



DOVE Chirp

Escapees DOVES BOF Newsletter

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President's Note

This issue of the Chirp was delayed as I waited for completion of the MOU. Don Klein chewed on every word and phrase to make sure they tasted right, and we parried with Mary Dewitt-Dia at Partners to get the final agreement.

The business of DOVES has continued since the last issue. Wildfires in the west, followed by floods in the east resulted in a number of DOVE deployments, including me.

I am proud to share stories in this issue about the kinds of contributions DOVES are making to the Red Cross. I hope they inspire you.

Quote

"I laughed today, cried today, and am proud of our amazing volunteers and ongoing efforts in our communities. Thank you all for what you do constantly to remind me of the above fact. You are all amazing, and I would never change being a part of the best team in the country."



- Ian Dyar, Regional Disaster Officer in Michigan

NEW MOU Signed

Mahlon Stacy

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is the official document that defines DOVE's relationship with the American Red Cross. All of the privileges and responsibilities enjoyed by DOVES is prescribed in this agreement. It is not a contract, in that neither party is bound by the language. In fact, either party can step away from the agreement without penalty.

The last MOU was signed in 2010. Clearly the Red Cross has changed significantly since then, and more changes are to come. DOVES has changed, too, as each of our leaders has imprinted the organization with their personal style. Debbi Criswell signed the last agreement and guided us through several years. Anita Laffey developed the close relationship we now have with National. And it appears that I am ushering us into the technology era.



Mahlon Stacy signs the new MOU in the DOVE "Office" with Tim Worley and Consuelo Stacy looking on

Defining DOVES ability to arrive in their RVs at a disaster consumes a substantial part of the MOU. We have retained reimbursement for fuel costs in the new MOU, but have had to tailor that to the IRS requirements for volunteers. In 2014, ARC shifted from business mileage of \$0.55/mile to IRS volunteer mileage of \$0.14/mile. ARC recognizes that our RVs cost much more than that to travel. The IRS allows for reimbursement of actual expenses, and we included language to allow ARC to pay you for actual fuel expenses into the MOU, not to exceed the cost of airfare for one volunteer. You will need to show receipts to justify fuel costs based on the miles you travel. One way to do this is to fill your tank when you leave and again when you arrive, and show both receipts.



Mary Dewitt-Dia and Vice President Richard Reed signing the agreement at National

The new MOU also includes language to support DOVES being deployed when they are in proximity to a disaster, but outside the realm of their primary chapter. The option of seasonal chapters is defined in Volunteer Connection, and the MOU supports DOVES connecting in that way.

You can check out the final MOU on our website, www.dovebof.org

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Virtual Volunteering

Consuelo Stacy

So... you've been deployed, you are hurrying down the road to arrive at the disaster. You walk into the buzz of hundreds of volunteers checking in and some checking out. You get your assigned job, find a good campground or dry camp at the job site and for the next two, three or more weeks for 10, 12 hours a day you give your heart, body and soul to the job. You eat out a lot and munch on all those snacks the Red Cross so loves to give us. You have clearly made a difference and you leave happily exhausted, a few pounds heavier, and sleep for a week.

Or... you make a phone call to say yes, you will work remote. The next day you wake up in the morning and still in your pj's (if you wish) you sit in your favorite chair with a cup of coffee and sign into your laptop and work. Come break time, you walk the dog, say high to the neighbors and then get back to it. You may still work 10 - 12 hours a day and you still make a difference but you have saved yourself the stress of the disaster and you have slept your normal schedule. You have also saved the Red Cross a pile of money because they don't have to feed you, house you or pay your way there!



One is not better than the other, both jobs give back to those affected by the disaster when they need it the most, both jobs relieve suffering and both jobs are necessary but by having this choice we can have more DOVES able to participate... all you need is good phone and internet service, and a laptop. Ain't technology grand!

How the Remote Call Center Works

Mahlon Stacy

This summer, ARC created a pilot project to provide Call Center services using volunteers working from home. The first deployment was for the California Wildfires, and about 6 DOVES participated in this project. The project had some problems, but was successful enough to continue for the South Carolina flooding response. Since you may have an opportunity to participate in this in the future, I will describe it here from my firsthand experience.

The Call Center provides a well defined conduit to provide information and referral services to the public, especially ARC clients. For people seeking ARC shelters or casework support, call agents can provide them up-to-date information on where and how they can find these services. This is very valuable in a fluid situation like South Carolina, where shelters were shifted, bulk distribution sites changed, and resource centers moved locations as the needs in the disaster migrated downstream.

Call Center operation is rooted in 2 key pieces of software. Transera is telephone management software running on your computer, and the current requirements are Internet Explorer 11 or Firefox browsers. Sorry, the Android and iPad tablets won't cut it. When a call arrives on the call center, if you are the next available agent, Transera will ring your phone and you answer, speaking with the caller. When you hang up, you click on Transera to report the nature of the call, and are then ready for the next call. If you need a break, you put Transera into idle mode so you don't get any calls.

Caller demographics are captured into Sharepoint, a database interface used by the Red Cross. Sharepoint runs as a window in most any browser. The interface is tailored to the types of information needed for the call center. You will record demographics such as name, phone, address, county as well as a narrative describing the call and what referrals you offered. Saving the call initiates an email to the departments that can address the client's needs, such as casework, health, mental health, bulk distribution, sheltering, etc.

In addition to the two key pieces of software, you will use a number of other web pages in your browser to display resources to refer the caller. These include a Wiki, a page constantly updated with specific call center info, lists of agencies, maps and DR reports. Juggling all these pages takes a little patience, but you come to know how to manage them after a day or two.

Besides new and existing clients in the current DR, you may get calls from other folks looking for information or help. I received calls from FEMA agents, hotel staff, and many calls from people with goods or services to donate. When you don't have an answer, you can always ask your supervisor or manager.

This is a great way for DOVES to be deployed to a DR while working from home in their RVs. Watch for Call Center requests in the deployment emails from your deployment coordinator.

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Working on a DAT Team

Walter Barfield

FedEx just delivered two large envelopes from the American Red Cross (ARC) to our home, one for me, the other for Liz, my wife. The envelopes contained Client Assistance Cards (CAC). Liz and I, together, can “work” 20 cases (e.g., home fires). Each card can be activated for clients, according to their situation and needs, not to exceed limits set by ARC. By entrusting us to deliver these cards, ARC realizes the purpose, mission and determination embodied in the organization. The ARC survives, and thrives on donations made by people and organizations; not one cent from government (federal, state or local), and it depends on volunteers like us to deliver on the mission.

The arrival of the CAC means we are qualified to respond to the calls for ARC help! These calls most often come from fire departments (FD) and/or law enforcement (LE) personnel.

I was active in Arizona Chapters of ARC before moving to Arkansas in 2005. During the 10 years gap, ARC had made many changes, so I began to renew my participation with ARC, and Liz joined along with me.



Our applications triggered emails giving us lists of courses to take (mostly online). When we neared the end of this phase of training, we began going to home fires along with senior ARC volunteers. Next, the senior ARC volunteers decided we were ready to “work” the cases on our own. This decision resulted in the shipment of the CAC cards to us.

Now, we are ready to respond. It is a joy to be able to help families when they really need ARC help. In our first week “working” the cases with the senior ARC volunteers, we were called to three fires in one week. There are many homes and commercial buildings in this part of Arkansas that experience fires.

My wife and our two teenagers (Official ARC Volunteers in the Youth Program) are qualified to participate in the Pillowcase Projects, as well as going with us to fires. ARC volunteers go into the elementary schools and provide information and demonstrations to enhance safety for kids when there is a fire in their homes, and during other weather-driven hazards. Calls to visit schools have already been received, and presentations are scheduled in the next few weeks.

So, all four of our household are ready to respond to requests for help! The old saying, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” certainly applies to fires, storms and other emergency situations.

We are DOVES, too, a subset of our Escapesees membership, and DOVES are also ARC volunteers. What a way to enjoy the RV life and to serve as an ARC volunteer at the same time.

Some Challenges of Deployment

Jane Jennings

I've just returned from the California Wildfires deployment and want to share some thoughts. First, I was very happy to meet two other DOVES on site at the deployment, but regret not having the time to get to know them. Second, I was fortunate to work directly with another DOVE who was doing the virtual Call Center. The virtual assignments are relatively new, but especially for DOVES I think those assignments are working very well when good cell service and technology is available.

As a co-chair of the Ableing DOVES committee my attention to the needs of people with access and functional needs is very much heightened. The DOVES committee has a focus on enabling Red Cross volunteers (and staff) who have an accommodation need to be deployed if they can be accommodated. My conclusions during this deployment were that we have a long way to go! Having talked to a variety of people on the job and experienced some struggle myself, I came to the conclusion that again, the accommodation depended upon the individuals on the job and their level of understanding and passion for creating an accommodation. Education is very much needed for everyone and there is an

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Some Challenges of Deployment (continued from page 3)

excellent course on EMBARC that everyone should take. Serving People with Functional and Access Needs in Shelters (FANS) provides an overview on the subject and updates on current expectations. My dream is that everyone deployed, at all levels and functions, be required to take this class. The issues I saw weren't just with a poorly educated shelter worker, it ran the gamut of almost every level and function. The class is a good way to start.

The Abiling Committee continues to struggle with numerous issues, but during the deployment it became quite apparent that the issue of appropriate accommodation and service has reached the top levels of the organization. While the process is slow, I am hopeful that our combined knowledge, skill, patience and effort will have a positive effect on the Red Cross going forward. Many DOVES have been deployed this year and my husband, Jay, and I look forward to sharing our experiences with many of you at the DOVES meeting in January in Quartzsite.

The DOVE Global Group

We have some exciting news. DOVE is now a Global Group in Volunteer Connection. This has a number of effects on the way we will be interacting with the Red Cross, both in communications and in deployments.



How you interact with your local chapter is not changing. To them you are a volunteer like any other volunteer. The Global Group is a connection between DOVEs and Red Cross at the national level.

Starting in November, we will make the first major change to utilize the Global Group. Deployment emails will be going to DOVEs who are in the Global Group, instead of our entire mailing list. We have worked hard to get all DOVEs who are in Volunteer Connection to become included in the Global Group, a task requiring us to reach out to all the regional Volunteer Connection administrators.

One way to verify that you are, in fact, part of the group, is to log into Volunteer Connection, click on 'My Groups', then look to the bottom of the groups list to see if there is the entry 'Disaster Operations Volunteer Escapées' under Global Groups. If this appears, then you are a member of the DOVE Global Group.

If you are in Volunteer Connection, but are not part of the Global Group, email vicepresident@dovebof.org to let us know so we can get you added. There will be a series of emails going out to insure that the DOVE Global Group is accurate. Please watch for them. They will include information on what you can do with the Global Group, including finding other members and sending them email.

Training and Fun in Arizona: Mark your Calendar

A significant flock of DOVEs migrate to Arizona in January, along with other birds of many different colors. Tom and Jodie Scales will be hosting a DOVE potluck supper in Quartzsite, details to follow. DOVE instructors will be leading ARC classes:

Quartzsite January 13-15:

- Shelter Fundamentals/Exercise
- Psychological First Aid
- ERV/ Ready, Set, Roll

Yuma January 19-24:

- CPR/FA/AED
- Shelter Fundamentals/Exercise
- Psychological First Aid
- Disaster Frontline Supervision

