

# IT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE

**Agency:** American Red Cross

**Program:** Emergency Services

**Service:** Emergency disaster response and coordination for things like fires, floods & tornadoes

**Need:** Last year, over 4300 people were helped by our local American Red Cross, including disaster relief such as emergency food, clothing, shelter, clean-up kits, and emotional support

**Impact:** Disaster preparation, reported reduction in family stress, homelessness, increased ability to deal with family crises, and fulfillment of victims' most immediate, pressing needs

When a Mankato area house fire broke out in the middle of the night this fall, everyone in the family: mom, dad and baby were able to get out of their home safely, but their house, and everything in it, was completely destroyed. A team of local American Red Cross disaster volunteers immediately got out to the fire to meet with the family.

Thanks to funding from United Way, the Red Cross was able to provide the family with the things they needed to fulfill their immediate needs: lodging for several nights until they could find a new place to live, clothing (because everything they had was destroyed in the fire), baby supplies (like a portable crib, diapers, formula), and food.

The Red Cross responds to approximately 25-30 house fires annually in the Mankato area. Typically, trained mental health care volunteers go out as part of the Red Cross volunteer teams, so that the teams are able to take care of not just the physical needs of the victims of disaster, but the emotional needs as well.

As a volunteer-driven organization with a small staff, approximately 95% of all Red Cross work is done by volunteers. There are approximately 125 locally-trained volunteers that help with preparedness work, planning, and response. With this amount of volunteers, coupled with the critical nature of the work they are doing, vital coordination and ongoing training is required.

With disasters as diverse as bomb threats or this spring's anticipated flooding, the Red Cross's disaster preparedness and coordination are an essential part of making sure that our community is taken care of and ready if disaster strikes.



Greater Mankato Area United Way's support of the American Red Cross stays local to help cover the costs to train disaster volunteers, as well as for the cost of activities for disaster services, preparedness and response