



*Together, we can save a life*



## Portsmouth Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES) Spring 2004 Newsletter

### Volunteers 2004

Volunteers are teen-agers who have a desire to work in medically oriented volunteer service. The Volunteer Program in the hospital provides this opportunity. These young volunteers handle many worthwhile tasks and develop new abilities. They create a more pleasant atmosphere for patients and provide relief for staff while also gaining personal and professional skills. They are encouraged to actively participate in all areas of the unit to which they are assigned. While some volunteers decide medical work is not to their liking, others are able to affirm this as their career goal.

Volunteers must be at least 14 years and less than 19 years old at the start of the program (July 06). The deadline for filing applications is May 14. The program will run from July 06 through August 19, 2004. Orientation will be June 28 & 30. A PPD skin test for tuberculosis will be administered during the orientation. It is necessary for the Volunteer to become CPR certified at a cost of \$5.00 if not already holding a valid CPR card.

Volunteers are expected to work at least 4 hours a week, morning or afternoon. The program is being offered Monday through Thursday. If desired, participants may work a full day(s). Volunteer Applications for summer 2004 may be found on this web site. They are to be completed on line and e-mailed back to the Red Cross AFES Office. The parental consent form is to be completed, downloaded, printed and signed and submitted to the Red Cross AFES Office, Building 249, by May 14, 2004.



### Grants

This Red Cross AFES Station has received generous gifts this year for their ongoing programs in the hospital.

The **UAW 919** gave funds for the purchase of 200 Comfort Kits. Joe Kitchen, Vice President of **Rolling Thunder Inc.** Chapter 2 VA, was instrumental in our securing this generous gift. This AFES Station has limited funds and this gift is most appreciated by the service members who benefit.

The **Navy Federal Credit Union** provided this station with funds to use for our hospital programs and NFCU workers gave generously for the Christmas program at the hospital.

**Moose Lodge of Portsmouth** provided funding to be used for the purchase of small gifts for all patients in the hospital at Christmas.

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## Comfort Kits

A comfort kit contains the necessary toilet articles for use by individuals. The Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services Personnel at NMCP have provided nearly three hundred comfort kits to deploying Expeditionary Medical Forces in the last month. Volunteers have provided some of these and others were ordered from Red Cross Headquarters. Here are a few quotes from LT Raymond Bristol, Officer for Plans, Operations, and Medical Intelligence.

*"Thanks so much for your continued support and providing the comfort kits to our deploying Sailors. I feel that the comfort kits are wonderful departing gifts for those deploying. I've heard nothing but good comments from our deploying Sailors. If we can continue to provide them, it would be great. ... They have 3 stops before they reach their final destination. The comfort kits provide them the necessary personal care items and allow them to pack the bulk of their items. Again, thanks so much for your continued support!"*



The AFES Station NMCP also briefed the departing troops regarding available support services and how to provide communication information to their families during deployment. Often the Red Cross is asked to contact a service member to notify of a death in the family, a new baby, a sudden illness or other emergencies. It is important that the family know the service member's address and the social security number. This information is necessary in order to deliver messages in a timely manner.

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## Language Bank

Often, there are patients in the clinics or on the wards at the hospital whose command of English is insufficient to understand instructions and diagnoses. Also, those who have severe hearing impairments may need someone to sign for them. At present, the hospital has to pay qualified interpreters.

This Red Cross AFES Station is establishing a language bank to be available for medical staff to use when needed. Unless it is an emergency situation, advance notice for the need of these interpreters is given.

If you are fluent in any foreign language, please volunteer your services by calling the Red Cross AFES Office at 757-953-5435. It would be particularly helpful to have a volunteer willing to organize, screen participants and supervise this most worthwhile endeavor.

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## Red Cross President and CEO Issues "WAKE UP" Call

On January 28, 2004, American Red Cross President and CEO Marsha J. Evans issued a "wake up" call to all Americans challenging them to take personal responsibility for their own safety. She pointed out that in the past year, we have faced many disasters, including a string of 516 tornadoes that killed 39 people in one month, power outages in the Northeast and Hurricane Isabel.



"Last year reminds us all that we live in unpredictable times," she said. "I'm asking each of you to help the American Red Cross 'wake up America' because there are 175 million people who are basically asleep at the switch when it comes to their own and their family's safety and security."

She went on to say that the Red Cross is the only non-governmental agency assigned a lead role in the Federal Response Plan coordinated under the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security. For the full text of her speech, go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). Visit this web site for other information on the American Red Cross also.

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## Military Members and Families

Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services personnel serve in nearly 1,000 chapters in the US, on 109 military installations around the world and alongside our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Using the latest in computer and telecommunication technology, military members stationed all over the world are able to send messages to loved ones back home during an emergency or other important events through the Red Cross AFES. Families are also able to send emergency messages to their service member. These communications are delivered around-the-clock, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To contact a service member call the [AFES Station at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth](#), 757-953-5435, your local Red Cross Chapter, or after working hours call 1-877-272-7337.

While serving 1.4 million active duty personnel, the Red Cross also reaches out to the 1.5 million members of the National Guard and Reserves who reside in nearly every local community in America. Both active duty and community-based military can count on the Red Cross to provide emergency communications that link them with their families back home, access to financial assistance, counseling and assistance to veterans

