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## Red Cross Month, 1986

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

In cities, towns, and rural communities across our Nation, Americans have turned time and again to the American Red Cross for help. And they have not been disappointed. Acting as a conduit for the generous outpouring of time, money, and voluntarily donated blood, the Red Cross has been there whenever needed throughout the past year.

During 1985, an unprecedented series of violent storms, including hurricanes and tornadoes, smashed across our Nation. The Red Cross responded by providing immediate emergency assistance to more than four million Americans displaced by these storms. In small towns and large cities, the Red Cross responded on more than 60,000 occasions to Americans in need, and to families whose homes were damaged or destroyed by fire, flood, or storm. Due to the unprecedented demand for assistance to disaster victims here in our Nation, the funds available to the Red Cross for such vital work have been totally depleted, and yet that magnificent organization continues to provide emergency assistance to individuals and families in need all across America.

The American Red Cross also played an active role as part of an international effort in the harrowing drama of the American travelers hijacked in Beirut, relaying messages from the prisoners to families back home and insuring their safe conduct out of Lebanon. Our Red Cross quickly and efficiently mobilized support for the victims of the terrible Mexico City earthquake and the Colombian volcano eruption, in conjunction with the International Red Cross, while continuing the vital work of feeding and providing medical care for millions of victims of drought and famine in Africa.

As the collector, processor, and distributor of more than half of the Nation's voluntarily donated blood, the American Red Cross took the lead in implementing HTLV-III antibody testing, adding significantly to the effectiveness of recruitment and screening practices already in effect that protect more than one-and-a-half million recipients of blood and blood products from exposure to the deadly AIDS virus.

All of this was accomplished without the Red Cross cutting back on any of its continuing heavy responsibilities. Millions of our fellow citizens were taught lifesaving techniques in CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation), first aid, water safety, and small craft operation. More than half-a-million emergency messages were relayed worldwide between members of our Armed Forces and their loved ones back home. Nearly six million individuals were served at Red Cross blood pressure screenings and aid stations.

Providing the most efficient and effective help in times of emergency and disaster is an enormous task. But since its founding by Clara Barton in 1881 the American Red Cross has met the challenge. It has been able to do so only because millions of Americans have volunteered their money, time, and their hearts so that those services will always be available.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, and Honorary Chairman of the American National Red Cross, do hereby designate March 1986 as Red Cross Month, and I urge all Americans to give generous support to the work of the American Red Cross and to their local Red Cross chapters.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

*Ronald Reagan*