



**Contacts: Mike Virgintino**  
212-875-2133  
virgintinom@nyredcross.org

**Mara Leventhal**  
212-875-2047  
leventhal@nyredcross.org

**AMERICAN RED CROSS IN GREATER NEW YORK  
OPENS NEW HEADQUARTERS ON MANHATTAN'S WEST SIDE**

**REINFORCES COMMITMENT TO NEW YORKERS:  
RESPONDING WHEN DISASTERS OCCUR,  
HELPING THEM PREPARE FOR ANY EMERGENCY**

*Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg Cuts Symbolic Red Ribbon During Dedication*

New York – November 14, 2006 -- The ceremonial cutting of a symbolic red ribbon today officially opened and dedicated the new Manhattan headquarters of the American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY). New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg joined Theresa A. Bischoff, CEO of ARC/GNY, members of the organization's board of trustees, staff and volunteers at the morning ceremony to commemorate more than 100 years of Red Cross service to the people of New York City.

“With this new state-of-the-art headquarters, the American Red Cross in Greater New York will be even better equipped to work with the city to prepare for and respond to emergencies,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “For more than 100 years, the Red Cross has assisted New Yorkers when we have needed help the most, and I congratulate the thousands of Red Cross volunteers for donating their time to help the Red Cross fulfill its vital mission to aid people during difficult times.”

The new headquarters is located at 520 West 49<sup>th</sup> Street, between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Since 1963, ARC/GNY had been located at 150 Amsterdam Avenue at 66<sup>th</sup> Street.

“This new headquarters is key to ensuring that we are ready to respond to whatever disaster may strike,” said Ms. Bischoff. “It is here that we will train New Yorkers in preparedness and life saving skills. It will also support our efforts to grow our volunteer ranks three-fold to 10,000. Through those trained volunteers, we will be able to provide immediate humanitarian support when our community needs it most.”

The American Red Cross in Greater New York is a humanitarian partner and a key participant in New York's plans and programs to help the nine million people in New York City and Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan counties prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. The largest Red Cross Chapter in the U.S., ARC/GNY provides immediate aid to more than 100,000 people affected by more than 3,000 emergencies a year, including fires, floods, building collapses and blackouts.

The new headquarters building was designed to meet the training needs of New Yorkers along with Red Cross volunteers and employees. When major natural and man-made disasters occur, the state-of-the-art technology and communication equipment in the new building enables the Red Cross to work in close collaboration with the New York City Office of Emergency Management, New York City Fire Department, the New York City Police Department and other agencies to coordinate a response to any major disaster. ARC/GNY also can coordinate activities from this facility with its operations in Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan counties.

Features of the new facility include:

- The Emergency Communications Center (ECC), which monitors emergency responses in the region and remains in contact with the Red Cross Disaster Action Response Teams in addition to other non-profit partners and governmental agencies, including 911 and OEM centers. The ECC is equipped with satellite, cable and wireless systems that enhance communication with the National American Red Cross network. It is totally free-standing, has its own independent power and is capable of operating irrespective of external influences which might hinder or make traditional communication methods impractical.
- The Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which, in the event of a large-scale disaster in this area, will be the hub for briefings, strategic decisions, team meetings and ongoing management of the disaster. The EOC is designed to assemble, update and display critically important information needed during emergencies and facilitate collaboration with government and non-profit organizations. Resources include emergency response plans and mutual aid agreements, as well as demographic and geographical information systems. The contoured and tiered environment is configured to maximize effective response and reaction in a timely manner to any and all emergency situations.
- More than 10,000 square feet of classroom and training space that doubles previous capacity to provide instruction in lifesaving, preparedness skills and disaster response to individuals, organizations, volunteers and employees.
- Sophisticated computer and communication technology systems to ensure information is processed and shared quickly and efficiently.
- An on-premises transportation center that enables emergency vehicles to be dispatched quickly to disaster sites with necessary personnel and supplies. Direct access to the West Side Highway and other major arteries will enhance disaster response times.
- A Red Cross Heritage Gallery that is open to the public and commemorates the unique role of the Red Cross in New York, U.S. and international history. The Red Cross Store, located in the building lobby, is open to the public Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. New York’s premier source for safety and preparedness information and materials, the store is stocked with safety kits, “go bags”, books and teaching materials.

Volunteer opportunities with the Red Cross are available in the five boroughs of New York City and Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan Counties. Volunteer specialists will match talents, interests and availability with opportunities, which include helping victims of disasters and teaching safety and preparedness programs. Students (ages 14-18) can participate as youth volunteers to help organize community programs.

ARC/GNY helps New York residents and businesses prepare for emergencies by offering hundreds of courses in first aid, CPR and aquatics and free emergency preparedness training programs and resources. ARC/GNY is not a governmental organization and relies on individual and corporate gifts, special events and grants from foundations and local, state and federal government to fund its essential programs and services. For more information, call 1-877- REDCROSS (1-877-733-2767), or visit [www.nyredcross.org](http://www.nyredcross.org).

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