



American Red Cross
Mid-Illinois Chapter

Red Cross Update

Serving DeWitt, Macon, Moultrie & Shelby Counties

September/October 2009 | Mid-Illinois Chapter

Red Cross Supports Fallen Soldier

by Glenda Plunkett

Sgt. Gerrick Smith, 19, assigned to the Illinois National Guard 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry died on July 29, 2009 as a result of a non-combat related injury in Afghanistan. Citizens and flags lined the streets as Smith was escorted home on August 5 to Sullivan, Illinois where he was laid to rest in the Moultrie County Memorial Park Cemetery for veterans.

Smith was escorted by family, Patriot Guard Riders, local fire and EMT departments, the Military Honor Guard, police, as well as other patriots paying tribute to Smith's sacrifice.

To honor Sgt. Smith, Red Cross volunteer Bill Reedy suggested that the Mid-Illinois Chapter offer to feed the entourage escorting Smith. Reedy called upon the American Legion and local merchants for support and they willingly answered that call.

"Gerrick Smith is a hero whose sacrifice shall not be forgotten. Bil's idea was an excellent one. He laid out the operation and we were honored to help," stated Dennis Eller, Executive Director, Mid-Illinois Chapter.



12 Red Cross volunteers fed 150 of those who guided Smith home

Another Successful Institute!

Mid-Illinois Chapter Hosts 3rd Annual Emergency Services Institute

By Glenda Plunkett

This summer the Mid-Illinois Chapter hosted our third annual Illinois Emergency Services Institute at Millikin University, from July 7 – 10. The purpose of the four day conference is to educate and train Red Cross volunteers and staff in disaster relief. With 35 classes offered from basic to advanced topics, over 220 volunteers and staff from throughout Illinois and eight surrounding states attended the Institute to improve their skills as disaster responders.

Highlights of this year's event included a live shelter simulation course and a live disaster kitchen operation held at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Decatur.

Red Cross volunteers taking the shelter simulation class learned how to set up a cot, register a client, and enforce the regulations and rules of a Red Cross shelter. This was the first year for the live shelter simulation; in previous years, Red Cross volunteers learned the policies and procedures on



how to set-up and run a shelter operation through lecture-based courses, but this year volunteers received hands-on training with pretend disaster clients and real-world scenarios to test their skills and knowledge. While the shelter simulation students were setting up the shelter, the students of the disaster kitchen course were tasked with preparing and serving a balanced and nutritious meal to the volunteer clients and staff of the shelter simulation. These courses in addition to all the training offered at the Institute were a major success. In all, over 4,120 hours of disaster response training were conducted and

received throughout the 4-day institute.

"Training is the key to running a smooth disaster response. We are thankful for the opportunity to provide the training, but more importantly, we are thankful to have volunteers who provide Red Cross services to those in need," remarked John Weibull, Director of Emergency Services for the Mid-Illinois Chapter.

Have You Remembered The Mid-Illinois Chapter In Your Estate Planning?

Girl Scouts Host Successful Flip Flop Drive for American Red Cross

The Mid-Illinois Chapter responds to dozens of local house fires every year. Many fires occur in the middle of the night and most often families lose everything from their toothbrush to their prized family possessions. The Red Cross responds to these families' needs with emergency assistance for food, clothing and shelter to help get the family back on their feet. However, Red Cross volunteers have seen a need for immediate temporary foot protection for families and individuals who are forced to leave the house before they are able to grab a pair of shoes, especially in extreme weather conditions.

The Girl Scouts of Troop 3087 have responded to this need. In preparation for their Emergency Preparedness badge, the



troop held a flip flop donation drive at the Dollar Tree locations in Decatur and Forsyth from June 15 to July 7. On July 8, the Troop presented the Chapter with 457 pairs of flip flops. The drive was such a success that

both stores ran out of flip flops; the Troop continued to collect teddy bears (45) and slippers (18) to be given to local families affected by disaster. The items will be distributed throughout the counties in which the Mid-Illinois Chapter serves: Macon, DeWitt, Shelby and Moultrie.

The Mid-Illinois Chapter was thrilled to see these girls get excited about emergency preparedness and helping others, and would like to extend their gratitude to the Girl Scouts and Troop leaders of Troop 3087 and both Dollar Tree stores in Decatur and Forsyth. Thank you for helping us help your community.

Boy Scout Troop Lends a Helping Hand to Red Cross

With a new, six-bay garage, the Mid-Illinois Chapter needed additional organized storage space inside the garage to store emergency supplies. Around the same time, Boy Scout Christian Rau was looking for a project to complete his Eagle Scout requirements. To earn the rank of Eagle Scout, Rau was required to design project plans, delegate job duties and supervise the entire construction crew, which consisted of seven fellow scouts, Scoutmaster Jeff Burnham and Rau's Dad, Brad Rau.

Rau enlisted the help of seven Scouts from Decatur's Troop 202. Rau designed the plans and acquired the necessary

materials. On May 9, the scouts built a set of sturdy shelves where the Red Cross will store cots, blankets and other shelter supplies needed during a disaster. The garage storage will allow for much faster loading for the Red Cross in the event of an emergency.

The project was a success and the troop is now waiting for approval from scout headquarters of Christian's application for promotion to the rank of Eagle Scout. The Mid-Illinois Chapter is very grateful for the new shelves and would like to thank Christian and all the boy scouts who assisted in the project for their hard work and contribution.



Boy Scout Troop 202: Zach Anderson, Nick Livasy, and Christian Rau pose in front of newly built shelves inside the Red Cross' garage. Troop members not pictured include: Sean Fitzgerald, Matthew Wheeler, Brad Munos, John Livasy, Daniel Burnham, Aaron Wiggins, and Scout master Jeff Burnham

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