



Alberta
**REPORT BACK
TO THE COMMUNITY**

2016-17

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT



It has been a year of collaboration, learning and innovation at the local, national and international levels of our organization.

The spring of 2016 was extremely busy on the domestic front. Thousands of Red Cross staff and volunteers across Canada assisted with the largest evacuation in Canadian history after a wildfire threatened the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in Alberta. Our teams mobilized quickly and tirelessly to assist the evacuees alongside of local, provincial and national governments across the country. We also made history using electronic fund transfers to get financial aid into the hands of evacuees as they found refuge from B.C. to Atlantic Canada. I wish to say thank you to all our Red Cross colleagues who assisted us in Alberta, across Canada and in the United States. As we know, recovery takes time and we continue to work with the communities and individuals impacted by the wildfire.

In the last year, our disaster management program continued to recruit volunteers throughout Alberta and build our capacity to enhance response capabilities. In addition, we are working with communities and residents to raise awareness about disaster preparedness.

The Indigenous Swimming and Water Safety Program had another successful season. In the first four years of the program, we have trained 723 individuals in water safety in 16 Indigenous communities. In 2016, we also hosted our first Water Safety Leadership course and trained 14 individuals as assistant lifeguards in Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement. This year, we are on track to advance that training and add additional lifeguard courses in at least two other communities.

I am highlighting just a few examples of the work of the Red Cross in Alberta. We continue to train and provide support to Albertans in our prevention and safety, community health and wellness, and disasters and emergencies programming.

I look forward to our ongoing work with the Provincial Advisory Committee and the hundreds of dedicated volunteers across Alberta, as well as colleagues, partners, donors, governments, and citizens to build on these successes. Thank you for your continued support of our work and our teams.

Jenn McManus,
Vice President, Canadian Red Cross, Alberta and Northwest Territories

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jenn McManus	Patrick Lichowit
Allan Works	Billy Wu
Chris Diamant	Diane Carter
Ed Stevenson	John McCook
Justin Dunphy	Mary-Jane Dawson
Muhammad Yaseen	Shahab Fajarr

RED CROSS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

HUMANITY	UNITY
IMPARTIALITY	UNIVERSALITY
NEUTRALITY	INDEPENDENCE
VOLUNTARY SERVICE	

BE SAFE! KITS

Talking about sexual exploitation with children can be challenging, but the Canadian Red Cross Be Safe! program seeks to do just that. And the Respect Education team is working to bring more sponsors on board so the program can expand and be brought to additional children and schools.

Be Safe! is a personal safety program designed to educate school children aged 5 to 9 about sexual abuse and ultimately help prevent it. In addition to lesson plans and templates, the program provides educators with engaging, child-friendly tools such as songs, illustrations, and Trusty, the Be Safe! rooster puppet to talk about children's rights, the responsibility of adults, and safe touching in a comfortable way. "Children really like Trusty," says Carlia Schwab, Respect Education Associate. "He's a great tool to talk about some of the more sensitive topics."

Last year, Respect Education received a \$20,000 grant from the Telus Community Foundation, enabling it to put Be Safe! kits in 50 Edmonton schools. This year, they are also seeking grants to supply kits to schools in Calgary, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat, as well as surrounding rural communities. "Our goal is not only to have the Be Safe! kit in every elementary school in Alberta, but also in child care programs and organizations," says Schwab. "We want children to be safe in all of their relationships with teachers, peers, family and community."

Be Safe! will also be returning to the Sylvan Lake Hockey Camp this summer where Trusty has already had a warm reception in previous years.

Trusty can be seen in a Red Cross [video on YouTube](#). Please contact your local Red Cross office or [visit our website](#) for more information.



FORT MCMURRAY RESIDENT GIVES BACK

Red Cross volunteer Jessica Weber draws on her own experience as a survivor of last year's devastating wildfire in Fort McMurray as she serves at the Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP) site in Calgary.

HELP provides loans of vital health equipment such as wheelchairs and walkers to individuals dealing with illness or injury.

"Often, they are uncomfortable; they are in pain," says Weber. "They don't have the finances to pay for [medical equipment], and they are under financial stress."

The life-long Fort McMurray resident, whose family lost their home in the wildfire, says that her experience has given her empathy for the clients.

"My experience, having gone through a very stressful situation, is that they need a calm and caring person to listen to them. That is the best thing for them," says Weber.

The University of Calgary master's student first encountered Red Cross volunteers in Fort McMurray giving out cleaning kits to returning residents.

"Whenever I talked to the volunteers from the Red Cross they were so personable; they were so caring," says Weber. "It was the humane aspect the Red Cross brought to [its work] in Fort McMurray that led me to volunteer with them."

In the days immediately following the fire, Weber's family received financial assistance to buy food and replace clothing. Later, the Red Cross contributed to her tuition fees at the University of Calgary and helped her find a rental home in the city.

"The Red Cross helped me massively," she says.



RED CROSS BY THE NUMBERS

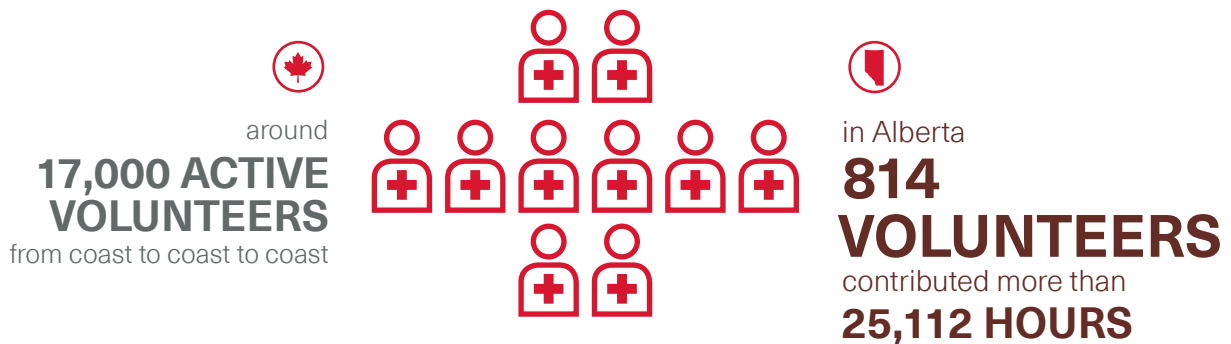
FISCAL YEAR 2016/17

 Canadian Statistics

 Alberta

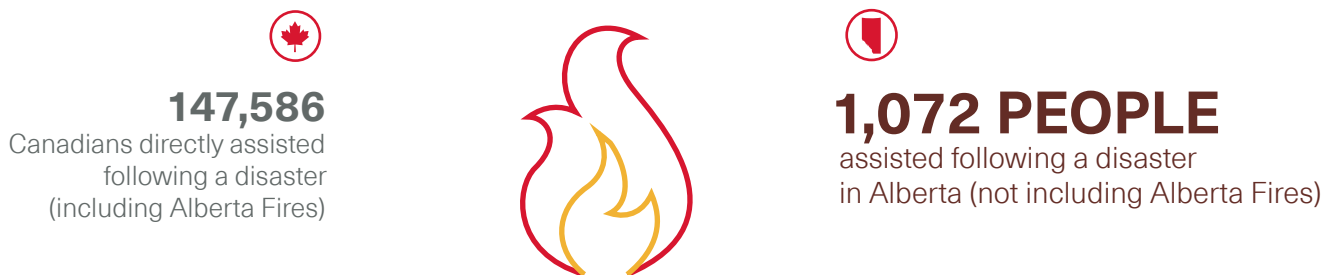
OUR STRENGTH

is in our volunteers and donors



READY TO RESPOND

when disaster strikes




HEALTH EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM (HELP)



READY TO PREVENT

injuries and abuse

 **738,616** Canadians took violence, bullying, and abuse prevention training

 **54,544+** took the same training in Alberta



1,085,330 Canadians took Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety lessons



181,433 people took the same training in Alberta



 **621,475** Canadians took Red Cross First Aid courses

 **128,882** people took the same training in Alberta



INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

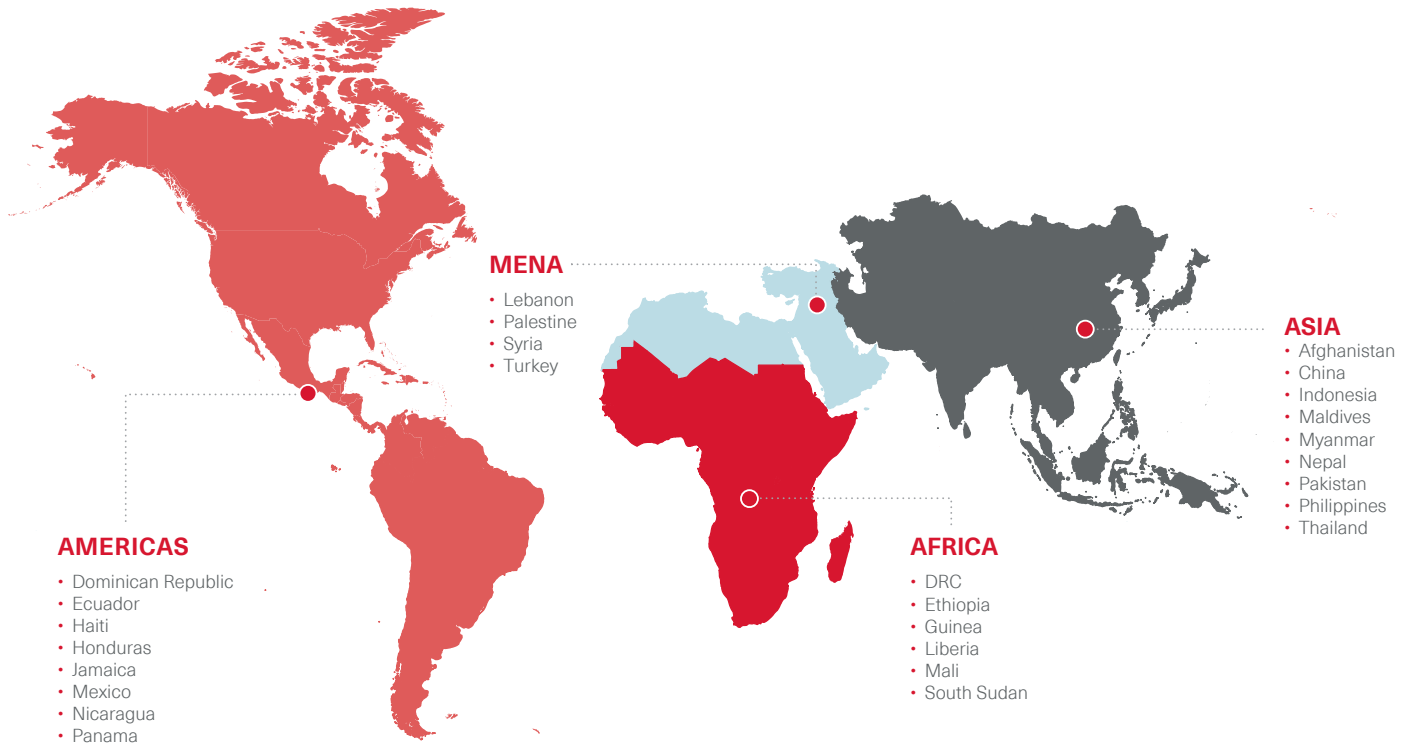
Canadian Red Cross is managing programs in **15 countries**

136 Canadian experts deployed to **32** countries

Over **48,000** medical consultations performed

2 Emergency Response Unit (ERU) deployments (Haiti, Ecuador)

Over **2,810,000** people assisted globally





CIRCLE OF WISDOM: BUILDING CULTURAL CONNECTIONS ACROSS GENERATIONS

It was a special event that brought together more than 100 Indigenous elders, with a group of young dancers and an Indian princess at the Grey Eagle Resort in Calgary. The elders gathered for the Circle of Wisdom Luncheon, a collaboration of Calgary and area, Treaty 7, southern Alberta First Nations, Metis and Inuit community agencies and organizations.

The elders were entertained by the dances and stories of the Wandering Spirit Dancers. Jackie Soppit, dance leader, explained that she was adopted when she was two and had wonderful parents, however, “the culture is in your blood. It calls to you no matter what.”

At 15, Jackie rediscovered her culture at a pow wow and has been a dancer ever since. The audience watched the youth demonstrate their commitment to the traditions that are their cultural birthright in a room full of their elders.

Jason Good Striker, the master of ceremonies, repeatedly referenced the important role

the Canadian Red Cross plays in supporting Indigenous community projects such as the luncheon that brought several generations of Treaty 7 together.

Sarah Burke, senior manager of Community Integrated Development with the Canadian Red Cross, shared stories of Treaty 8 neighbours that had been affected by the Alberta fires in May 2016. She expressed their interest in meeting and working with Treaty 7 communities to share stories of resilience.

As the event closed, each elder received a gift bag hand sewn by the Grandmothers' Circle that comes together to empower young women by teaching them to sew and bead ceremonial objects using traditional techniques.

The Canadian Red Cross has been – and will continue to be – actively working in partnership with over 200 Indigenous communities across the country in a way that recognizes their ownership, strengths and diversity.



INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND THE POLITICAL CLIMATE

With all the conflict in the world, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) plays an increasingly critical role.

To discuss this ongoing challenge, about 50 people attended the IHL conference held by the Canadian Red Cross and the University of Alberta (U of A) on February 10, 2017.

The conference kicked off with remarks from Jenn McManus, Canadian Red Cross vice president for Alberta and the Northwest Territories, and Joanna Harrington, U of A professor of law. The conference also commemorated the lives of the six aid workers who were killed in Afghanistan. It was a powerful reminder that combatants are not to target aid workers under IHL.

Next, Catherine Gribbin, senior legal advisor for the Canadian Red Cross, gave a presentation on IHL and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Following that, there was a panel discussion between Major Geoff Smith of the Judge Advocate General Office, and Andrew Carswell of the ICRC. It was stressed that any attacks must not impact civilian life and safety.

Carswell discussed the importance of states following international humanitarian law.

After the discussion, conference delegates were invited to participate in a Q&A with the panel.

Next year, the **international humanitarian law conference** will again be held in Edmonton, Alberta.

NATIONAL PLAN TO PREVENT DROWNING

Several organizations are banding together to create a national plan to help bring the number of drowning deaths in Canada down to zero. The goal is to present the plan at the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Vancouver in October 2017.

The Canadian Red Cross, Lifesaving Society, Swimming Canada, Pool and Hot Tub Council of Canada, and National Marine Manufacturers Association Canada, led by Dr. Steve Beerman, have formed the steering committee for the Canadian Drowning Prevention Coalition and are working to achieve this important goal.

“The reason we’ve gone for zero drownings is there is research that supports that if you set a zero base as your target that you will see bigger gains in the reduction of numbers,” said Shelley Dalke, Canadian Red Cross director of swimming and water safety programs, during the annual Water Safety Conference in Edmonton.

The initiative comes following the release of the World Health Organization Global report on drowning. Released in 2014, the report states that drowning is a leading global killer, particularly in children and young adults, and while it is preventable, it is a neglected issue.

The report made four recommendations, which include developing a national water safety plan – something Canada is missing.

“On average we have over 500 water-related fatalities a year, which is too many,” said Dalke. “The coalition’s approach is to treat water safety as a social health issue.”

The Red Cross is leading the component of the plan that focuses on unintentional falls into water.



FIRST AID APP INCLUDES MENTAL HEALTH



BE READY. 

Download our new disaster preparedness app. Visit redcross.ca/bereadyapp for more information.

When an accident happens, Canadians with first aid training are often ready to jump in and help. But when it comes to a mental health emergency, some responders feel like they are at a loss.

“We teach them how to deal with the bleeding,” says Red Cross Education Specialist Diane Story. “But what do you do when you’re faced with a mental health crisis?”

In 2016, the Red Cross commissioned research on attitudes about physical and mental health issues. A trend emerged. Despite agreeing that mental health emergencies were important, people did not feel confident responding to one.

Now, the Canadian Red Cross is bridging that gap by introducing mental health first aid training. Red Cross is the first agency in Canada to add this new component to all first aid courses and the first aid app. Kaysha Edwards, Red Cross first aid program representative, points out that first aid and mental health emergencies often go hand in hand.

“For example, if someone came across a vehicle collision, there may be obvious physical injuries to individuals in the vehicles which get attention first,” Edwards says. “But there could also be a mental health emergency that isn’t as obvious, such as bystanders who may be in shock or experiencing a panic attack due to the situation. That’s why it is important to be able to recognize the signs.”

The app was updated with instructions on how to deal with these kinds of emergencies. It includes a tool that helps responders regulate a patient’s breathing during a panic attack.

“The more we introduce this as part of the bigger picture,” says Story, “the more we can reduce the stigma.”

To get the app, go to redcross.ca/apps, the Apple App Store, or Google Play.

OUR SUPPORTERS

The Red Cross would like to thank the following organizations for making a financial investment of \$10,000 or more in local programs in Alberta, along with all the other companies, institutions, governments, schools, and thousands of individuals that gave their support this past year. Thank you for making it possible for Red Cross to provide life-saving and life-changing services to those in need in the province.

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Edmonton Community Foundation
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S M E D International Inc.
Suncor Energy Foundation
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The Calgary Foundation
The Tao Foundation
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More than a year since a massive wildfire swept through Fort McMurray and the surrounding areas, the Canadian Red Cross continues to support people and communities of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in their recovery.

The scope and scale of the wildfire was unlike anything the Canadian Red Cross had faced before. Evacuees travelled across Alberta and Canada to find shelter with friends and family.

As news of the wildfire's aftermath spread across the country, Canadians stepped up to support Wood Buffalo residents in their time of need. As of one year after the fires, the Red Cross has received \$323 million in donations, including matching funds from the governments of Canada and Alberta.

This generosity meant that the Red Cross was able to offer help wherever it was needed most in the early days following the evacuation. More than one year on, the Red Cross continues to assist with unmet needs, having already spent and committed \$244 million to support residents who are rebuilding their lives, businesses and communities.

"Our future looks very bright, and it's only because of the help we received," says Sheila Champion, who **received support from the Red Cross** after her family lost their home to the fire.

Recovery from this disaster will take years as the impact is still being felt by residents. And thanks to the generosity of Albertans and Canadians, the Red Cross will be there to offer support and guidance for every step.

For additional information on Alberta Fires, please go to our **website** for the one year report.