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## Mayor proclaims March as American Red Cross month

By Vera Kochan



From left, Council Member Mike McCluer, Vice Mayor Kymberleigh Korpus, American Red Cross' Briana Taylor, Mayor Roger Wykle, Council Member Renata Sos and Council Member Steve Woehleke. Photo Vera Kochan

witnessed the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino (a small town south of the Lake of Garda). While touring the battlefield, Dunant saw more than 40,000 dead and wounded soldiers. He wrote a book, "Un Souvenir de Solferino," which described the suffering of the wounded and the lack of medical attention given to them. This book and Dunant's tireless advocacy was the inspiration behind the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Red Cross emblem was designed as the inverse of the Swiss flag, an homage to Dunant's Swiss citizenship. The ICRC laid the groundwork in providing attention to the conditions of wounded soldiers. It also provided the protection of neutrality for medics, ambulances and field hospitals during wartime. For his efforts, Dunant was awarded the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901. To this day the Red Cross symbol is internationally respected and trusted for its humanitarian deeds.

The American Red Cross was founded in 1881 by Clara Barton. She had first heard of the ICRC while visiting Europe after the Civil War. Barton, a hospital nurse, led the American Red Cross for 23 years, not only providing relief to military personnel, but also overseas disaster relief efforts. She campaigned successfully for the inclusion of peacetime relief work as part of the global Red Cross network. Part of the American Red Cross' charter restates "the traditional purposes of the organization which include giving relief to and serving as a medium of communication between members of the American armed forces and their families and providing national and international disaster relief and mitigation."

Taylor stated, "We want people to remember that we began as an organization to help members of the military and their families, and that function has not diminished even though we have a strong disaster relief presence." Blood collection (processing and distribution), health and safety education and training along with international relief and development are all synonymous with Red Cross.

According to Wykle's proclamation, the American Red Cross is "the largest humanitarian organization in the world," responding "to an average of more than 62,000 disasters across the country." He added, American Red Cross Month is "a special time to recognize and thank the American Red Cross volunteers, partners and donors who give of their time and resources to deliver help and hope to members of the community." Additionally, "We encourage all Americans to support this organization and its noble humanitarian mission."

For more information or to donate visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

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