

Awareness Event Paper D

When the tsunami hit the countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, one of the first American charity organizations to respond to the call for help was the Red Cross. Their response to the disaster has helped countries like Indonesia rebuild communities after the horrific disaster. This immediate response and call to action made the Red Cross a unanimous decision when we decided who to give money to.

The Red Cross is the largest humanitarian organization in the world. Their services are acknowledged in 181 national communities. They began in 1859 by director Henry Dunant, a Swiss man who recognized the need for soldier support during a battle in Solferino, Italy among the Austrians and Franco-Sardinian alliance. After the battle was over, he proved that having an organization that could provide aid in Europe during times of war and other disaster situations was a necessity. Dunant's organization was legitimized in Paris in 1919 after World War I because of the proven need for such an organization. The Red Cross that Dunant began was later aligned with Henry Davidson's American Red Cross War Committee 1918. The basis of the organization was to bring the aid Dunant made popular to the entire world. The first five members of the new League of Red Cross Societies were Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the U.S. (Asia).

The American branch of the Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton in May 1881 (American). We are donating our money to this branch of the organization but it will be distributed to the Indonesian branch to programs in need of monetary support.

The Red Cross has four core initiatives: promoting humanitarian principles and values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health care in the communities stricken by disaster. The disaster in Indonesia was so extreme that the Indonesian Red Cross had to traverse densely

populated areas that were completely destroyed, to get 1,000 tarpaulins and 1,800 relief kits to needy families (Asia). Some things that the Indonesian people are in dire need of are medical supplies, shelter, and clean water. The Red Cross had said that in their efforts they plan to fulfill these needs by setting up makeshift hospitals to provide medical support and created momentary shelter for homeless citizens until permanent shelter can be built. This effort will be costly; therefore the Red Cross is in need of donations to support their efforts.

The Red Cross website, www.redcross.org, has a link for donations. There we found that we can donate the money we collect by mail or phone, online or in person. They also state that we can say where we would like the money to be used. They offer, Disaster Relief Fund, International Response Fund, Measles Initiative, Military Services, Blood and Biomedical Services, or funds toward a local Red Cross chapter. We decided that our money would probably be best used toward the Disaster Relief Fund that aids tsunami victims. The address we are to mail our donation to is:

American Red Cross
P.O. Box 37243
Washington, D.C. 20013

They have also noted that if any of our audience members would like to write checks, they need to make them out to the Red Cross and write on the memo line what fund they wish to support (Donate).

We did not make personal contact with the Red Cross because we found a plethora of information of their website, but we do have a telephone number to call, 1-800-HELP-NOW (1-800-435-7669) if we want to make ensure our donation goes to the correct place (Donate).

In their efforts in countries affected by the tsunami, the Red Cross has provided immediate supplies like shelter, medicine, and food. Their long term efforts include providing technical support to provide security for the vulnerable areas, sending doctors to help in the hospitals that have limited resources, and any other support the citizens need to rebuild their country (In).

During our research we also learned that the Red Cross works in over 150 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas. Over the years the Red Cross has provided aid in these countries over 2,000 times for reasons such as; weather disasters, floods, tornadoes, storms; natural disasters, earthquakes and volcanoes; socio-economic problems, poverty; health problems, AIDS epidemic, health care, famine; and many others (Asia).

Works Cited

“American Red Cross, the.” 2005. 29 March 2005 <<http://www.wikipedia.com>>.

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“Donate Now.” 29 March 2005 <<http://www.redcross.org/donate.html>>.

“In the News.” 29 March 2005 <http://www.redcross.org/article/0,1072,0_440_3879,00.html>.