



**American
Red Cross**

Headquarters
Louisiana Region
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July 16, 2015

Dear Colleague,

Do you remember where you were ten years ago on August 29th of this year? I do, because the chapters in your region helped the ones in mine.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina whipped past New Orleans, leaving in its wake the most catastrophic disaster the Red Cross had ever responded to. Over 1.2 million persons were affected--and many families sought refuge under your care.

We may have never met, but the communities I serve in the New Orleans area and I have been helped by you. Ten years ago, members of our communities here in Southern Louisiana knocked on the doors of communities in your area--and you let us in, gave us shelter, gave us food, and gave us hope.

As CEO of the Southeast Louisiana Chapter then, I remember the first time I realized exactly how far the winds of Katrina had scattered the people who called New Orleans and Louisiana home...and feeling so alone and lost. And then, that first volunteer showed up--in his Red Cross vest, with her Red Cross shelter team, his Red Cross ERV and that signature Red Cross hug. I knew then help was only a touch away...and that together we would survive and become stronger.

Through the years, I've watched us become stronger--and more prepared for whatever disasters come our way. You and I have seen many changes in these past ten years. We are all part of a preparedness wave that reaches far into our communities, making us more resilient. We see that resilience in the eyes of the mothers who thank us after we've helped install smoke alarms, in the raised hands of children in classrooms with answers on what items to pack into disaster supply kits, and in the steps we've taken with families who pick up the pieces after disasters strike and help patch a community back together again.

We want to mark that resilience in a very big way on **August 29th**...and as I did, oh so many years ago, I'm reaching out to you now with a request. The Pillowcase Project began in New Orleans during that first hurricane season after Katrina had leveled our land. With the help of many, we were able to reach out to the children in our communities who remembered the fury of Katrina and were afraid of any storms that came our way. We spoke to them about disasters and loss; we spoke to them about rebuilding their lives, starting with a pillowcase and a plan; and we spoke to them about the strength that comes from being prepared. On **Saturday, August 29**, we want to again join together, uniting as chapters/regions--much as we did ten years ago...and participate as One Red Cross as we hold the **World's Largest Pillowcase Project**.

Will you work with your teams to help us by hosting a Pillowcase Project Presentation on August 29th? We are working with our Russ Paulsen, Rachel Krausman and our National Headquarters team on this project and have already alerted your Disney Pillowcase Project Coordinators during a call last week, July 7. Your coordinators have all the details and would love to have you participate!!!

You can even take a selfie and post it to two hashtags we've created for that day:

#PillowcaseProject
#Katrina10

Thank you again for being part of One Red Cross. I am deeply humbled and extremely privileged to be part of your team. Please know my thoughts will be of you on 8.29.15, as together, we once again work to change our communities for the better.

All the best to you and your teams!

Sincerely,

Kay W. Wilkins