



**American  
Red Cross**

## Louisiana Flooding

One-Year Update | August 2017

### Helping Louisianans Bounce Back after Record Flooding

When Shirley Kelly woke up on the day of the August 2016 floods, the first thing she noticed was her feet in the water. “It was like a river going down Greenwell Springs Road,” Shirley said. She called 911 twice before a small boat could arrive to take her and her adult son, Tim, to a nearby shelter.

Throughout southern Louisiana, families like the Kellys struggled with the onslaught of torrential rains and record flooding that forced thousands from their homes and devastated communities. Powered by the extraordinary generosity of our donors, Red Cross volunteers and employees from Louisiana and all over the country joined the emergency response to help people facing heartbreaking losses.

Trained volunteers provided safe shelter for people with nowhere else to go, along with meals, relief supplies, basic health services and all-important emotional support. And when people began returning to clean out flood-ravaged homes and salvage what they could, Red Cross

vehicles visited the impacted neighborhoods to deliver cleanup supplies, water, food and snacks.

Over the last year, we have continued providing casework and recovery assistance for flood survivors like the Kellys, helping them locate and access available resources and make recovery plans. But sometimes, the simplest things can make an unexpected impact.

“[Tim] has been different since we came home. He has been talking a lot more,” said Shirley, who credits friendly Red Cross shelter workers with helping her son, who has developmental disabilities, come out of his shell. “They spent a lot of time with him. Anything we needed, they tried to get.”

It took Shirley and Tim nearly two months before they were able to return home, with additional support from the Red Cross and our community partners. “It took a toll, but I’ll bounce back,” Shirley said.

#### Response at a Glance

More than 4,800 Red Cross workers have helped thousands of people impacted by the August 2016 flooding in Louisiana, including:



More than **79,800 overnight shelter** stays



More than **1.3 million meals and snacks** served



Nearly **700,000 relief items** distributed



More than **47,000 health and mental health contacts** made



More than **11,400 cases** opened for people in need

All numbers are cumulative and reflect Red Cross response efforts since August 12, 2016.

Above: During flood cleanup, local volunteer Cora Lee provides food and water to Mike Armstrong, a Denham Springs, La., resident of over 30 years. Photo by: Marko Kopic/American Red Cross

## Red Cross Joins Local Partners to Make a Positive Impact on Recovery

One year after the August floods, the Red Cross and our nonprofit, government and community partners continue to assist residents (some of whom were also hit by the earlier spring 2016 flooding) with unmet recovery needs. We are working hand-in-hand with affected communities to make a positive impact for flood-affected individuals and families.

Donna Bliss, a Northshore resident who has a lot of experience with flood damage, was grateful for the help. “My family was impacted twice by the 2016 floods [in March and August],” she said. “The response of help was amazing. It was something we never expected, but we are so thankful for organizations like United Way and the Red Cross, along with all the volunteers, that were able to help us and our neighbors.”

Jeanette Crain lives in Holden, in hard-hit Livingston Parish, where her home of 28 years took on more than four feet of water. After staying with family and supported by various organizations for months, she was able to purchase a used trailer to place on her rural property.



Jeanette Crain (left), who lost her home in the floods, speaks with Red Cross volunteer Sydnee Maynard. The Red Cross assisted with access needs and fire safety in Jeanette's new home. Photo by: Nancy Malone/American Red Cross

**“In times of tragedy, this is what coming together to help one another is all about.”**

Donna Rogers, north Baton Rouge flood survivor

Jeanette received assistance through our partnership with the Louisiana Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition on access needs for her new home, which sits eight feet above ground, well higher than the faded red marker noting the flood line. The home sits so high above the ground that, while a ramp provides access, it's impossible for a wheelchair user to navigate.

She received a home evaluation, power wheelchair, hospital bed, a platform lift with modifications, including a concrete pad and a 47-foot long concrete pathway for accessibility to her trailer home. The Red Cross also installed new smoke alarms and helped Jeanette make an escape plan in case of fire.

“I knew you were going to try to help, but when they started bringing me this equipment so I can sleep, with my whole body in a bed...” said Jeanette, describing the difference the equipment made in her mobility. “It's been a blessing. I literally cried. It's such a blessing.”

In north Baton Rouge, Donna Rogers saw her home inundated by four feet of water, losing 30 years of clothes, furniture and “things I had forgotten I had.” Donna received building materials to help repair her home through a Red Cross partnership with True Light Baptist Church and the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention.

“I would say the positive impact the flood had on my life and my community would be all of the great people that gave us their love, time and donations to help us rebuild our homes and restore our communities,” Donna said. “In times of tragedy, this is what coming together to help one another is all about.”

Another Red Cross recovery partner, Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge, is committed to helping more families return to completed homes in affected areas of Baton Rouge, where more than 4,500 families were impacted. Support includes help with walls, finishes and replacing appliances.

“We’re excited about this opportunity to serve more families in their recovery after the August flooding,” said executive director Chris Andrews. “In addition,

the knowledge our homeowners will have [from the Red Cross] in the event of a fire emergency cannot be more valuable.”

“If the most recent natural disasters have taught us anything,” he said, “it’s that you have to always be prepared for the unexpected. The Red Cross and its partnership is giving us the opportunity to be better prepared.”

## ‘I Never Expected Anyone to Help Me’

Teresa Pastor, whose backyard abuts the Vermilion River, initially thought her family was going to be okay—she even invited others who already had flooded to stay with her. Then the waters rose within a foot of the retaining wall at her backyard. The family moved furniture upstairs and surrounded their home with sandbags.

The single mother of five remained optimistic, especially when the family left to stay with her mother and she didn’t hear from neighbors. But the river kept rising. “When we returned the next morning, the entire neighborhood was under water,” Pastor said.

Despite their extensive efforts, river water ultimately poured through the front door of their home, flooding the first floor. Challenges kept arising for the Pastors, who did not have flood insurance. Mud was everywhere; the floor turned out to contain asbestos; the sewer backed up into the house; and mold eventually appeared on the walls and ceilings.

Along with neighbors and volunteers, organizations including Upbring, Salvation Army, Eight Days of Hope and local churches helped the family gut their



With repairs from last year’s flooding well underway, Red Cross disaster specialist Charles Banks checks in with Teresa Pastor (center) and family at their home in Acadiana. Photo by: Nancy Malone/American Red Cross

house and offered ongoing support. In addition, a Red Cross recovery partnership with United Way of Acadiana provided building materials like flooring, doors, sheetrock and molding, as well as assistance in the rebuilding process.

“The weird thing is I never expected anyone to help me. It’s like every time there was a need, someone was there. Y’all really helped me get back together; it helped me get back on my feet,” said Teresa.

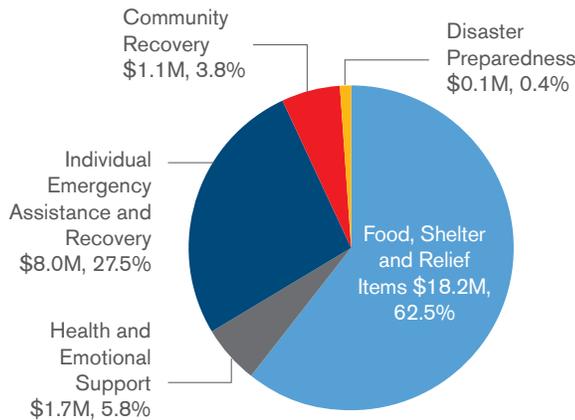
## Compassionate Donors Power Relief and Recovery for Louisiana

Thanks to generous contributions from our supporters, the Red Cross has raised \$29.1 million, including the value of critical donated goods and services, to help people impacted by the August 2016 flooding in south Louisiana.

As of July 7, 2017, the Red Cross has already spent or made commitments to spend approximately \$29.1 million on emergency relief, recovery and preparedness efforts for the August 2016 Louisiana floods.

### Louisiana Flooding

Louisiana Floods Expenses and Commitments\*  
Through July 7, 2017 – \$29.1M (\$29.1M raised)



\*These costs include the logistics, staff and technology expenses that make our services possible, as well as the value of critical donated goods and services. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs.

**Food, Shelter and Relief Items:** Red Cross volunteers and staff open shelters to provide safe refuge, serve nourishing meals to residents and first responders, and hand out needed relief items.

**Individual Emergency Assistance and Recovery:** The Red Cross works one-on-one with residents to create recovery plans, find housing solutions, replace items, provide other support and help them apply for government and other community assistance.

**Health and Emotional Support:** Our volunteers and staff help provide services such as first aid support, replacing prescription medicines or eyeglasses, and helping people to cope.

**Community Recovery:** The Red Cross supports broader recovery initiatives to help communities meet specific disaster-caused needs, such as community rebuilding projects.

**Disaster Preparedness:** The Red Cross helps communities plan and prepare for disasters. This includes offering community trainings and distributing preparedness information and resources, such as smoke alarms, that can help save lives.

*Thank you!*

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of nearly 64,000 disasters per year—including single-family or apartment home fires, severe weather, floods and wildfires. Those in need turn to the Red Cross in their darkest hours because they know they can depend on us right after the disaster and through their recovery. Your donation helps us fulfill this promise. We are grateful for your trust.