

For Immediate Release

Generous Donors Allow Red Cross to Respond Swiftly and Effectively to California Wildfires

Costs of Response Essentially Met but Donations Still Needed to Prepare for Future Disasters in Greater Columbus and Across the Country

November 1, 2007 - The American Red Cross has met the expected costs of its' California wildfires disaster response thanks to generous financial supporters. But, donations are still needed to replenish its' Disaster Relief Fund – the fund that ensures response to the next disaster is just as swift and effective as that in Southern California.

When the wildfires began to spread, the Red Cross opened 26 shelters in Southern California, providing a safe place to stay for approximately 6,000 evacuees at the peak of the fires. Some 5,000 Red Cross disaster relief workers — more than 90 percent of them volunteers from all 50 states – rushed to ensure that survivors had shelter, food and comfort. Survivors are now receiving clean-up supplies, counseling, basic healthcare and family connecting services. In the coming weeks and months, the Red Cross will continue to work with community partners to identify resources that can aid in the long term recovery of survivors.

This level of response would not have been possible without ongoing donations to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Red Cross has made investments to improve its response capabilities, such as pre-positioning cots and other supplies in strategic locations across the country. While the Red Cross believes that due to the extraordinary generosity of the American public, current financial donations and pledges will be sufficient to cover the estimated costs of the California wildfires, donations are still urgently needed for the Disaster Relief Fund.

“Many donations to the relief efforts remain in pledge form,” noted Michael Carroll, CEO of the American Red Cross of Greater Columbus, “and, while not yet received by the Red Cross, have been incorporated into the estimate of funds raised for the California wildfire response.” Carroll continued, “It is important for supporters to fulfill their pledged gifts.” The cost of the Red Cross’s relief operations is estimated not to exceed \$12-15 million.

-more-

American Red Cross – Add One

The Red Cross is committed to keeping donors and the public informed of how donations are being used to provide ongoing relief and has a standard practice of informing the public when sufficient funds have been raised to cover the costs associated with a Red Cross disaster response. The Red Cross will no longer initiate fundraising activities specifically for the California wildfires but continues to urge the public to donate to the Disaster Relief Fund or their local American Red Cross so the Red Cross can be there whenever and wherever people need us.

In addition to making a financial contribution to the Disaster Relief Fund or the American Red Cross of Greater Columbus, people can also help their neighbors through the American Red Cross by scheduling an appointment to donate blood by calling 1-800-GIVE-LIFE or volunteering to support the Red Cross mission by contacting (614) 253-2740. For more information visit columbus.redcross.org.

You can help the victims of thousands of disasters across the country each year, disasters like the California wildfires, by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. This Fund enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to victims of disasters. Donations can be made by calling 1-800-REDCROSS or going to www.redcross.org to make a secure online contribution. Contributions to the Disaster Relief Fund may also be sent to your local American Red Cross chapter or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster please do so at the time of your donation.

All American Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American people. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on voluntary donations of time, money, and blood to do its work.

#