

Local disaster relief is one part of Red Cross work

By LAURIE PELLICHERO
 Special to The Times

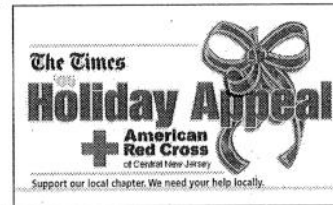
The Red Cross of Central New Jersey's disaster relief volunteers respond 24 hours a day to victims in need in our area.

When a family is made homeless by a devastating fire, Red Cross volunteers are there to provide aid and comfort, including a safe place for families to stay, food, clothing and help in replacing medical supplies.

This vital assistance was needed in June when Lutheran Ministries of New Jersey in Trenton experienced a devastating fire that displaced four families.

Bob Selander, coordinator of response logistics at the Red Cross of Central New Jersey, responded to the call.

Selander discovered that two of the families were homeless and did not have other family members or friends in the area. Both members of one family, a father and son, spoke only Spanish. An in-



terpreter was brought in to assist Selander while he interviewed the family to record necessary information and provide the family with food and a temporary place to stay.

Turkish was the language of the second family — a father, mother and two children — but the father spoke Russian as well. No Turkish to English translation was available, but a Russian to Spanish interpreter was found. This interpreter relayed the family's information from the father's Russian into Spanish to the Spanish/English interpreter,

who then relayed the information to Selander, who was then able to provide the family with the necessary relief services.

The families were grateful to the local Red Cross for the assistance, but also extremely grateful to Selander for his patience. About a week later, a very large "thank-you" note arrived at the chapter office with many messages of thanks for Selander, including "What a gift to know you are there when people are in need" and "Can't tell you how much we appreciate all of your help! You saved the day! Thank you."

All Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by generous donations of time and money from the local community.

Funds from this year's Times' Holiday Appeal will be used to support the services and programs of the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey.

The Times deducts no overhead expenses. All money goes directly to the

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designated nonprofit agency.

To make a donation in support of the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey, please make your check payable to The Times Holiday Appeal and mail or hand deliver it to: 500 Perry St., Box 847, Trenton, NJ 08605. To make a donation online, visit www.njredcross.org. All gifts will be acknowledged. Anonymity, if requested, will be granted.

For more information about the Red Cross of Central New Jersey, call (609) 951-8550 or visit the Web site at www.njredcross.org.

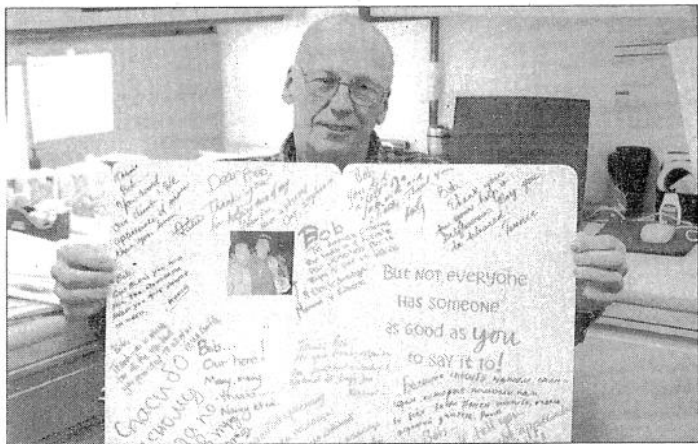


Photo courtesy of American Red Cross of Central New Jersey.

Bob Selander of the Red Cross of Central New Jersey displays a thank-you card from the grateful victims he assisted following a fire in Trenton.