

The Red Cross — serving Maui and the nation

By TOM BLACKBURN-RODRIGUEZ

The American Red Cross plays a vital role as the responder in a disaster, working in conjunction with the local, state and federal governments as resources are being marshaled. The Red Cross meets that need with a network of state chapters and hundreds of local organizations. In 2004, the American Red Cross national office reported 874,375 people served as volunteers during that year. The volunteers came from all 50 states and hundreds of communities — including Maui.

The American Red Cross, Hawaii State Chapter, Maui County, is led by Maui County Director Michele Liberty and represents the local Maui volunteer effort behind the national and international reach of a humanitarian institution that was organized in 1881 by Clara Barton — who gained renown as “The Angel of the Battlefield” during the Civil War for her efforts to establish a service of supplies for soldiers and for nursing Union soldiers in army camps and on the battlefield.

One of the 874,375 volunteers in 2004 was Craig Hauelsen, a Mortgage Loan Officer with Loan Network, LLC in Wailea. Hauelsen began his involvement with the Red Cross by being a regular blood donor on the mainland.

Moving to Maui in 2004 with his wife Kim, Hauelsen entered the mortgage business



and in 2005 he began assisting the Red Cross on Maui, going through several classes such as CPR and Disaster Assistance Preparedness. Hauelsen is one of approximately 4,000 volunteers across Hawaii ready to respond to disasters.

Hauelsen's Red Cross experience has been varied. “During my time as a volunteer I have opened Red Cross shelters during times of need (fires mainly) and have staffed the Red Cross Hotline which entails being available 24/7 for a week at a time taking calls from the emergency dispatch as necessary when either fire or police are involved in a situation where a family (or many families) may be displaced due to an event,” he said.

Another aspect of Hauelsen's volunteer role has been as the liaison in the Maui County Emergency Operations Center. In that role he has been the Red Cross representative that gathers and shares information as it comes in from the Red Cross and from the other



Craig Hauelsen and American Red Cross, Hawaii State Chapter, Maui County Director Michele Liberty are stocking the contents of a Red Cross Portable Shelter Kit for health service volunteers. Red Cross disaster bags and emergency preparedness supplies are available at www.hawaiiredcross.org, or at the Maui office at 45 N. Market Street in Wailuku.

entities on the island (fire, police, transportation, weather, tourist industry, schools, etc.) in times of an emergency.

“I got involved because it is one way I can give back to the people of the community in times of need,” Hauelsen said. “I believe that without the Red Cross the people of Maui would suffer and so would the tourists during times of need or disaster,” he added.

While the Red Cross may be

best known for disaster relief — they are mandated by their Congressional Charter to respond to any disaster — they also provide a wide range of volunteer opportunities and classes through their health and safety services.

Jaclynn Sabado is the Maui Branch Training and Preparedness Coordinator and in that role she oversees all Red Cross classes, supervises all instructors, does community presenta-

tions and contacts, and works with local businesses for employer training in areas such as CPR, First Aid and AED.

She notes, “The Red Cross is in the business of saving lives in disasters as well as in everyday situations that may occur.”

Among the health and safety services provided by the local office are First Aid Training, Adult, Child and Infant CPR, Babysitter

Training, CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer and Health Care Professional, Life Guard Training, Pet First Aid, CPR for Instructors, AED Training, Disaster Services Training, and Wilderness and Remote First Aid Training.

According to Michael Liberty, Maui County averages seven disaster responses per year, however, since December 2009 volunteers from the Maui Red Cross Branch have responded to 12 disasters. These range from single and multiple family home fires, high surf events with Tsunami potential, the February earthquake in Chile when local shelters were activated in case of an earthquake generated Tsunami, and the Olowalu and Ma'alaea fires.

With 160 trained volunteers on Maui, plus additional volunteers for hurricane relief and other episodes, the Red Cross is ready to respond 24/7, 365 days of the year. This includes providing food, water and other drinks to fire and police personnel at the scene of an incident.

The Maui office also operates the Red Cross “Military & Family Life Consultant Program” that provides support to service members and their families.

If you would like to become a Red Cross volunteer on Maui you can contact them at www.hawaiiredcross.org. Their office is located at 45 N. Market Street, Wailuku.