

Be prepared: Red Cross speaker gives hints

By DAVID GREEN

As a volunteer with the American Red Cross, Sharon Cardinal of Morenci faced some difficult situations over the years when she was dispatched to assist in emergencies that ranged from ice storms to flooding to tornadoes.

Finally, when she went to the East Coast in 2012 following Hurricane Sandy, the situation for volunteers looked brighter than most times when they learned they would be lodged in the Hyatt-Regency hotel in Newark, N.J.

"It was fabulous except that they had no power, no ice, no elevator," she said. "The only light I had was a little glow stick and I remember putting it in a glass to make the whole room glow."

That's when she had an odd thought for someone who spends a lot of time teaching people how to prepare for emergencies.

"I am so not prepared," she told herself.

As part of an extended program pertaining to the Michigan Humanities Council Great Read book "Station Eleven," Cardinal spoke Thursday at Stair District Library about planning for a hardships.

"Hopefully after I get done tonight," she said, "you may have a little bit more than a glow stick on your side."

Cardinal currently serves as a liaison

between the Red Cross and government agencies. She's been involved in Lenawee County's emergency housing planning, and she spends a lot of time presenting information about emergency preparation.

People tend to think about big storms when Red Cross assistance is mentioned, but house fires demand the most frequent emergency response in the Southeast Michigan Region that stretches from Lenawee County to St. Clair County.

And it doesn't take a hurricane to bring about big trouble from weather events.

"If you think that you're not having a disaster because you don't live in a hurricane state or a high flood state, you might have to re-think that," Cardinal said. "The Detroit flooding in 2014 was the most expensive disaster that the Red Cross dealt with that year in the entire country."

The mission of the Red Cross is to alleviate the suffering of people who have been affected by a disaster, and it's all done through donations. There's no government funding, but the agency is mandated by the federal government to provide the initial service to people



Sharon Cardinal

in need.

Although the Red Cross might be known most for its emergency response efforts, the agency also plays an important related role in helping people connect following a tragedy. Through the Safe and Well program, someone across the country can find out if a relative is safe following an incident.

Many people are willing to help out following an emergency, Cardinal said, and that's appreciated, but the best way to help is to send cash.

"The first instinct is to send all sorts of items to people in an emergency. Please don't do that. What's really needed is cash," she said. "Let those in charge of the response decide what is needed."

It's a monumental task to sort out donated items and somehow distribute them to people who can't get to a center to pick them up.

According to Red Cross data, the number of people affected by disasters in the U.S. in the first 10 years of the century was nearly five times as great as in the 1990s. Nearly 21 million people were affected from 2001-2010 and disasters are on the rise.

A few miscellaneous tips from the Red Cross

- **Flooding**—Don't play in flood water and don't try to drive through it.
- **Damaging wind**—After the storm, be very careful to avoid fallen power lines that

may be hidden under a tree. Don't touch a metal fence; it could carry electricity from a fallen wire.

- **Thunderstorm**—If carrying an umbrella

in a thunderstorm, make sure it has a graphite handle rather than metal.

- **Nuclear**—Five million people live in the vicinity of the Fermi Nuclear Generat-

ing Station near Monroe. If a disaster at the nuclear plant doesn't affect this area, there will be thousands of people heading this way for safety.

Disasters can happen anywhere

Sitting in a house without power can become quite a challenge.

"It gets to be really old after about 12 hours," Cardinal said.

Planning ahead can help, but only one in 10 families has a household emergency plan.

Cardinal led audience members through a brief exercise to think about what would be needed for a trip. Then she urged them to take the time to come up with a real plan at home.

More than half of U.S. citizens believe they will not be affected by a disaster. On the other hand, more than half of the population has faced at least one of these situations: power was cut for three days or more; evacuation was necessary; communication with family members was cut; first aid needed to be given.

Make a list of items needed, Cardinal said. Visit the Red Cross website for suggestions, but tailor the list to fit your family.

RedCross.org sells disaster kits, but it's easy to make your own if you make the effort to get it done.

"Get a plastic tub and start filling it," she said. "You don't have to do it all at one time. This isn't meant to overwhelm you."

Some items are for use in sheltering at home; others are more pertinent to an evacuation.

Cardinal's planning goes beyond a disaster kit because an emergency can happen anywhere at any time.

"From now on, when you walk into a building, know three ways to get out of it," she said.

It's not that she's worried about a crisis. She just wants to be as ready as possible if something does happen. It's become her standard operating practice. If she goes into a building, she wants to know how to get back out of it.

If she sees something that doesn't look right—like the stack of highchairs that she saw in front of an exit door in a restaurant—she doesn't hesitate to speak up. She doesn't make a confrontation out of the situation; just a polite suggestion that restaurant personnel probably didn't consider.

Cardinal urges parents to take some time to talk about planning for an emergency. How to get out of a burning house, where to meet outside, what to do in severe weather, etc.

All children are taught about using 911 to call for help.

"They need to be prepared for an emergency, too," Cardinal said. "This isn't to scare them, but to give them information."

Plan, plan, plan, she says. Spend a few minutes in an effort that might save a life.

Buy or make an emergency kit

Consider these items

- Water and food: a three-day supply plus a manual can opener. Figure one gallon of water per person per day. Figure three-day supply for evacuation and two-week supply for home.
- Flashlight and radio (hand crank, solar or extra batteries).
- First aid kit.
- Duct tape, plastic sheeting, N95 masks
- Clothing, bedding and towels
- Prescription and non-prescription medications

- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Baby supplies (bottles, formula, diapers, baby food)
- Pet supplies (collar, leash, food)
- Cash and coins
- Important papers (birth certificates, passports, deed or lease for home)
- Extra set of car and house keys
- Matches
- Rain gear and work gloves
- Emergency contact numbers
- Maps if in a different city and state.

Morenci PTO

Family Fun Night

Friday, May 6 • 6-8 p.m.

Middle School Gym & Cafeteria

Invite your friends, family and neighbors to come and have a great time!

**Carnival Games • Food • Cake Walks • Bounce Houses
Photo Booth • Face Painting • Silent Auction • Raffles**

Silent auction and Raffle will end at 8 p.m.

4 Disney park hopper passes • If-N-When Lake Erie fishing charter • Detroit Tigers tickets
Morenci Family Athletic Season Pass • Sky Zone family pass • Kids LegoFest tickets
Toledo Zoo passes • Field of Dreams Drive-In (Liberty Center) family season pass • African Safari
VIP passes • Mud Hens tickets • Thirty One brand bags • Toledo Walleye tickets • Yogi Bear's
Jellystone Resort admission • Holiday Inn Wauseon (one night stay) • Siena Heights football season
passes • Croswell Opera House tickets • YMCA family membership • Four-wheel Jamboree tickets
& family fun pack • Toasted Mud Pottery after-hours party • University of Toledo football tickets
Rounds of Golf from Quarry Ridge • Fulton County Fair Tractor Pull tickets • Ann Arbor Hands-On
Museum • Adrian College football and hockey tickets • Moonwalk Adventure passes • Lenawee
County Fair passes • Par 2 Putt-Putt passes • Tam o' Shanter skating party • Barrett's Garden Center
hanging baskets • Sweet Shalom Tea House certificates • River City Bowl-a-Way glow bowling
Maid For You cleaning certificates • Johnson's Sporting Goods certificates • BGSU football tickets
Cleland's Outdoor World range time • Chuck E. Cheese pizza & tokens • Chelsea Tree House passes
Oakshade Raceway tickets • Wauseon Rollercoaster passes • Tupperware • Salon certificates
Restaurant gift certificates • Movie certificates • Photography sessions & *much more!*

Cash Raffle: \$300, 1st place; \$200, 2nd place; \$100, third place

Kalahari Raffle: 1 night suite and water park entrance for 6 people

Themed Baskets: Morenci Bulldogs, Gardening, Scrapbooking, Golf, Movies, Sports, Ice Cream, Baby, Camping, Fishing, Spa, Toys, etc.

All proceeds support the 5th grade camp, field trips, teacher grants, playground, etc.