkhannock, Pa. One local resident, Sandra Coolbaugh, remained in her basement apartment for several days after it was completely flooded. When she came to the Red Cross shelter, Berman helped secure oxygen and several medications to help Coolbaugh recover, and worked with community agencies to find her a place to live. “She is my angel,” Coolbaugh said. “I can’t tell you all she did, but she is my angel.”

The Red Cross has been responding to multiple disasters across many states, and these relief efforts will cost millions of dollars. At the same time, we continue to respond to home fires and other disasters in our local communities, like *Henderson and Transylvania*. If you would like to help, you can call 1-800-REDCROSS, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), or text the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation. Contributions may also be sent to your local American Red Cross chapter at either: 203 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. East, Hendersonville, NC 28792 or 175 King St., Brevard, NC 28712.

#### **About the American Red Cross:**

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation’s blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.*