



## Neighbors Helping Neighbors

March 2009

In his 1987 "March is Red Cross Month" proclamation, President Ronald Reagan said, "No one can predict when the next river will flood or the next storm will hit. No one can foresee the next threat to the Nation's health. What is predictable is that we will face such threats and emergencies, and that the American Red Cross will be there to offer help and hope."

During the historic 2009 ice storm, the Bluegrass Area Chapter offered help and hope to area residents forced to evacuate their homes in the aftermath of the most catastrophic natural disaster to hit Kentucky in nearly 200 years. The Bluegrass Area Chapter operated shelters in Fayette, Clark, Estill, Harrison, Jessamine, and Scott Counties. A total of 826 overnight stays occurred in the shelters, with over 2854 meals served.

The Bluegrass Area Chapter mobilized 142 volunteers and staff members in their shelter operations. Deanna Merideth, Director of Volunteers for the Bluegrass Area Chapter, said, "Volunteers assisted in a variety of ways during the disaster response, including staffing shelters, performing clerical and administrative duties, and providing nursing care and mental health support."

Patricia Collins was one such volunteer, who worked every night the Fayette County shelter was opened. Collins said she was happy to help area residents and is "ready to work if ice hits again."

Another Red Cross volunteer, who wishes to remain anonymous, said the experience was rewarding for her, as well. She also noted that her 17-year-old son assisted in setting-up the shelter. "I think most people were pleased with the help they received," she said.

Merideth is proud of the Bluegrass Area Chapter's tremendous volunteer response to the ice storm. She states, "We owe a debt of gratitude to our Red Cross volunteers and those in the community who graciously offered their time and compassion to their neighbors to make a challenging situation easier."

The Bluegrass Area Chapter responds to disasters and emergencies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To learn more about the Bluegrass Area Chapter of the American Red Cross and the many ways you can help our neighbors, please visit our website at [www.redcrosslexky.org](http://www.redcrosslexky.org)

