

**NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF THE BUDGET
TOWN HALL HEARINGS
NOVEMBER 27, 2007**

**AMERICAN RED CROSS
MARCI HENDERSON
REGIONAL CHAPTER DIRECTOR**

My name is Marci Henderson and I am the Regional Chapter Director for the local chapter of the American Red Cross. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

The Onondaga Oswego chapter is one of 36 chapters in NYS that help New Yorkers prepare for disasters and provides assistance when disasters strike. The American Red Cross in New York State is requesting \$20 million in the 2008-09 State budget for the programs and services we provide for all New Yorkers. We appreciate your previous support and want you to know that it makes a difference each and every day.

Rather than inundate you with a lot of statistics about the work the Red Cross does in this community and around New York State, I would like to share with you the recent activity of the American Red Cross just this past week in just a two county area.

Following a building collapse in Fulton a week ago today, we helped four displaced residents with food, clothing and a place to stay;

On Thanksgiving we helped a Syracuse family of six whose house caught on fire;

The day before yesterday another Syracuse family, ironically also with six members had a house fire on Herriman Street needing food, clothing and a place to stay!

All told, \$2,116 dollars of assistance provided to 16 individuals from 6 families as the result of 3 disasters ALL helped by one organization, the American Red Cross!

Your support makes a difference!

During this same time period, the chapter assisted families of the US military through 8 emergency communication messages including 5 major illnesses and 3 death

notifications. This 24 hour service is provided by trained, compassionate Red Cross workers who understand the critical nature of their work.

Your support makes a difference!

During this same time period, the chapter taught 96 people life saving skills like First Aid/CPR and even two classes of teenagers taking babysitter skills training. Who knows when this knowledge will be put to work to save a life?

Your support makes a difference!

During this same week, hundreds of donors gave blood to help sick and injured people. They share this precious gift because they understand there is no substitute.

Your support makes a difference!

Last year, in NYS, the Red Cross responded to more than 5,000 disasters, many of them residential fires. In just the North Central New York region, local Red Cross chapters responded to approximately 10% (500) of those disasters. That's a lot of lives affected, that's a lot of late night calls in the middle of winter, that's a lot of pain and anguish. But, with the dedication and commitment of Red Cross staff (paid and volunteer) and the support of our community we can make a difference.....

Through the support of NYS, the Red Cross has helped victims of disaster get back on their feet and find comfort in their hour of need. YES, your support does make a difference to New Yorkers....each and every day!

The American Red Cross and the State of New York have developed a strong partnership over the years, and this partnership has resulted in a safer New York. We look forward to continuing this partnership and working effectively to prepare, prevent and respond to future disasters in New York.

On behalf of the Red Cross and the people we serve across NYS, I want to express our appreciation for your careful consideration of this request.

Thank you.