

MEETING BETWEEN AMERICAN RED CROSS AND DEPT
Thursday, January 6,
2005 Upcounty Regional Services Center
PROPOSED AGENDA

ARC
Mat Swinburne

DEPT
Frank Jacob
George Moy

COUNTY
Cathy Matthews

Mat opened the meeting by handing out the following forms from ARC:

Shelter Survey
Shelter Sign-Off
Shelter Sign-On

Of which the important one was the Survey, a multi-page document used by ARC to determine the suitability of a facility for acting as a shelter. The other forms are what ARC gives to the facility when it takes it over as a shelter and after it finishes using it as a shelter.

Before going into details of these forms, I asked Frank to give a description of the Good Heart Program. Frank used Doc's "The Good Heart Program" write-up as a guide and presented all the points including the Purpose of Good Heart, Why Churches were suitable, What the Churches would do, Notes on how it would operate, the Forming of a Community Communications Network, and Conclusions. Although Mat knew most of this, Cathy was glad to have the presentation as she's never heard it before.

Cathy had some questions about the Good Heart Program:

- Would the churches agree to sharing their data-base of At-Risk with the County? Jay Kinney of the County's Department of Health & Human Services, is tasked with gathering such a list. Mat mentioned that RC's role is to open and operate the shelter, not to get people in.
- Has Good Heart considered liability issues in providing food and water? RC provides workers, food preparation and distribution (including bringing food in from fast-food places such as Popeye's or McDonald's or in boxed meals in their Emergency Response Vehicles which can heat-up meals). Mat mentioned that whether the Good Heart facilities would be designated as RC shelters was one of the points of contention in previous meetings.

In an actual situation, the Government (County) would declare an emergency, tell the RC it needs to open a shelter, and RC would open the shelter. Agreements have been made with RC to provide shelter management and staff. A check-list of what's been handed over to RC is made, and when the RC is finished using the facility as a shelter, it hands it back (see forms above). Everything is covered by RC insurance. Presently the designated RC shelter is the Damascus high school. The community center might also qualify. Generally, what's needed are a Greet Area, Large Space for gathering, Smaller areas for Break-Out, Food Areas, Bathrooms and Showers. There are two types of RC shelters: Evacuation ("Warming") which would be the most

basic type, and Post-Impact, which would provide longer term care. The Warming type would probably be most suitable for the churches as it would not need full kitchens or showers.

It is easier to work with the community if it is prepared – if people are already sheltering in-place. The County prefers:

- Sheltering-In-Place
- Go to hotels
- Provide shelters – but only an average of 5 people actually to shelters. During Hurricane Isobel, only 10 residents showed up. There were more ARC/County people than residents.

The County has a large issue in sheltering pets together with their owners. ARC does not accept pets into their managed shelters, and so the County must solve the problem of what to do with people with pets. Mat suggested that if a church would take care of people with pets, there would be a large support given by the County, including RC Disaster Training and Humane Disaster Training. The challenge is to find/develop a pet-friendly shelter. This could be a good way for Good Heart to provide a badly needed service to the County.

RC could provide training for classes for DAT (Disaster Assistance Teams). They could get a small number of DEPT into the classes.

Question of boundaries came up – what coverage does DEPT/Good Heart provide geographically. We said DEPT covers the same area as the Damascus Fire Zone. Cathy asked what about someone who lives on the other side of the street – would they be excluded? We said the purpose was to set up an area that DEPT would concentrate and focus in, as it was not our intention to service the whole county. Under an actual emergency, the actual limits of service would be decided on a case-by-case basis. The problem with a looser boundary definition is it could rapidly expand the coverage into areas much larger than our resources would allow. Cathy said she thought in one of the earlier DEPT meetings the boundary definition was much stricter.

The question about Good Heart facility usage came up – would the churches be for it's own use, or could they be shared – possibly being added to County's list as possible back-ups for ARC shelter. This is something we should discuss and possibly explore with the County.

On Back-up power, RC doesn't have strict requirements or minimums for shelters. They simply evaluate a facility and decide what type of shelter it would be most suitable for. The County has a Transportable Backup Emergency Arrangement at the Dept. of Public Works. We should talk to Jim Resnick about requirements.

In addition to filling out the Shelter Evaluation forms, two things that would greatly help are digital photos of the areas to be used as a shelter and a floor plan.

RC has training courses it could provide:

- Mass Care – a free class on what it takes to care for large groups
- Shelter Simulation – class that practices what it takes to run a shelter (4-5 hours)

- Shelter Operation – how to manage a shelter (4-5 hours) – key responsibilities

Mat will send a description of these courses.

A key person in the County is Jay Kinney (mentioned above) who is Head of the Aging and Disability group for the DHHS. He's also chair of the Shelter task force responsible for finding shelters that are pet-friendly and for special needs people. He's the one that's compiling the list of at-risk persons.

After reviewing and analyzing the survey forms, Mat will provide feedback on:

- Given the space and bathroom facilities, a particular facility should be limited to sheltering X number of people
- Determining what the challenges are in each facility

If we take the Shelter Training courses, then we can evaluate shelters ourselves. However, we cannot use the RC paperwork if the facilities are not to be operated by RC.

The action items are:

- Good Heart churches will fill out the survey forms (make copies for everyone)
- RC will analyze them – Mat will try and get Alex Sanchez, their Disaster Coordinator, to work on this. This could take 1-2 weeks, but would be dependent on RC resources left here after being called to Far East to help with the Tsunami Disaster (Mat's boss Charles Blake has already left, and Chris Paladino is leaving next Friday).
- Mat will provide feedback on each facility: how many people it could handle, what type of challenges it has, what's the most suitable type of shelter it could be.
- Good Heart/DEPT should identify members who should take the RC training. RC can probably take only two at a time, depending on number of openings. The courses are normally attended by DAT members from PG, Fairfax county and DC.

We should consider other resources that might be needed. One area is in security – RC Shelters have someone from the police department who handle people who are confrontational or who may have a drinking problem. We might also consider partnering with the County on other requirements such as nursing, mental health personnel and legal areas.

On Training DEPT/GH for working at Damascus High School as a shelter, Mat said as all volunteers there will be under RC, he suggested:

- Join DAT
- Learn RC protocols and paperwork
- Get experience

There could be a possible arrangement where DEPT could act as a backup.

Mat strongly urged GH also be used to train the community in being prepared for disasters. RC would provide instructors and material which would be used to plan with families. Essentially RC would partner with DEPT to train the community.