



**American
Red Cross**

Southern Tier Chapter

American Red Cross
Southern Tier Chapter
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<http://www.southerntierredcross.org>

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Busy Start to Disaster Season Strains Red Cross

At 2:45 am on Oct 28th, Red Cross volunteers responded to a fire in Sidney Center that severely damaged a home, displacing 9 people who were provided temporary shelter, clothing and groceries. That same night a family of two in Bainbridge, whose home sustained fire damage, received assistance with seasonal clothing and groceries. And, another young woman with a baby lost her home in Mt. Upton. In addition to temporary housing assistance, the Red Cross provided her with food, clothing, infant supplies and as in all cases, referrals to other agencies for more resources.

Meanwhile, on the same day, a family of three in Binghamton needed help with temporary housing when a fire destroyed their kitchen and living room. Two other Binghamton families suffered through fires on the 17th and 19th that destroyed one family's house and severely damaged the other. Bedding linens, clothing and grocery assistance were provided depending on the families' needs.

On October 21st, a young family in Plymouth lost their mobile home, four pets and all their belongings to a fire. They received food, clothing and seasonal garments.

On Oct. 29th at 5:00pm, Delaware County volunteers opened two warming shelters, one in Delhi and one in Andes to accept county residents who had lost power due to the snowstorm that swept through our region. Teams from Endicott and Elmira were dispatched to relieve the first responder crews and provide additional food and supplies.

Major disasters such as Hurricane Ike receive a great deal of media attention, yet the most common disaster threat is not hurricanes or floods — it's home fires. **The Southern Tier Chapter of the American Red Cross responds to an incident approximately every 3 days**, and volunteers are on call 24 hours per day, seven days per week to help meet housing, food and medication needs for those who have lost everything.

This is early in the season and the 14 incidents in October suggest that we will outpace last year's rapid rate, when the Red Cross responded to 173 cases and helped 465 individuals get started on the road to recovery. The local disaster relief fund exceeded its budget by 80% last fiscal year and it is already 25% over budget as of the end of September.

“Given the severe economic downturn this year, we are concerned about our ability to keep pace with the needs of our community members, who are predicted to use more alternative heat sources this winter. First of all, please be careful, especially if you are using an alternative heat source such as a woodstove or space heater, and if you need tips or information, call us or your local fire authorities. But, if the worst should happen and your family should experience a disaster, you can rest assured that the Red Cross will be there to help, just as we have done for 101 years”, said Cynthia Gordineer, CEO of the Southern Tier Chapter.

The Red Cross is appealing to the community to support its services, including disaster relief, services to the armed forces, preparedness and life-saving skills. All Red Cross disaster assistance is free and made possible by the voluntary donations of people from all walks of life. By making a financial donation to the American Red Cross, you too can help a family who has lost everything to begin rebuilding their lives in hopes of a brighter and safer future. Donate now to the American Red Cross, Southern Tier Chapter located at 620 E. Main Street Endicott, NY 13760 or by calling (607) 785-7207. A secure online donation can also be made at www.southerntierredcross.org .

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About the American Red Cross Southern Tier Chapter: The Southern Tier Chapter of the American Red Cross celebrates its 101st year of providing relief to victims of disasters, teaching lifesaving skills, and supporting military members and families. For more information about the Red Cross call 607-785-7207 or visit southerntierredcross.org.