American Red Cross

**Organization brief description:** The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

**Organization site contact:** Jill Orton, Region CEO / Cindy Pfennig, Executive Assistant

**Description of identified needs and proposed activities:** Community Resiliency – The American Red Cross is committed to building resilient communities and neighborhoods so during times of emergencies people are able to help themselves and prepare for emergencies before they happen.

Two major preparedness initiatives of the Red Cross are:

1. **Home Fire Prevention Campaign** – a five year nationwide campaign to work with local area fire departments of identified at risk neighborhoods to install smoke alarms in people’s homes. Annually, nearly 2,500 people die and 13,000 people are injured in home fires. A) Through ‘community canvassing’ volunteers will meet with families in their homes to complete a home safety checklist, help them develop a fire escape plan and install smoke alarms and replace batteries. B) Through ‘youth engagement’ outreach to classrooms and afterschool programs will teach youth about the science of fire and explain how to prevent fires and what to do if a fire occurs. C) Through ‘national marketing and public relations outreach’ a clear and consistent message about fire prevention and preparedness will be disseminated.

2. **The Pillowcase Project** – a nationwide youth preparedness program (connected to school curriculum) for grades 3-5 or ages 8-11. This program sponsored by Disney teaches kids the learn/practice/share concept, home fire prevention, a local hazard such as tornadoes or winter storms, coping skills, how to put together a preparedness kit in a pillowcase and how to make a communication plan. Kids receive a pillowcase, workbook, and a certificate.

3. **Community outreach** – the Red Cross is invited to have a display booth at health fairs, speak at company lunch and learns, and have a community presence to help educate residents on how to prepare for emergencies before they happen.

**Timeframe of proposed activities to begin:**
Resiliency and preparedness activities occur year round. So, a timeframe can be agreed upon by the American Red Cross and the interested student.

**Benefit of proposed activities to community organization:**
Developing, educating and implementing community resiliency programs brings community leaders and residents together facilitated by the Red Cross to begin the thought process and begin to create plans to organize safe and prepared neighborhoods whether it be in fire prevention, natural disaster preparedness, lifesaving skills, and knowing how neighbor can help neighbor during times of emergencies.
Benefit of proposed activities to the student:
Students will acquire leadership skills, event coordination skills, relationship building skills, presentation skills, networking, helping communities become resilient, and help save lives. Opportunities for program evaluation and database development/analysis may also be possible.

Skill sets of students requested, including possible MPH concentration desired:
Leadership, organization, relationship management, public speaking, presentation skills, humanitarian mindset. Possible MPH concentrations: Health Promotion, Environmental Health, Epidemiology, or Social Marketing and Health Communication, although after further discussion with the organization, there may be opportunities for other concentrations as well.