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Central and Western Massachusetts Red Cross Website Re-Design

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Central and Western Massachusetts Red Cross Website Re-Design

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report
submitted to the Faculty of
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

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Abstract:

The goal of this project was to unify the four Central and Western Massachusetts Red Cross websites into one centralized site that could better host all of the information needed. In today's modern world the internet has become society's central artery, nearly inseparable as the ones that run through any living person. Where phones and television have laid the foundation, the internet is currently strengthening its hold and spreading its web through every aspect of daily life. This project is essential to keeping the four chapters of Central and Western Massachusetts linked into that web so that they can continue to provide their essential services. Our project aims to modernize their current infrastructure by adding additional functionality in the form of online sign up for classes and a combined system for both donations and online volunteer signups. By creating a new joint website for the four chapters, we hope to ultimately improve their current capabilities by updating them to today's current technological standards.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Humanitarianism

Despite the best efforts of Man, suffering is still omnipresent throughout today's enlightened world. Humanitarianism as a core grew out of the obvious yet overlooked idea that everyone is a person. While throughout history it has been race, gender, religion, and a host of other skin deep principles which decide who has the power and who received the help, humanitarians preach indiscriminant wellbeing. In terms of written context it extends as far back as the Old Testament in that one must honor thy neighbor. Sadly in today's world where technology and the literality of past works prevail, neighbor has been misconstrued to a physical presence rather than a spiritual connection. While humanity puts in place laws via convention to limit the means of harm instead of limiting harm itself, the Humanitarian movement attempts to lend its resources to a universal policy of compassion, and the ease of suffering. (1)

While people have been helping each other through countless millennia, the formation of Humanitarian organizations is a surprisingly young concept born in the terrible atrocities of human belligerence. Humanitarian ideas have been present throughout history; however the difference between the ideas of the past and present has to do with scope and complexity of the world in which the average person resides. Thousands of years ago when humanity first developed an agricultural society humanitarian ideas were present, however they weren't needed on a very large scale. If a neighbor in the village had a bad harvest, food could easily be transferred between two people to compensate, a donation out of the kindness could be made on a face to face basis. If a warrior came back wounded from a hunt, it was the responsibility of the town to mend the warrior and account for their wellbeing. The relationship between the warrior and the town is mutually beneficial as the warrior provides food and the town provides shelter and care. The change in today's world however is that technology has grown exponentially

faster than its creators, greatly extending the view of the average citizen while leaving the citizen relatively unchanged. Thousands or even hundreds of years ago one might never venture 20 miles from their home. A trip around the world would be a yearlong adventure instead of a 26 hour flight. Technology has given the world an all-seeing eye, in the form of internet, television, telephone, and the various other forms of communication and information processing.

Technology for all its joys of social interconnection and the greater diffusion of knowledge to the masses has also streamlined the process of inter-human cruelty, yet its double edged sword also helps further the cause of human relief through services such as blood collection for medical use. The trouble stems from the fact that where issues of cruelty and crisis could be dealt with on a small community level hundreds of years ago, the same drive to help those in need can now be applied to any issue, anywhere in the world. Organizations such as the International Red Cross have been forged out of the primal human need to help others. Facilitating a means in which the now globally aware masses can achieve peace through the unconditional help of those in need.

The International Red Cross started primarily as an organization whose primary obligation was to help care for the thousands of injuries incurred during wartime, as well as limit the means in which one human can harm another. In many cases before the advent of the Red Cross soldiers wounded on the battlefield were almost guaranteed death. The Red Cross helped to minimize the number of fatalities by providing assistance where there was none as well as a standard for medical care. Internationally, the Red Cross attempted to solidify multi-national laws in order to protect its members from wanton harm while serving their duties. Overall, although their purpose has changed dramatically over the ages slowly encompassing more responsibilities, the central principles that all peoples merit a certain level of care and assistance

has never been lost. (2)

In more recent decades, the Red Cross has taken on even more tasks as they spread their influence from the international and national level down to the individual communities around the world.

The local Red Cross is vital to improving the well being of the everyday communities present throughout the United States and world. The Red Cross provides vital services for the local and regional community such as teaching classes in order to help citizens better themselves or become more hireable, or being one of the largest influx of donated blood in the entire nation.

(3) It was because of the huge support provides by the Red Cross for their local communities that this project formed in an attempt to help facilitate their necessary services.

1.2 Project Description

Currently the Central and Western Massachusetts chapters of the American Red Cross have an entirely decentralized business where services and information are available through the internet, phone conversations, and face to face meetings. There are seven chapters of the ARC (American Red Cross) currently in Massachusetts, four of which we worked with for the duration of this project. The remaining three of the Massachusetts chapters will not be included in the unification process of the websites due to the fact that they are in a different region. Each of the four chapters in Central and Western Massachusetts that we worked with had a poorly designed website which allowed for online donations and volunteer sign up. The credit cards that can be taken at each of the four chapters are different. The URLs for the four chapters are also not in a standard format which makes remembering them difficult. The sign up information and what is required for the user wasn't standardized. Each website is paid for individually by each chapter. Information was repetitive at each of the websites without links or knowledge of

how to move between the four of them if you need to contact or work with another. In short, the system was disorganized and in desperate need of an overhaul. Our project was aimed at providing the overhaul and centralization that the Massachusetts chapters of the ARC need. Our task was to provide them with a new website that allows for the grouping of information and modernization of their current infrastructure. Our project will help add to the rich history already created by the various locations of the International and American Red Cross.

Chapter 2: Background

2.1 International Background

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is a conglomerate of three independently run organizations which strive to provide and deliver humanitarian aid in areas of crisis based on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service and universality. The three organizations that constitute the movement are the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The latter exist as the governing bodies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement within individual countries.

The history of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement began in 1859 when a Swiss businessman, Henry Dunant, witnessed the Battle of Solferino, a part of the Austro-Sardinian War. Dunant was president of the Financial and Industrial Company of the Mons-Gemila Mills, which operated in Algeria. Needing permission to use water for a particular tract of land in Algeria, Dunant wanted to meet with Emperor Napoleon III personally. However the emperor was directing the French Army to fight and drive the Austrians out of Italy at the time so Dunant resolved to meet him in the town of Solferino, close to the Emperor's headquarters(4). At Solferino, Dunant witnessed the battle that later gave him the inspiration to establish the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Based on his book, *A Memory of Solferino* which was published in 1862, Dunant describes the battle that occurred, the aftermath of the battle, and a plan to help victims of war in future armed conflicts(4). Dunant had noticed that during, and after the battle, wounded soldiers were left to die on the field and despite his efforts to gather people from neighboring towns to help these soldiers, thousands had died. In his book, Dunant calls for every country to establish relief organizations devoted to caring for victims of

warfare. Each of these organizations are to be governed by a board comprised of influential leaders from their respective countries and should train volunteers to properly take care of the wounded on the battlefield. Based off of this idea, the Geneva Society for Public Warfare set up a committee of five of delegates, including Dunant, to explore the possibility of creating such an organization. This committee called for an international conference to address the issue of caring for people who are wounded in war. The conference held in October of 1863 included delegates from 16 European countries who approved the notion of protecting the injured in war, and called for another international gathering, one in which delegates would be able to fully represent and act on behalf of their respective countries (4). This led to the Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field, simply known as the First Geneva Convention, held in August 1864.

The First Geneva Convention drafted ten articles regarding treatment and care for wounded soldiers and those that cared for them. In accordance with the Convention, all medical facilities and personnel were henceforth considered neutral parties to be respected by all sides of armed conflict. Any injured combatant was to be cared for, and if he or she was deemed unfit to fight, then he was to be returned to his country. The Convention also called for the establishment and use of a distinctive symbol to mark medical facilities and personnel so as to indicate neutrality and that this symbol was to be a red cross on a white background, the opposite of the Swiss flag-- a white cross on a red background (4). This treaty was ratified by Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Baden, Holland, Hesse, France, Portugal, Italy, Württemberg, Spain, and Prussia(5).

Since the First Geneva Convention, three more conventions have taken place to broaden the treatment and care for victims of war. The Second Geneva Convention occurred in 1949 and

was titled the Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea. This Convention sought to replace and better define the purpose of the Tenth Hague Convention that took place in 1907 which intended to establish the same rules of the previous Geneva Convention onto naval warfare. The Second Convention also calls for the humane treatment of soldiers who were involved in domestic conflicts indiscriminately. All conflicting parties are prohibited from all forms of physical violence towards prisoners as well as taking hostages, performing executions without the judgment of a court and from all forms of “outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment” (6). The Convention directly states that all wounded, sick and shipwrecked soldiers are to be cared for and that an impartial humanitarian organization such as the International Committee of the Red Cross is allowed to offer its services in order to do so. The Convention also reiterates that all medical facilities and staff are neutral parties in times of armed conflict and that should any detaining party not be able to provide sufficient treatment for the wounded and sick, it may turn over that responsibility onto an impartial and neutral country or organization to carry out the task.

The Convention continues to explain in detail through its articles that all wounded and shipwrecked soldiers (in regards to naval warfare) are to be treated as wounded soldiers on land and that when captured or brought to an impartial organization for care and treatment, the organization must record as much personal information as possible so as to be able to identify each soldier. All parties involved in naval conflicts must determine a cause of death for each dead soldier and then ensure a burial at sea for the dead, unless the dead have been brought to land, at which point they shall be treated as soldiers from the land. All medical ships and ships

belonging to neutral parties are exempt from capture, as well as their staff including religious personnel brought to provide medical and spiritual care (6).

The Third Geneva Convention, or Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, states that all parties who agree to the Geneva Conventions must provide for the humane treatment of all detainees and prisoners of war. Each prisoner of war is to be given an identity card with their name, rank, army, personal serial number, and date of birth. No form of torture, physical or mental, is allowed upon any Prisoner of War. All prisoners must be interrogated in a language they understand and must be kept a safe distance away from combat zones on land in places where they are capable of being healthy and clean. Medical inspections on prisoners of war are to take place at least once a month and all medical and religious personnel are to be given the necessary facilities to provide for the prisoners. Prisoners are to be given an advance pay equivalent to their rankings as stated by the Convention and all prisoners who have lost a limb, experienced paralysis, or are chronically sick are to be repatriated immediately (7).

The Fourth Geneva Convention, or the Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, was also held in 1949. This Convention specifically focused on the treatment of civilians in times of war and calls that all parties who sign the convention are required to care for all wounded without regards to race, religions, sex, birth, or any discriminating factor. All civilians as well as non-combatant military personnel are to be cared for in neutral zones away from the combat and that those who are sick, and expectant mothers are to be care for in particular. Civilian hospitals and medical staff are not to be attacked in combat and if the governing nation allows each civilian hospital to be marked by the emblem stated in the previous Geneva Convention. Intimidation, terrorism, and pillaging are forbidden. Any region intended solely for sick and wounded are to be marked by the Red Cross(2). The

four Geneva Conventions along with their additional protocols (which were added after the Conventions) form the basis of International Humanitarian Law and the International Committee of the Red Cross seeks to enforce these rules.

“International Humanitarian Law is the branch of international law that encompasses both humanitarian principles and international treaties that seek to save lives and alleviate suffering of both combatants and noncombatants during armed conflicts” (8). International Humanitarian Law (IHL) works in compliance with human rights law. Human rights law can be found in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789 and the Bill of Rights found in the Constitution of the United States of America. Upon the founding of the United Nations and later, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 brought the notion of human rights as a political issue. This led to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to be signed in 1966. These agreements provided the basis of human rights law. International Human Rights Law works with human rights law to safeguard human dignity for all people without discrimination. While Human Rights Law continues to apply to situations of conflict, rights such as freedom of movement and liberty may be revoked in times of national emergency. However, in situations where International Humanitarian Law is applied it stands as a safeguard to protect all victims of war. International Humanitarian Law is “a body of international principles, established by treaty or custom, which places restrictions on the use of violence in armed conflict in order to regulate the conduct of hostilities; in particular, to set limits on methods and means of warfare [as well as to] protect persons not (or no longer) taking part in hostilities, i.e., civilians” (9).

Based off of the principles of IHL (International Humanitarian Law) and Human Rights Law, the ICRC and its national societies are impartial humanitarian organizations that seek to enforce IHL and to act as a neutral organization dedicated to protect those hurt in war. The Geneva Conventions regard the ICRC as such an organization. During times of armed conflict the ICRC serves to help protect and care for victims of war, send Red Cross messages between family members, create medical safety zones for civilians, conduct relief programs for displaced people, and visit prisoners of war and civilian detainees(9).

While the ICRC focuses its primary efforts in international armed conflicts, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies provides aid not only in times of armed conflict, but also in times of natural and man-made disasters. The second of the three organizations that form the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, is the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Originally the idea of Henry Davison, then-president of the American Red Cross, the IFRC was formed in 1919 under the name "League of Red Cross Societies." Representatives from National Red Cross Societies in the United States of America, France, Britain, Japan, and Italy met in Paris to discuss the formation of a separate Red Cross affiliated organization in order "to strengthen and unite, for health activities, already-existing Red Cross Societies and to promote the creation of new Societies." The establishment of the League of Red Cross Societies incorporated the idea that humanitarian aid would be provided not only in situations of war but also in situations of other man-made or natural disasters. Within the first 5 years of its inception, the League had already acquired 47 appeals for donations to work in 34 different countries. The League's first major emergency response situation occurred in 1923 when it responded to organizing and providing aid to earthquake victims in Japan where approximately 200,000 people were affected (10) .

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was the first time that the ICRC and the League collaborated in a joint effort to provide aid, and it was the first time in the history of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement that the organization had been involved in an internal conflict. The League continued to provide humanitarian aid during World War II as well as the Spanish Civil War. In 1983, the League officially changed its name to the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, due to the numerous National Red Cross Societies that had adopted the symbol of the Red Crescent. The official name changed once again in 1991, to become what it is currently, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies(10).

The importance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement lies in its strong network, disaster response and its commitment to its 7 principles, which include helping everyone equally and indiscriminately. Thus the IFRC and the ICRC are able to distribute aid to all parties involved in political and armed conflicts without engaging in foreign affairs. The IFRC provides emergency response and aid to victims of man-made and natural disasters, while the ICRC primarily focuses on providing aid to victims of war and internal conflict. Together along with each of the National Societies of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the largest humanitarian organization in the world currently with approximately 97 million volunteers worldwide. The 7 principles of the Red Cross are as follows:

- Humanity
- Impartiality
- Neutrality
- Independence
- Voluntary Service
- Unity

- Universality

Humanity is represented in the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, through the very creation of the movement. The Movement was founded on the idea of helping those who are sick and wounded on the battlefield, and has expanded its work to help all wounded and sick military personnel, provide assistance and relief to civilians involved in armed conflict and through the work of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies the ICRC also helps people in times of natural and man-made disasters. As a result, the ICRC works to protect and serve all people.

In order to carry out its work and its mission to serve all of humanity the ICRC must remain impartial in all its endeavors. Therefore the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement does not discriminate towards those in need based upon race, religion, nationality, class, or political opinions. The Movement strives to work to provide aid and relief solely based upon need.

While remaining impartial towards those the Movement serves, the Red Cross as an international charitable organization must also remain neutral from all political affairs. Hence the Movement and all subsequent Red Cross organizations do not partake in armed conflict or hostilities. The Movement stands apart from all racial, religious, or other conflicts.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement stands as an independent organization subject to its own rules and regulations. The national societies of the Red Cross, while working under the umbrella title of the “Red Cross” are still subject to the rules and bylaws of their respective home countries and must still also maintain their sovereignty and provide their services in accordance with the Movement when necessary.

Aside from independence, neutrality, and impartiality, and humanity, the Movement also prides itself on the principles of voluntary service, unity, and universality. Without the dedicated work and effort of its volunteers no branch of the Red Cross would be able to provide its services. Each branch of the Movement works together equally in helping those in need and the each National Society within the Movement shared equal status, responsibility, and duty in helping one another throughout the world. (11).

2.2 National Background

The American Red Cross was founded in Washington DC on May 21st 1881 by Clara Barton. Barton first heard of the Red Cross while visiting Europe following the Civil War. After returning home she campaigned for an American Red Cross society and for ratification of the Geneva Convention protecting the war-injured, which the United States ratified in 1882 (12). Barton was the head of the American Red Cross for 23 years, during which time it conducted its first domestic and overseas disaster relief efforts and campaigned successfully for the inclusion of peacetime relief work as part of the International Red Cross Movement. The American Red Cross then sometimes called the "American Amendment" initially met with some resistance in Europe (12). The Red Cross received its first congressional charter in 1900 and a second in 1905. This charter, which remains in effect today, sets forth the purposes of the organization that include giving relief to, and serving as a medium of communication between members of the American armed forces and their families and providing national and international disaster relief (12).

Prior to the First World War, the Red Cross introduced its first aid, water safety, and public health nursing programs. With the outbreak of war, the organization experienced

phenomenal growth. The number of local chapters jumped from 107 in 1914 to 3,864 in 1918 and membership grew from 17,000 to more than 20 million adult and 11 million junior Red Cross members. The public contributed \$400 million in funds and material to support Red Cross programs, including those for American and Allied forces and civilian refugees. The Red Cross staffed hospitals and ambulance companies and recruited 20,000 registered nurses to serve the military. Additional Red Cross nurses came forward to combat the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918 (12). After the war, the Red Cross focused on service to veterans and enhanced its programs in safety training, accident prevention, home care for the sick and nutrition education. It also provided relief for victims of major disasters such as the Mississippi River floods in 1927 and severe drought and the Great Depression during the 1930s (12).

World War II called upon the Red Cross to provide extensive services once again to the U.S. military, Allies, and civilian war victims. It enrolled more than 104,000 nurses for military service, prepared 27 million packages for American and Allied prisoners of war, and shipped more than 300,000 tons of supplies overseas. This at the military's request, the Red Cross also initiated a national blood program that collected 13.3 million pints of blood for use by the armed forces (12).

After World War II, the Red Cross introduced the first country wide civilian blood program that now supplies nearly 50 percent of the blood and blood products in this country. The Red Cross expanded its role in biomedical research and entered the new field of human tissue banking and distribution. During the 1990s, the Red Cross engineered a massive modernization of its blood services operations to improve the safety of its blood products. It continued to provide services to members of the armed forces and their families, including during the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf wars. The Red Cross also expanded its services into such fields as civil

defense, CPR/AED training, HIV/AIDS education, and the provision of emotional care and support to disaster victims and their survivors. The Red Cross is also the principal supplier of mass care in federally declared disasters (12).

While closely associated with the federal government in the promotion of its objectives, the Red Cross is an independent, volunteer-led organization, financially supported by voluntary public contributions and cost-reimbursement charges. A 50-member and all volunteer Board of Governors leads the organization. The president of the United States, who is honorary chairman of the Red Cross, appoints eight governors including the chairman of the board. The chairman nominates and the board elects the president of the Red Cross who is responsible for carrying into effect the policies and programs of the board. The American Red Cross works closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross on matters of international conflict and social, political, and military unrest. As a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the American Red Cross joins more than 175 other national societies in bringing aid to victims of disasters throughout the world (12).

The American Red Cross today exists as part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The American Red Cross (hereafter referred to as simply the Red Cross) states in its mission statement that it strives to achieve humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality (12). These ideals also show the need for the Red Cross to exist as an organization today despite the existence of similar government funded organizations such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Red Cross plays an important role in both national and international aid in the world today.

The first aspect of the mission of the Red Cross is humanity. The Red Cross exists due to a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield and alleviate human suffering wherever it is found (12). One example of a service the Red Cross provides is support to military servicemen and their families. Every year the Red Cross delivers 1.4 million emergency messages between servicemen and their families. This helps to keep soldiers apprised with current and accurate information about what is happening in the United States. In addition to the obvious benefit of an increased morale, it assists commanders in making decisions to allow troops to return home on emergency leave (12).

Another service the Red Cross provides to military families is financial aid to those in need. The aid provided can be for a number of reasons. These include emergency travel, costs of burial and general health and welfare (12). In addition to aiding in the cost of a funeral, the Red Cross can also provide counseling to military families. Given the large number of American soldiers overseas the benefit of these programs is clear.

One of the most well known services that the Red Cross provides is the collection, processing and distribution of blood to hospitals and suppliers. The Red Cross supplies over 40% of the blood provided in the United States making it the single largest provider in the country (13). The Red Cross is responsible for nearly the entire blood donation process. First a donor registers with the Red Cross and a history and physical exam are conducted before about one pint of blood is removed from the donor. From there, the Red Cross transports the blood to a processing center (13). Once the blood is at a processing center several things happen in parallel. The blood is catalogued in a database and the white blood cells are removed to stop the blood from being rejected by the host. Dozens of tests are also run to test for blood borne diseases as well as testing for blood type. The blood is then stored for up to 42 days before being distributed

to hospitals for use (13). These services save lives on a daily basis and therefore the impact of blood donations is massive.

Another fairly well known service that is provided by the Red Cross is the promotion of health and safety information. Local Red Cross chapters provide instructional courses in first aid, CPR, AED, babysitting, disaster relief and home safety. These classes help train health care workers assisting them in becoming employed as well as advocating safe procedures to save lives before professional care can be delivered. Nationwide the Red Cross trains about 12 million students annually (12). Again the influence the Red Cross has spread throughout the United States can be shown to have important implications.

Finally, one of the most well known ways in which the Red Cross helps others is through disaster relief. After Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005 the Red Cross opened 1470 shelters and provided 3.8 million overnight stays (12). They also provided basic hygienic supplies as well as supplies to help clean up homes. Overall the Red Cross was able to shelter 450,000 victims and provide assistance to 4 million people (12). In addition to this, 91 cents out of every 1 dollar donated went directly towards relief which is quite high for a large organization (12). In the case of disaster relief it is obvious that without the Red Cross life would almost certainly be more difficult for the surviving victims of Katrina and other disasters.

In contrast to the Red Cross, the closest government funded organization would be FEMA. The mission statement of FEMA is more specific than the Red Cross's and is designed to help US citizens rather than anyone in need. It is also specific to disasters in particular rather than general human suffering (14). Although both the Red Cross and FEMA have humanity in mind when they operate, FEMA provides the humanitarian services in a different way. In the

example of hurricane Katrina, FEMA has worked to rebuild public buildings and facilities such as schools, roadways and fire hydrants (14). FEMA (along with local authorities) also participated in more urban search and rescue missions than the Red Cross. This helps illustrate the difference in the roles FEMA and the Red Cross play. While the Red Cross provided people with assistance for day to day basics like food, shelter and other supplies, FEMA and other government funded agencies, such as state and local police and the National Guard, were mostly responsible for evacuating people from their homes and rebuilding areas after the storm (14). Clearly the services provided by the Red Cross help to complement the services provided by the Federal government. Each one offers humanitarian aid while operating in a different way.

After humanity, the next portion of the Red Cross mission statement deals with impartiality and neutrality. This is a key area where the Red Cross differs from federally funded organizations. The Red Cross responds to any situation without regard to its location. In contrast, FEMA, although is able provide aid to other countries, is primarily concerned with American citizens. These international services are important due to the fact that there are many countries that may not have sufficient recourses to combat a disaster alone. One such example is the recent earthquake in Haiti in January, 2010. The Red Cross was able to provide important supplies for 130,000 people (12). These supplies included food, water, hygiene kits and blankets similar to the services provided during Katrina. In addition to these basic supplies, the Red Cross has worked to establish field hospitals in order to treat the wounded after many hospitals in Haiti were destroyed in the earthquake. The Red Cross also provides short term shelter for the now homeless victims as well as long term solutions to help the survivors safely rebuild their homes.

All of these services are important ones that are not necessarily provided by government funded agencies. The ability of the Red Cross to operate independently of political boundaries enables them to quickly respond to more situations because they do not need to seek any national approval. In addition to the Red Cross's desire to respond to situations in any country, they also do not plan their response based off of funding received. The Red Cross deploys assistance immediately to any in need with the assumption that funding will be raised afterwards (12). This method of operation allows the Red Cross to provide more humanitarian aid in a timelier manner. If the Red Cross were to wait for donations before sending help, the response could take months and by then it could be too late (12).

Another important aspect of the funding is that it is comprised entirely of voluntary donations. This helps keep the Red Cross more autonomous and independent. Often times the actions of an organization are reflections of the interests of the parties funding them. If the Red Cross were to be mostly federally funded then it would be less able to act internationally without the approval of the government. The donation based funding also fits with the "volunteer service" aspect of the Red Cross mission statement. The Red Cross aims to make all fundraising voluntary and not motivated by the desire for personal gain.

The Red Cross at the national level plays an important role in disaster relief. They serve by providing humanitarian aid to anyone in need. This role is typically not filled by federally funded organizations. Today the Red Cross partners with FEMA in order to complement FEMA's services to disaster victims in order to help ease the suffering in the most effective way possible. The Red Cross also vows to remain neutral and unbiased when providing aid. The Red Cross often sends aid outside the country to international disaster victims. This provides an advantage over government funded organizations which may not be able to commit their full

resources in an international situation. Finally, the Red Cross accepts voluntary donations so that there is no motivation for personal gain.

2.3 Local Background

When Clara Barton was organizing the American Red Cross, her plan was to establish a national HQ, and under that to have state and local levels. This hierarchy would help maintain respectable standards in the organization of the American Red Cross whilst making the services available to communities. Unfortunately, her plan was slightly unrealistic. Running a chapter of the Red Cross in every town in the United States is not the best solution, especially in this era. The need for a chapter in every town was mostly phased out with the dawn of modern transportation. Once affordable automobiles were available to Americans of nearly all financial brackets, transportation over more than a few miles was made practical and reasonable. This, in turn, helped to eliminate any lingering need to establish more local chapters.

Evolution of new, affordable transportation technologies is clearly not the only reason why Clara's vision was never fully realized. The amount of income required to run even a small office locally with a few staff members requires a significant amount of income which would likely not be realized in towns with very small populations. The establishment of local chapters has typically been fueled by the amount of need in an area.

Most important in this project, are the four central and western Massachusetts chapters. The Pioneer Valley Chapter was founded in 1906 and has expanded not only its area, but its coverage over the past century to serve over 70 cities and towns throughout Greater Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties. The Greater Westfield Chapter of the American Red Cross was initially chartered in 1923. The chapter meetings were held in various locations until 1945 when Mr. and Mrs. Frederick L. Parker of Westfield, donated approximately \$20,000, purchased

a house and its lot, and arranged for extensive alterations, which transformed it into the American Red Cross, Greater Westfield Chapter. Neither the Central Massachusetts nor Berkshire County chapters have their history viewable to the public.

The main point of having Red Cross locations near communities is to provide them with the many services that the Red Cross offers. Among these are Health and Safety Services, Disaster Services, Blood Services, among a number of others more specific to the location. For instance, many Red Cross chapters provide services such as specialized clothing drives, or hospital equipment loan services. The latter service allows any resident of a chapter region to borrow hospital equipment like a wheelchair for a period of time to avoid having to purchase something for a temporary condition. All of the equipment available has usually been donated by volunteers.

One of the most important services that local American Red Cross chapters provide falls within the category of Health and Safety Services. This encompasses a large number of programs, most of which having to do with classes and volunteer training. This is a substantial source of income for many chapters. Even though most classes are offered almost at cost, the number of people signing up annually makes a \$5 profit per person fairly significant. Each year, roughly eleven million people sign up for American Red Cross Health and Safety courses (15).

These classes cover a large range of skills that are used in everyday life, emergency situations, or as future volunteers. The Red Cross offers basic health care training such as First Aid training, which assists students in learning how to properly handle minor day to day injuries and health problems, as well as short term support for more serious injuries until paramedics arrive. CPR and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training are often offered in classes with First Aid training due to their similar situational usage, and are very important to have a

more complete skill-set to assist those in need of medical attention. CPR training teaches participants the proper technique of cardiopulmonary resuscitation through basic instruction, hands on experience, and concludes with a certification test. AED training provides instruction for proper use of Automated External Defibrillators. This course is becoming more important with new legal requirements for workplaces and schools to carry a number of AEDs in case of a sudden cardiac arrest.

The Red Cross offers a number of Aquatics courses as well. These classes range from “Learn to Swim,” to Lifeguarding, as well as a number of others in between. Many Red Cross chapters do not have the facilities to teach any Aquatics classes, so they use Authorized Providers. These are locations certified by the American Red Cross to teach courses independent of the organization, but using a set curriculum and list of certification requirements for trainees. Classes such as “Learn to Swim,” “Parent and Child Aquatics,” and “Preschool Aquatics” focus on the fundamentals of swimming to promote safety in and around the water. Classes such as “Lifeguarding” and “Lifeguarding Management” assume a fairly high skill level in the water, and have prerequisite tests to make sure the student is adept enough to make use of the training. These courses teach basic lifeguarding principles and protocols, as well as hands-on demos, with an end product of certification for lifeguarding.

Another set of the classes offered is Babysitter’s Training. This presents a self-contained, comprehensive course that will get participants educated and certified in a single session. The course is designed to teach the students how to properly care for children and infants, how to be a leader and make good decisions, how to keep the babysitter and the children safe, and be prepared in case of a medical or other emergency. As an up and coming individual (the class is

targeted at eleven to fifteen year-olds), it also teaches resume writing and how to handle job interviews.

One of the more important and involved sets of Health and Safety Service courses are those of Health Care Training. There are five main programs available in this section, and are among the most highly respected programs in the nation. These programs are NAT (Nurse Assistant Training)/HHA (Home Health Aide), Phlebotomy, EKG (Electrocardiography) Technician, Acute Care, and Medication Administration. The general idea of most of these courses can be pulled from the name except Phlebotomy. This course refers to the practice of collecting blood samples. People who successfully complete the Phlebotomy course are now certified to work at Red Cross run blood drives as a certified Phlebotomist.

Health Services also provides another very important service education about blood borne pathogens and HIV/AIDS. There are informational sessions available to the community to learn about how to control the spread of HIV among other things, and the Red Cross also provides testing for such diseases. As a major concern in many communities, it is very important to know the risks of this disease, as well as many other dangerous blood borne diseases.

Disaster Services are another major function of the Red Cross. Not only do they provide assistance to areas in need, but provide training courses for those willing to volunteer, or those wishing to better themselves and be more prepared as an independent in these situations. The Disaster Services classes teach a variety of survival and rescue tactics for a number of disasters, usually dependent on the location. For instance, the Central and Western Massachusetts chapters do not offer a comprehensive class on dealing with hurricanes, but the Tampa Bay chapter certainly does. Most if not all chapters handle Fire Prevention and some method of fire training, as this is typically not an area dependent disaster.

Of course the main role of Disaster Services is to actually deploy trained volunteers to disaster sites to minimize damage, and of course, save lives. The American Red Cross responds to over 70,000 disasters annually. Most of which are house/apartment fires, but also includes hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, transportation accidents, hazardous material spills, explosions, among other man-made and natural disasters. Despite not being a government agency, the American Red Cross was given the authority to provide disaster relief in 1905 when Congress chartered them to "carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same."(16) The main focus as a humanitarian organization is making sure any potential victims are removed from danger, and then cared for medically as needed, followed by any more potential needs such as food, water, or shelter.

While the Red Cross may have a plethora of national and international services, another one of the important domestic services would be their Workplace Training programs. These programs are usually run in a similar fashion to the Health and Safety classes; however, the instruction is brought right to the workplace. This is a convenient way to educate employees about their work environment, and how to stay safe in it, and even to help others who may have encountered an accident on site. Common training regiments involve CPR/AED/First Aid Training for potentially dangerous work settings such as constructions sites and mills. Depending on the nature of the job, other things may be taught as well, but the fundamentals are usually the same for all workplace seminars.

The most well-known service that the American Red Cross provides is Blood Services. Even those who have not donated blood before, have seen a sponsored blood drive at a nearby

clinic, school, fitness center, nearly anywhere. This is an incredibly valuable service that the Red Cross provides, saving countless lives thanks to generous and courageous individuals, and orchestrated thanks to local Red Cross personnel. About every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. Thanks to the Red Cross, over four million Americans are able to donate to those in need(17).

Many of the Red Cross services have benefitted from new technological advancements. Planning and finding blood drives is much easier thanks to the internet. Keeping in touch with members of the family serving in the Armed Forces is now more than just letters; webcams allow both parties to see each other. Disaster reports can be instantly reported on a web ticker, cell phone messages, beepers, radios, and so on. This raises maximum awareness, and facilitates the quickest possible response.

One of the newest improvements to Red Cross services is that of online classes. Currently, many CPR/AED/First Aid classes can be taken online. The client may then come in to the final class session to get a certification for the skill they signed up for. This is very convenient, and could lower teaching costs; however it is not the only improvement to course sign-ups. Registration will now be online for Central and Western Massachusetts, a significant upgrade from the current system. This allows the user not only to pick a class to take, but the system handles payment as well. The client can view all the days, times, and locations of any available class, as well as the remaining seats. Similarly, any direct donations to the chapters, region, or the National American Red Cross can now be handled in a simple, secure, online transaction. This system will be activated on the new website once the final process changes have been completed at their respective locations.

Chapter 3: Methodology

First, data was collected on the issues involving the four Chapters of the Central and Western Massachusetts websites. The major issues of the four websites needed to be determined so that various sections were either included or excluded from the new website. Once the problems were assessed, a master list of sections was created that formed the skeleton of the new unified website.

Once the master list of sections was drafted, was then created for those sections and then handed to Chapter Neighborhood to create the original frame of the website. The master list of sections was then broken up by the project group in order to give a relatively equal amount of work to each person. The amount of work per section was determined through recommendation by Tony Pini who had a general idea of what would be involved in their creation.

Once the sections were broken into various groups and given to team members, deadlines for the sections were set in order to maximize forward progress on the website. Easier sections such as the individual chapters were given early deadlines. Sections that required more work or cooperation with an outside source such as a merchant bank were given later deadlines to allow for communication delays. The deadlines were designed to be relatively rigid, but subject to change given adequate circumstances.

Drafts were then created for each of the sections. The order in which the drafts were created corresponded to the order of the deadlines given. The drafts were then given to the various business partners relating to the sections so that ideas for revisions and modifications could be given. Once feedback was collected, a final draft of the pages was created and placed on the new unified website.

The website followed this methodology strongly; however as a dynamic object it was able to be slightly modified depending on situation. At times, final sections were modified due

to errors being noticed after they were thought to be complete. This occurred especially around the go-live time.

Chapter 4: Necessity of the New Website

Each of the four individual chapters within the Central and Western Massachusetts Region of the American Red Cross originally maintained their own respective websites; however with this Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) the four chapters are represented by one new website. Prior to the creation of the regional website, each of the four local chapters were responsible for their own websites. Each chapter had hired individual companies to create and update these websites as necessary. However, the maintenance of four separate and individual websites had brought forth many disadvantages. These disadvantages included the cost of the four individual websites in place of one, repeated information amongst the four websites, and lack of online registration for classes and money transactions through the websites.

One of the primary disadvantages of having four separately maintained websites was cost. Each chapter had to bear the burden of paying for their website and its domain. As a result, the individual chapters were forced to settle for simple websites that were often not well designed. Each of the four websites had cluttered homepages that often combined local, national, and international news events with warnings and advice on how best to survive natural disasters and disease. Pictures and other graphics remained simple on each of the websites. All four chapters allowed visitors to view the classes offered by that chapter and the schedules of the courses.

Another disadvantage with the original set-up of the four chapter websites was the display of similar, if not repeated information. Basic information such as how to make donations to the American Red Cross and the International Red Cross fund were the same for all four websites. Information regarding how to volunteer, how to give blood, international disasters such as the earthquake in Haiti, and pandemics such as the flu were also common amongst the four websites. In terms of structure, each website had an “About Us” section that presented

chapter-specific information, as well as a list of towns that each chapter provided its services to. All the chapters posted their board of directors, corporate sponsors, and presented their annual reports for the general public to view.

Aside from cost and repetition, another disadvantage with the previous set-up was its inability to process online transactions for the local chapter's classes. Each of the chapters had links where visitors were able to donate online, however, for class registration; the websites did not provide any online registration form. As such visitors were forced to call each of the individual chapters or physically visit them in order to find out more information regarding classes, schedules, and pricing.

As a result of the disadvantages presented by the former structure, the Central and Western Massachusetts Region of the American Red Cross decided that one website representing all four of the local chapters would be the best solution. The new website would have better design, consolidated information, online transactions, and would allow each chapter to be equally represented while maintaining chapter independence. With the previous set-up the local chapters, each had websites that were simple in design but were very cluttered. Advertisements of corporate sponsors and thick border lines made boxes around the web pages, and information presented was not often found in the appropriate part of the website (such as directions in the "contact us" section—Central Mass website. The new website would consolidate all repeated information into one direct spot so as to prevent that from occurring again, and would be cleaner in structure so that visitors would not be intimidated upon seeing the website and so that all information was accurately presented so as not to promote misunderstandings and miscommunications. Registration for classes would now be available online and it would allow visitors to not only view all the classes and their prices but also be able to pay for these classes

over the internet. This would make it easier for the chapters to monitor the status of their courses rather than process whole transactions and then see the status of those classes. Visitors would also be able to make donations over the internet through the new website, and visitors would be allowed to choose who receives the donation, one of the four local chapters, the National Disaster Relief Fund, the International Response Fund, or to the Service to the Armed Forces.

The new website would also be simple and easy to maintain. An employee of the Regional Chapter would be able to update all necessary information so as to keep the website running properly. Thus, the maintenance of this website would not require a third party company to constantly update and change the website. Rather, the third party company would set up the structure of the website and provide the skeleton off of which the chapters would be able to add and detract information from. Aside from easy maintenance, the new website would also promote the independence of each of the four local chapters. Since they no longer have their own individual websites to maintain, visitors would be able to see that the four chapters are indeed part of a larger Red Cross community, however, they would also note the differences amongst each of the chapters and how these chapters work to benefit the local communities. Each chapter will have their own section with chapter specific information such as information about course offerings, directions to the chapter house, news and events, chapter board members, and how to volunteer and donate to each of the chapters. All this information will be presented under the appropriate chapter's banner. The banner image is a rectangular picture found at the top of the webpage. Each chapter has its own respective image that appears at the top of any webpage found under its subsection, so as to remind the visitor which part of the website he or she is viewing. Each chapter is to be accurately and equally represented under the new website so as to not promote misunderstandings within them and for visitors.

4.1 Meet the Team

The creation process for the website that would provide information about all four local chapter and regional information required a team of students and Red Cross staff to complete. This staff includes approximately twenty people plus the website development company Chapter Neighborhood. Chapter Neighborhood is an organization that provides its services to numerous Red Cross chapters across the United States. This organization provides a toolkit that can be used to post information into the website, and allows for simple maintenance of the site. Chapter Neighborhood provided the general structure of the website and handled the back end coding so that the team only needed to determine the layout and content. From there, Chapter Neighborhood's automated system would generate the code to place content in the desired section. In other words, Chapter Neighborhood provided a toolkit to build the website much like a program like Microsoft Word provides a toolkit for writing a document. The core of the web development team included four students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a liaison from the American Red Cross, and a volunteer who once worked at the regional chapter and was willing to devote his time to this project. The remaining members of the web development team were employees of the local chapters of the Red Cross who would be responsible for providing the information required to be posted on the new site. Each of those members would make sure that all information posted was accurate and update.

The four students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) were Nicholas Alunni, Richard Goloski, Eric Jones, and Shuchi Mitra. All three are in their third year and were working on this project as part of their Interactive Qualifying Project. The advisor liaisons from the regional chapter of the Red Cross were Tony Pini and Susan Swanberg, who eventually became responsible for maintaining and updating the website once it was created. Tony Pini handled most of the dealings with Chapter Neighborhood and the merchant banks. He also led the web

development team to meet deadlines and formulated the schedules as well as which members of the team would work on what sections. The rest of the team was selected because of the local chapters they represent and their field of work within the Red Cross. They are as follows:

Name	Project Role	Location
Lisa Piehler	Business Partner	Central MA
Kathleen Phillips	Business Partner	Berkshire County
Rich Rubin	Business Partner	Greater Westfield
Rick Lee	Business Partner	Pioneer Valley
Bob Claise	Business Partner	Central MA
Mike Murphy	Business Partner	Berkshire County
Pat Gauthier	Business Partner	Central MA
Nicole Valentine	Business Partner	Central MA
Melinda Napolitano	Business Partner	Central MA
Sue Billings	Business Partner	Central MA
Paige Thayer	Business Partner	Pioneer Valley
Gail Enman	Business Partner	Central MA

4.2 Schematics of the New Website

During the planning phase of the website, it was decided that most of the information from the old sites should be preserved. Despite a bit of the info in each of the four chapter sites being outdated, it was at the very least new enough or relevant enough to function in the newly designed site. For instance, the “Towns We Serve” section of each chapter’s site contained all up

to date information, so the data was transferred to the new site using a neatly designed alphabetized table. Alternately, some of the data was carried over mostly as a placeholder, and was updated at a later phase of the website construction. Anything that was vastly outdated or no longer relevant was ignored and either rewritten or discarded for the new design.

The first step of the planning phase was to construct a list of sections that would include all the information and functionality necessary for the new site based on the content from the old chapter websites. Once the list of sections was assembled, this was expanded in to a work plan to cover the more general site development tasks such as quality assurance. The collected information at this stage was turned into a site skeleton. The outline was needed by Chapter Neighborhood to start putting together the new site. The work plan was discussed at the next meeting in A-term, and sections were assigned to each individual group member. A timeline was added to the work plan in order to provide reasonable deadlines for sections to keep all the participants on track and to improve the chances of completing the site on time (the original timeline can be found below). Certain portions received more or less time based on how much effort was expected for completing the section, as well as any delays. For example, “Services” was fairly standard, so the due date was set early, but “Overall Content and Quality Assurance” was ongoing, and needed to be scheduled right up until the site launched. The sections were broken up as follows:

Section	Project Member	Draft Date	Final Due Date
Overall Content and Quality Assurance	Eric	10/28	12/16
Content and Appearance of Home Page	Ricky	10/28	11/25
About Us – Section	Sue	10/14	11/25
Berkshire County - Section	Eric	10/21	11/25
Central MA – Section	Ricky	10/28	11/25
Greater Westfield - Section	Shuchi	10/28	11/25

Pioneer Valley – Section	Nick	10/28	11/25
Services – Section	Sue	10/28	11/4
Search – Section	Nick	10/28	11/11
How We Help - Directory - call to action	Sue	10/28	11/11
Take a class - call to action	Eric/Ricky	10/28	12/9
Be Prepared - call to action	Shuchi	10/28	11/11
Volunteer - call to action	Nick	10/28	10/28
Donate - call to action	Nick	11/4	11/18
Big Box top right - Home Page	Ricky	10/28	11/4
News and Events/Activities	Shuchi	10/28	12/2
Process Changes for Health Services	Ricky/Sue	11/4	12/2
End to End Testing of completed site	Shuchi	10/28	12/16
Blood	Sue	10/28	11/11
Secure Sections	Ricky	10/28	11/11

The first two sections were not specific content, and were there for the sake of the project. About Us was very necessary to carry over to the new site. Not only did it provide vital information about the Red Cross, but helped to maintain a level of individuality between the four chapters. Keeping some kind of distinctiveness between chapters was a major issue at the first web kickoff meeting. Many of the representatives from each location expressed their concern that all of the site information would be consolidated into a homogenous mixture of Red Cross resources. Worrying about this came as no surprise and the representatives had to be reassured that their most important unique site content would be preserved. A couple of the more skeptical Red Cross members had to be walked through the planned content and changes to make sure none of the important information or functionality would be lost. At least one Red Cross member from each chapter proposed adding or removing sections, however all but one of the requests was due to a miscommunication. Once the other issues were cleared up, the final request for making the local sites more distinct was met with the use of unique banner images at the top of their pages for each location. The image helped to provide some extra identity to each of the

chapters, as well as informed the user where on the site they were exploring. The group was satisfied with the proposed site layout, and the team was cleared to go forward on the sections.

To please the various CEOs and other Red Cross members, a set of requirements for each chapter was agreed upon. Many of these things were already implemented, or on the work plan but a few changes were made to the list. The new subsection list for regional chapters was then About the Chapter, Contact Information, Annual Report, Location and Directions, Volunteer, Donate, News, and Secure Login. The Business and Community Partners section was added a little later in the design.

About the Chapter existed to serve as an overview of each chapter, as well as a way to provide a message from the head of the chapter. This now exists as the 'home page' for each chapter section. Under this option is a way to view the towns that each chapter services. Contact Information lists each chapter's contact info, as well as extension for all the appropriate staff. Underneath Contact Info is a page for the board members of each chapter. Annual Report is simply a page to access any available (or possibly the most recent depending on preference) annual reports for the respective chapters. Location and Directions has step-by-step directions on how to get to each chapter location and includes an embedded map from Google. Volunteer is currently a redirect to main Volunteer page, but will soon be changed to include chapter-specific volunteer opportunities. Donate provides the user with information about donating to each local chapter such as phone numbers and addresses, and also provides a link to donate online. The importance of these sections being quite evident significantly outweighed any issues of redundancy. Business and Community Partners will be implemented as each chapter holds sponsored events, and each sponsor can be included with a link, or advertisement. News is a static page to highlight individual articles from the shared News and Events section. The final

sub-option included under each chapter is Secure Sections. This is for any restricted content that the public should not be able to access such as the Board of Directors, Volunteers, Disaster Volunteers, or Instructors/Authorized Provider Content. Access to these sections of the site is controlled by the Red Cross.

Chapter 5: Creation of the New Website

5.1 Individual Chapters

An important factor in the creation of the new website was the representation of individual chapters. Each chapter was given unique attention to ensure that they were properly represented. The following sections describe the construction of each chapter and screenshots of the website are included in Appendix C.

5.1.1 Berkshire County

The Berkshire County chapter represents the westernmost areas of Massachusetts. The original format for the Berkshire County website was very similar to the format used by the Central Massachusetts chapter. The Berkshire chapter had several problems that they wished to resolve with the new website. The first issue was the overall look and feel of the website. The old website used colors such as purple and yellow that did not fit with the Red Cross organization's typical colors. It also did not have an organized way of presenting information. For example, there was both a section called "Chapter Services" as well as a subsection under "About Us" also called "Chapter Services" which contained more information related to services the chapter offers. Issues like these can frustrate and confuse the user by forcing them to look in unlikely places for the information they need.

The new website resolved these "look and feel" issues by using a more structured format as well as better aesthetic choices for things like button size and colors. The most noticeable change in the website was the transition from the purple, yellow and gray color scheme to a primarily red, white and blue color scheme. The red and white were chosen to match the colors already appearing on the Red Cross logo and the blue was chosen as a triad color to the red. This greatly improved the overall look of the website as it was now much easier to recognize as belonging to the Red Cross. In order to resolve the issues of organization, a more rigid structure

was determined before adding content ensuring that any information added would conform to a specific category to avoid information being placed in ambiguous sections. All of the information from the old Berkshire chapter website was organized into one of the following categories: About the Chapter, Contact Information, Annual Report, Location and Directions, Business and Community Partners, and Secure sections. There are also links to the Volunteer, Donate and News sections but each of these sections are general and not specifically related to the Berkshire chapter.

The About the Chapter section contains a brief introduction to the Berkshire chapter written by the chapter Chairman. This helped to add a personal touch in order to avoid completely homogenizing each chapter. Although the goal was to have each chapter present themselves the same way on the website to add structure and organization, careful consideration was done to prevent the loss of each chapter's individuality. The About the Chapter section is critical to keeping the Berkshire chapter's individual values present using the introduction letter as well as a subsection listing of towns serviced by the chapter and a listing of services offered specifically by the Berkshire chapter that are not offered at any other chapter. The listing of the town's service allowed the Berkshire chapter to both proudly display the areas they helped most as well as providing users to check which chapter was responsible for their area if they did not already know which chapter they belonged to. The listing of the individual services offered was created to distinguish any unique way that the Berkshire chapter reached out to the community. Since every chapter offers basic services such as blood donations and disaster relief this subsection demonstrated how Berkshire went beyond the basic services to provide the local community with what was needed.

The next section of the Berkshire chapter portion of the website was “Contact Information”. This section is fairly self explanatory and contains a table displaying the major department heads that may need to be contacted by an outside user. The major improvement in the new website over the contact information already present in the old website was the inclusion of additional contact information. The old table included only names and email addresses but the new table included the name, department they worked for as well as their email and phone number. This provided both another way to contact a person as well as more information about the person to be contacted. It is unlikely that a user on the website will know the person they wish to contact by name but rather they would know the department to contact and need to find the person associated with this department. Along with the table of contact information a simple list of all the chapter board members was added as well. This was changed from the old website which placed the board listing in the “About the Chapter” section. This was changed to provide more organization to the website by placing any type of staff listing in the same section rather than spreading it out in multiple different places.

After the Contact Information section is the Annual Report section. This section simply contains the annual financial reports for the year at the Berkshire chapter. This section is incredibly simple and contains only a link to download the PDF file containing the report.

The next major section of the Berkshire chapter is the Location and Directions section. This section was entirely absent in the old website making it very difficult for someone to find the chapter. The location of the chapter was provided in two ways. The first was using an embedded Google maps applet which marked the location of the chapter on a map and allowed the user to get directions from any location. The second was using traditional generic written directions so that users that were not familiar with Google maps would be able to find the

chapter. The written directions also provided visible landmarks for someone to look for when finding the chapter that Google could not provide.

The Business and Community Partners section provided a place for Berkshire to emphasize any sponsorship they had. For example, often times a company would sponsor a local event and in return the Berkshire chapter would credit them for it on their website. This section provided a convenient location to place sponsorship information without having to put it in the separate News and Events portion of the website. The main reason for avoiding placing this information in the News and Events section was due to the fact that the News section was not separated by chapter. If sponsor information was placed here it could be lost among the sponsorship information placed by other chapters. This is in addition to the fact that not all news stories contain sponsorship information. The inclusion of a separate section in the Berkshire chapter portion of the website solved all the issues of including important sponsor information.

The final section created is the Secure Login section. This section was created to provide a place for board members and other personnel to access private information that they did not wish to share with the general public. These sections have access controlled with a username and password. The old Berkshire chapter website did not have this feature so any private information could not be placed online. By adding the access control functionality, the Berkshire chapter has the ability to place information online so that it may be accessed from any location without disclosing the information to everyone.

Much of the project involved communicating with the chapter staff. At Berkshire the primary contact was Mike Murphy. Mike was responsible for the health and safety services at the chapter. Relative to the other chapter contacts Mike was very accepting of the changes the

new website would bring. While many chapters were very cautious about losing their individual website and moving to a new format, Mike recognized the potential gain to be had by combining the websites into one. In particular, Mike recognized the importance of making compromises in order to achieve a more unified appearance on the website. Another area where Mike performed well compared to the other chapter contacts was in responding to email requests for information. In order to populate the website with new content Mike was responsible for acquiring any information specific to the Berkshire chapter. Mike responded to all emails in a timely manner and also provided useful criticism of the content that was placed on the website already. Most notably, as the head of health and safety, Mike was able to provide valuable advice on the structure of the Take a Class section. Overall, Berkshire was very receptive to having an improved website to expand the influence of the Red Cross as well as create a new opportunity to improve their current ability to help the community.

5.1.2 Central Massachusetts

The existing Central Massachusetts site had a number of issues. Apart from the absent course registration functionality, the site itself was rather messy and pieces were missing and broken. The existing Job Opportunities page was roughly one year out of date and was no longer applicable even while the site was still active. Also, the Search function was very awkward and clunky. Even though the actual content was the main dilemma, the site design was also relatively poor. The layout of the page was not very obvious immediately, and the color scheme was a dreadful purple and yellow—not at all evident of the Red Cross red and white theme. Many of the images were tiny and low quality. These poor quality images may not sound like much, but contributed to the unprofessional, shoddy, and not so welcoming design of the previous website.

The sub-site for Central Massachusetts used a decent amount of the existing content from the old site, however all of it needed reviewing and reformatting and much of it needed to be

updated at least slightly. The work plan skeleton covered each section from the new site, and what it would incorporate from the old site. This included all the information that would be consolidated or standardized such as the Privacy Policy and class sections. The previous websites did not have much in the way of online sign-ups or direct functionality. The main issue was the lack of class sign-ups. The existing class sections merely described the classes available and the suggested prices. Some of which had contact information which was largely redundant as it all linked to the same Red Cross employee's email account as well as the same phone number. Interestingly enough, the ability to apply for volunteering online was removed for the new site due to an issue with the sign-up process. The size of the volunteer application was too large provided a potential volunteer might apply online to find out that there were no openings. The new system simply uses the information to describe possible volunteer opportunities and provides contact information in order to find out what number to call about local positions.

Much of the chapter-specific content was lifted at first, but before it was approved by the respective chapters, most was updated or modified. There was also a reasonable portion that was trimmed. The old site was more of a quick reference than an actual source of information. The Services section was part of the lifted content, and only required some cleanup during its transition to the new site. Most of the old sites did not have a proper setup for Corporate Partnerships, so the existing data was discarded in favor of a brand new list supplied from each location to assure correctness. Also, each chapter had a section on giving blood, but that information was either removed, or consolidated into the main Give Blood section of the new site.

The development of the Central Mass section for the new site involved getting content and approval from the chapter volunteers and representatives. Since this was the chapter that was

running the entire site redesign operation, one would assume that getting information would be fairly straightforward. This was not always the case. Similar to other chapter contacts, there were a handful of communication issues, but nothing devastating. As was the case with other chapter personnel, a bit of urgency had to be stressed when contacting Red Cross members for them to provide an answer or send over a file or whatever the situation entailed. It seemed that none of the contacts ever had “down-time,” or they were always doing something that caused these seemingly low-priority items to get ignored.

5.1.3 Greater Westfield

For the Chapter of the American Red Cross in Greater Westfield Massachusetts, the information found on their old website was primarily kept and added to the new website. The “About Us” section for the chapter was updated and added under the chapter’s specific section. Directions to the chapter house, chapter board, towns we serve were all kept and updated to fit the new website. The donations webpage and the course offerings webpage were changed for all four chapters so that any visitor interested in donating would be linked to the same page within the website that would provide information on how to donate, who to donate to, and where the donation will be given. The course offerings webpage was changed so that each individual chapter section would link to one webpage that listed all the courses offered by all four of the chapters with their price listing. Thus one comprehensive catalog was established, and all visitors to the website would now be able to view all the offered classes, and their respective information, such as time and location.

Greater Westfield’s Donate section was mostly made from scratch due to the layout of the new site. Similar to the other chapters, the Donate link in the dropdown menu brings the user to a page providing information about how to donate to that chapter. The Westfield Donate page

has a link to the online donations page, and provides all the necessary information about how to donate by phone, mail, or make a “Gifts in Kind” donation of hospital equipment.

The classes section of the old Greater Westfield site was rather comparable to the other chapters’ sections prior to the redesign. The section consisted of a moderately large repository of class information regarding the content, prerequisites, prices, and other important information. Since most of this was Red Cross standard (excluding cost), it was consolidated into the new Take a Class section to eventually provide online sign-ups, not just information.

The Greater Westfield section of the new website did not pose any major problems or difficulties other than communication. In the early process of the website redesign project, each chapter had a contact person (or persons), who was responsible for reviewing all information regarding the chapter that was to be posted on to the new website. The communication problem lied in the fact that the contact person for Greater Westfield accidentally misplaced a few emails regarding requests for chapter information. This issue was due to the large number of emails she receives on a daily basis. This was quickly rectified by the feature found in Microsoft Outlook labeled “Read Receipt”. The feature ensured that each time an email was sent, a receipt would be sent back to the sender so as to ensure a proper delivery of the email. Another communication problem that was encountered at first was the lack of deadlines set on requesting information. Originally when information requests were sent via e-mail, there was no specific response deadline given. As a result, chapter members often did not respond for several weeks. This blunder was adjusted simply by establishing early deadlines, so as to ensure that all pertinent information would not only be given and posted on to the website in timely manner, but also so that all information had a chance to be reviewed.

5.1.4 Pioneer Valley

Overall at the start of the project the Pioneer Valley original website was a hodge-podge of confusing and redundant information. Visually, the website was unappealing and distracting. The pictures on the original website were all taken at a very small size and then blown up to fit the space needed on the website. The pictures also often included text giving many of the important parts of the website such as the address or phone number a difficult to read quality. The layout of the website is also particularly confusing as it appears that most of the options which were available to host content were turned on. For example there is a top bar which contains buttons in no logical order to them at the top of the page, buttons in no logical order on the side of the page, and more buttons and links to other parts of the same website and other websites on both the left and right sides of the page. The layout and ordering of the buttons also does not include any form of rhetorical or hierarchal layout. Where some may have assigned a priority to certain sections of the website in order to ease the visiting internet adventurer, most of the links here seem to have been placed down in the order in which they came to mind. The typical preference is that information most likely needed by the user should be placed first, followed by information most relevant to the chapter or organization the website is about, followed by information about affiliated or less needed pages. Also, there is no real hierarchy set in place to group or streamline the information present throughout the website. For example, information pertaining to contacting or reaching the website should all be grouped in such a way that the user can find it easily without having to poke through multiple sections. Currently information such as Contact numbers, directions, and towns serviced is split into different areas with few if any links connecting them. Although it may be a limitation of the host of the website and not its design, there is also no tree system so that the user can see where they are in on the old website. The lack of a tree-structure leads to a feeling of being lost as the user stumbles

through the various sections of the website. Most of the time it is simply easier to go back to the home page to figure out where the user has been rather than just pressing back and hoping the correct page appears.

In order to keep the identity of the Pioneer Valley chapter, two main things were done on the new website. For one, the chapter will be given a completely autonomous section of the website in which they can add or subtract pages as wanted as well as have control over the information which is present on those pages. All of the redundant information from their old website was consolidated with much of the repeating information from the other chapters. Inside of the autonomous section of the website, all of the unique information to the Pioneer Valley chapter was kept. Sections included Contact Information, Directions, and much of the other chapter specific information. The sections that were created for the Pioneer Valley chapter also reflected a hierarchy of importance in order to emulate what the user is most likely to be looking for upon clicking their chapter link. The first information is about how to both contact the chapter and get to the chapter via driving instructions including Google earth, and the subsequent information has to do with chapter specific services and donation / volunteer information. In order to ensure that the leaders of the chapter would feel that they still had a unique identity, a picture was also crafted for the top of each of the pages in the sections specifically for Pioneer Valley. Each of the other chapters was also given a picture in order to help retain their individuality. News on the original website was also simply stuffed onto the home page. The end result after years of news articles had accumulated was that the home page was around 10 times longer than all other pages on the website, and although the news was in chronological order the user infrequently had the patience to scroll through the entire page looking for the one article they were interested in. The new site has a page specifically designed to hold the news

and streamline the search process so that articles of interest can be accessed quickly and with minimal effort.

The Pioneer Valley Red Cross chapter was overall very easy to deal with. Originally at the kickoff meeting both Paige and Rick Lee decided that they would like to be contacts for all issues related to the creation of their portion of the new website. When e-mailing them both to introduce the project, only an e-mail from Paige was received in response. Due to Paige's and Rick's relative positions within the Red Cross, only receiving an e-mail from Paige was considered consent that she would be the primary contact for the remainder of the project. Paige was very responsive to all inquiries regarding content needed for the new website as well as problems in its implementation.

5.2 Take a Class

The Take a Class section of the website is one of the largest and most complicated sections. This section merged each of the four chapters separate class offerings into one place. This posed several logistical problems. The largest of these problems was that each chapter offered the classes at a different price. The Chapter Neighborhood system did not allow for one class to have different pricing leaving only two possible solutions. The first would be to make one class offered at four locations into four separate classes with the same name but a different price. The advantage to this would be that there would be no changes required in the budget of the individual chapters. The disadvantage would be that to an outside user, the difference in price for the same class would be confusing and would drive customers away from the higher priced chapters. The second possible solution would be to change all the chapter prices to match each other and make it appear as a single course on the website with four possible locations

where it can be offered. This required the chapters to change their budget but would greatly simplify the operation from the user. The latter solution was chosen for the final website.

In order to accomplish these price changes several steps were taken. The first step required a survey to be sent out to all the chapters to find out the exact discrepancy between prices. Using this information, a meeting was arranged between the chapters in order to attempt to work out the differences between prices. This meeting ultimately failed because the conference was only between the heads of the health and safety department. They did not have the power to make the decisions necessary to make the kind of budget changes that were needed to make this solution work.

Therefore a second meeting was arranged between the CEOs of each chapter. This meeting was much more successful because the vast majority of the price discrepancies were resolved. The general method used was to raise the price of each chapter to match the price of the most expensive chapter. This method worked well for classes with a price difference of \$5-\$20. However, some of the more expensive classes had a price difference of over \$200. In addition to this many of these expensive classes had a specific set prerequisites and pricing options that varied with each chapter. These could not be unified into one class like the others due to their complexity. Even if they were the same price a potential student would be required to call the chapter to schedule a meeting to test if they have meet the prerequisites to take the course. Therefore, these classes were not implemented with online sign up and a phone number was placed to contact the chapter directly to sign up. The Red Cross also offers classes through authorized providers such as the YMCA. These classes also did not have online sign up enabled because the user would need to sign up at the YMCA, not the Red Cross.

Once the prices were set the classes could be loaded into the Chapter Neighborhood database. When all of the courses were in place with descriptions and prices it became the responsibility of each individual chapter to schedule the courses in the website. This led to another issue. The system used by Chapter neighborhood has no way of recognizing if a single person signs up for multiple classes to give them a discount. The Berkshire chapter and the Greater Westfield chapter offer many different types of group discounts on their classes so a solution was devised to account for the lack of group discount support from Chapter Neighborhood. A separate class was created at the price of the group course price to represent someone signing up for both classes separately. In order to keep the number of registered people correct the capacity of each individual course that was part of the group sign up would be lowered whenever someone signed up for a group class. For example, if CPR for Adults and CPR for Children were offered as two separate classes with a group discount a third course CPR for Adults and Children would be offered as a group course. Each time someone signs up for the group course the capacity of CPR for Adults and CPR for children would each be manually reduced by one to stop the number of people signing up to exceed the max capacity. This would be invisible to anyone using the website but would require someone to constantly check the website for new sign ups. This requirement for constant monitoring was not seen as a major drawback due to the small amount of people who sign up at the Berkshire and Greater Westfield chapters.

The final type of class offered by the Red Cross is the online class. These classes could either supplement the material covered in a traditional classroom or even cover the entire course and would only require the student to demonstrate the material learned at a later date at a local

chapter to become certified. These classes were very easy to add to the website due to the fact that they are handled entirely by a third party website.

Overall the Take a Class section underwent numerous changes from start to finish. In the beginning, the plan was to make every class available to sign up online and that all classes would be priced the same. This goal was partially accomplished by changing the pricing on courses that had differences of less than \$20. Classes that had larger differences in pricing were not placed in the class database to enable online signup but instead were changed so that a potential student would call the chapter to find pricing information and available seats. By the end the project the Take a Class section greatly simplified the act of signing up for a user and allows some of the work done by hand for keeping records to be done automatically.

5.3 Volunteer

Much like the dispersion of content present throughout the chapter specific information on the old websites, there was absolutely no standardization of the Volunteer sections of the four previous websites. While most of the websites did have a volunteer section that contained information on the various ways in which one could sign up, other sites only had a means for users to sign up online. The form used form used by the various chapters was standard in the information it needed however the layout was different.

In order to build the new volunteer section, research was done on the volunteer sections of other Red Cross regions hosted on Chapter Neighborhood for inspiration. A tally was created of all the various sections present on all Chapter Neighborhood run sites. From the information gathered, it was possible to create a list of the most common sections present on volunteer pages throughout all Red Cross Websites. Content was then created for those pages and they were placed onto the new website. After an initial draft of the section was created, it was sent to the

woman in charge of the Central Mass Red Cross volunteer effort. From her comments, more sections were added to give a place for internships, rewards for volunteers (those who had volunteered for a substantial number of years), and FAQs about the Red Cross volunteer process. These pages were then created blank while content was to be generated from the various Red Cross chapters within central and western Massachusetts. Simultaneously an online volunteer form was created for each of the four chapters in order to retain their ability to have users sign up for volunteer opportunities through the new website. In order to fit the interface provided by Chapter Neighborhood, four different volunteer forms had to be created in order to allow for each of the different chapters to receive their own e-mail when a user wanted to volunteer at / for their chapter.

Due to various limitations of Chapter Neighborhood, the finished go-live version of volunteer was merely a shell of its in-progress version. Nearly all of the functionality was removed as well as many of the lists of services and FAQs. The troubles stemmed from the fact that Chapter Neighborhood does not support code that has conditionals, i.e. in this particular application they cannot have the same form e-mail four different people depending on which option the user had selected. While a work around would have been possible on the Red Cross' end by setting up one e-mail account that automatically forwarded the volunteer applications to the correct person. However, the maintenance of such a work around was deemed too haphazard as it would eventually have become a permanent solution. Therefore, the ability to volunteer online was completely removed as a function of the new website. While the loss of this function may come across as a failure of the website, overall the online volunteer traffic for the central and western chapters of the American Red Cross was never at a high enough volume to make the removal of online registration a large issue. The current implementation of the volunteer section

now holds only information on the various volunteer opportunities currently available. The other pages such as rewards for outstanding volunteers and the FAQ pages remain created, yet in a deactivated state so that if content is ever created, it can easily be popped back into existence.

5.4 Donations

As a donation and volunteer-based organization, the Red Cross is heavily dependent on the funds of those contributing to the cause. What is it that makes people want to donate? Interestingly enough, many psychologists agree that giving is a basic need in human beings. Giving is heavily driven by the need to find meaning or purpose in life. Ironically, a significant portion of giving and volunteering is based on “selfish desires,” but must simply be taken with a grain of salt as this is key for the operation of organizations such as the American Red Cross.

It turns out that part of human need is to give, to be a part of something that provides meaning. Some people claim it is for some greater purpose, but very few deny that it is something that must be satisfied. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (18), once a level of need is met, people will move to the next set to look for something to fulfill. The ‘pyramid’ starts its way up from breathing, food, water, and other basic physiological needs, through safety, belonging, esteem, and finally, self-actualization. It is indeed this last phase that inspires the individual to donate or volunteer. People in the self-actualizing phase are often described as optimistic, creative, spontaneous, and close to others, among other things. These qualities can also be used to describe philanthropists.

While self-actualization is often times one of the biggest motives for donations, there are others. One reason is for recognition. While donating to be recognized clearly appears self-centered, it is quite a reasonable motive in actuality. The desire to be known for your compassion is hardly a devious scheme.

Regardless of what personal reasons an individual might have for donating money or time to a legitimate cause, there is a minimal level of kindness or caring to do so. Willingly giving away time or money without expecting a solid return is evidence of at least a decent amount of moral credibility. Even skeptics would be silly to overly criticize one's motives, for charity is very important in today's society.

The donations section of the new website were a major cause of concern for the various business partners from the four different chapters of the central and western Red Cross chapters. Since the Red Cross is a non-profit organization they rely on donations almost exclusively for their income and there is a high volume of transactions daily for each of the Central and Western Mass chapters. When each of the chapters had their own website donations made on the chapter's website would go to each of the individual chapters. With the new website and consolidation of the four donation pages into one, each of the chapters were very concerned that their typical amount of donations would be lost in the unification due to the combined donations form.

The new website contains significantly more information than any of the previous chapter's donations sections. The major issue presented to the group with creating the new content is that each of the chapter's offers different services in terms of how they collect donations and what type of donations they take. While some of the larger chapters will accept clothing donations or even motor vehicles, the smaller chapters do not have the resources at hand in order to accommodate such gifts. In addition to the content present on the pages of the new website, even the form on which users place donations came under great scrutiny. Chapter presidents didn't like the idea of having a chapter selected by default. On the chapter's selection

portion of the form, they also criticized placing the chapters in an alphabetical order due to the likely hood that a user might simply choose the first option without reading the others.

Originally, none of the individual chapters had their own donations page; however there was a link to donations within their section that linked over to the main donations page for the entire website. After initial development and minimal testing, it was determined that each chapter should be given their own donations page in order to display chapter specific information, however the page content and number of pages should be as minimal as possible in order to keep users on the site's overall donations page. Less clicks or navigation by the user helped to avoid them becoming annoyed and therefore choosing not to donate whatsoever. In addition no users should be allowed to place donations online through a chapter specific donations page, and instead when they want to make a donation they are re-directed to the sites overall donations page. The changes add a few clicks to the users overall experience, however they helped to alleviate the concerns of the individual chapters that they would lose donations by forming one website together. In order to ensure the user is making an informed decision, the default chapter selection is left blank so that it must be filled in by the user. In addition to a link over to the main website for online donations, the chapter's individual donations page also contains the information needed if a user wishes to donate either by traditional mail or phone to the chapter. The page also contains chapter specific donation services such as whether or not they accept clothing donations or vehicle donations. The pages are dynamic in nature and services can be added in the future if a chapter adopts a new service after a few years of growth.

The donation form for the website was created by modeling the National Red Cross donations website. Their website was used as a template in order to keep uniformity for a user that might be browsing from the national website to the Central and Western Massachusetts

website. Also, the new website actually only uses one new donation link which is used for users who want to donate to any of the individual Central and Western Massachusetts chapters, while if the user wishes to donate to the National Red Cross or International relief fund they are automatically linked over to National site in order to make their donation.

The other critical sections of donations were special events being hosted by each of the chapters. Special events are essential to the donations coming into the Red Cross due to the fact that they are public events and raise public awareness of the Red Cross' cause. Many corporations also show up at events in order to place larger donations to the Red Cross. Due to their importance, a special section was later created under each chapter's individual donation page where they could both list upcoming special donations events as well as put a list of corporate sponsors. Corporate sponsorship awareness was deemed to be essential by the various Business Partners of the Red Cross working with the team on the website due to the sheer volume of donations made by various companies.

5.5 Merchant Banking

One of the most important parts of the new website was the ability to sign up for a class online. In order for this to be possible the customer needed to be able to pay for the class online at the time of sign up. In order for this to be possible several things need to happen. First, the customer enters their credit card information which is sent to the merchant in an encrypted form. The merchant then forwards the information to the payment gateway in another encrypted transmission. The payment gateway then forwards the information to the credit card processor selected by the merchant. The processor routes the information to the issuing bank used by the credit card company. The issuing bank determines if the transaction can be completed or not as well as the reason it cannot be completed if that is the case. This response is then sent back to

the processor who then forwards the information back to the payment gateway. Once a sufficient number of transactions have been approved, the merchant submits all of them at once in a batch to the bank used by the credit card company to be reimbursed. The approval process takes only a few seconds but it can take several days before the funds themselves are transferred.

In Appendix B, a table can be found which compares two competing merchant banks US Merchants and Paymentech. For the comparison, both merchant banks used the payment gateway Authorize.net. Originally the plan was to use Paymentech due to the fact that at the national level the Red Cross had already worked out a discounted rate. However, after further investigation by Tony, prompted by difficulties in dealing with Paymentech, it was discovered that US Merchants was in fact more cost effective even with the Paymentech discount. For a more comprehensive analysis view the table in Appendix B

5.6 News and Events

In order for people to be aware of the work of the Central and Western Massachusetts Red Cross chapters, the News and Events section was developed. Through the use of this section, each chapter is able to add their latest endeavors, such as functions, blood drives, fundraisers, etc. on to the website, thus allowing all visitors to the website to see their activity. The News and Events section has its own box on the homepage with the titles of the most recent news articles linked in it. Aside from this, each chapter has a link to their own specific news section under the drop down menus. Therefore, any visitor who wants to learn of an individual chapter will have easy access to do so.

The News and Events section includes local chapter news as well as national and international news. The News Box located underneath the homepage campaigns includes tabs for all three divisions of news. Local news is the first tab, followed by national, and then

international. Chapter Neighborhood provided the toolkit through which news articles can be posted, and categorized. Instead of posting articles through the chapter subsections within the toolkit, articles were posted through the “News and Press Room” link at the top of the toolkit home page. This link leads to a new webpage that lists all currently posted articles. All national and international articles are not manually posted but appear on the website through RSS feeds linked to the American Red Cross website and the International Red Cross websites, which update automatically.

Local news, however, requires manual posting, and also that the articles be linked to the individual chapters so that visitors can locate chapter specific news within their drop down menus. Each time an article is to be posted, it has to be subcategorized as to which chapter the article belongs to. Every article is also marked by date, author, title, as well as a brief summary. The content is placed in the content box, and all relevant links are posted underneath the content box. Once the article is finished it is automatically posted to the site, and will appear as a link on the homepage. This way all visitors to the site can see the most recent workings of the chapters immediately. Each article is also linked to its respective chapter, so old articles that no longer belong to the home page can still be found within their appropriate chapters, and so that each individual chapter can represent their own news regardless of others.

Some of the problems that arose while developing the News and Events section were the proper linking of all the articles to their appropriate chapters, and the appearance of each article on the website. At first, after an article was entered into the Chapter Neighborhood toolkit, a link for the article would appear on the home page, which would lead to a new page. This page would have the article posted however, despite subcategorizing each article to their appropriate chapters; this page would not show up under its chapter news. Also, some articles were found on

one “bucket” page, a place containing links to all local articles. At first however, this page could not be located within the toolkit, and as a result it was difficult to find where the articles could be located once they were no longer on the homepage. This problem was solved by posting each article, following the link to the article off of the homepage, and copying that URL into each chapter’s news section. In doing this, it was ensured that once an article was no longer on the homepage, it would still be found within its respective chapter’s news section.

The second problem with the news section was the appearance of the content. Some of the articles, once copied over on to the page, would have incorrect formatting, typesetting, and in some archaic browsers, extraneous HTML code. This problem was rectified by manually typing the articles into the toolkit when necessary, and by deleting the stray HTML from the source code within the toolkit. Most errors were fixed by manually retyping the information, and properly linking all pictures within the body of the article.

5.7 Home Page

Many of the chapter representatives at the Web Kickoff Meeting began by proposing ideas for the homepage. These ideas were mostly reasonable until the end of the meeting when a couple participating chapters started suggesting clearly biased additions. The troublesome ideas typically involved posting services or events unique to their chapter in place of other information. What started out as a concern for being properly represented as a regional location turned into a battle for ad space. This fight stemmed from each chapter trying to maintain its individuality, but the suggestions at the meeting were not very considerate to the other chapters.

It was eventually left to the main project group of WPI students to decide on some of these things due to being unbiased. Part of the agreement was to make sure each chapter had a visual that would link to their section. An existing function of the Chapter Neighborhood sites

was a set of cycling “campaign images.” These pictures appear at the top right of the homepage, and are usually used for providing general information, and occasionally something regarding any recent local or global disasters. By examining a number of other pages, this seemed like the best place to represent the four chapters since much of the information provided in those windows could be easily reached by a single click elsewhere on the page. The use of potential space for disaster info was not up for discussion, but since that would only be situational; the chapters agreed that in times of crisis, the scrolling images linking to their respective sections could be rightfully switched out for any more critical information or a call to action. This would be supplemented by the site ticker. The ticker appears near the top of the homepage, and can be set to display critical information in case of a disaster. By default the ticker is turned off, but can easily be switched on at a moment’s notice.

Another expectation of the homepage was reinforcement of the necessity to donate. This was a unanimous decision on the part of the students, and the Red Cross members. To supplement the large donation Call to Action button on the left margin of the page, the bottom right-hand image space is currently saved for a donation-related image. During the demo phase of the site, there was a “donation pig” as a placeholder. For lack of a better replacement, the website nearly went live with that image in place. This would not have been ideal, as it was brought to the students’ attention that a piggy bank may not convey the right message. On top of being less than professional looking, viewers may take a piggy bank as hoarding the money. The Red Cross is very generous with any incoming contributions, and won’t hesitate to send funds wherever necessary, so the bank was a poor selection. Fortunately, a more clearly Red Cross themed image was put in its place. Two red bandages in the shape of a cross seemed to fit the requirements for that space much better than the slightly confusing piggy bank donation image.

Initially, the bottom left image on the page was reserved for disaster situations, but due to the eventual agreement of switching out the scrolling campaigns for more pressing information and the emergency ticker, this would be redundant and had no alternative plan if there were no disasters to report on. The next consideration was to use a set of scrolling images for general information similar to the campaigns. This idea was discarded as it created far too much motion with a set of scrolling images nearly adjacent to it already. It sat as a placeholder until at one meeting someone expressed concern that people visiting the site may not be familiar with the chapter names, but more with the location or town of their local chapter. At this time, it was decided to go in that location would be an interactive map.

The design of the map called for use of Adobe Flash since the map had to have clickable regions representing the coverage of each chapter. This was drawn based on the Towns We Serve info from each chapter. The map displays each chapter title as their respective regions are rolled over with the cursor. The regions also physically ‘pop-up;’ this was done from a visual rhetoric standpoint to show the user where their mouse is. By providing the user with the idea that these pieces of the map are like buttons, they will be more likely to click them, taking them to the appropriate chapter page. Another requirement for the interactive map was that it contained a link to the national Red Cross website. The link to national was hidden at the time under a dropdown menu on the home page which was not optimal. To make the link more obvious and accessible, it was included at the bottom of the interactive map as its own attention-grabbing piece. When hovered over, instead of popping (since this was only text and a the official cross) the cross would beat like a heart and “Link to National” appeared to make sure it was clear where the next click would direct the user. Unlike the regional links, the national link opens in a new window to make sure the user is not taken away from the American Red Cross of

Central and Western Massachusetts page. This map also helped to fulfill the need to signify each individual chapter in the greater region. A visual representation of the regions helps to identify coverage areas for the viewer and served the purpose quite well.

The bottom center section on the homepage was the News and Events section. The original breakdown of this was simply two divisions—Regional and National. This was deemed unacceptable since international news was not represented, and was redesigned to have three tabs instead of two. These broke the news down into Local, National, and International. This was generally viewed to have better defined “regional” and would hopefully cause less confusion. The National and International sections conveniently update on their own using the national and international Red Cross news feeds.

Once again the issue of equal representation arose, but not for long as the staff maintaining the site agreed to do their best to post at least one article from each chapter under the Local news tab. Unfortunately, Chapter Neighborhood does not support a system that would allow the news articles to actually be grouped by chapter, so as a part of the naming convention for the articles would include the name of the chapter to avoid confusion.

Choosing the top banner for the website was relatively easy and was not met with much opposition. The temporary banner was a typical autumn New England scene on a lake within the state. All four chapters quickly agreed after Central Massachusetts was convinced that using Red Cross images in the title banner was beyond what was necessary given the inclusion of the logo. During the creation of the banner, attention was briefly brought to the extreme length of the regional title, “American Red Cross of Central and Western Massachusetts.”

On the middle left of the home page were the “Call to Action” buttons. These were significantly larger than any of the other nearby buttons due to their importance. This setup was

restricted to five buttons maximum, so they had to be chosen wisely. The original configuration consisted of How We Help, Take a Class, Be Prepared, Volunteer, and Donate. The three options Take a Class, Volunteer, and Donate were critical site functionality and were very necessary. Since this was part of the new functionality, it was agreed upon that these three would have to remain as Call to Action buttons. How We Help was a standard for most Red Cross website at that point, and described the general functions of the Red Cross and what they can do in a variety of disaster-related situations. Be Prepared was an informational section that provided resources for any kind of disaster one might encounter. Much of the advice on the site is the same as, or similar to, the National Red Cross information, but was decided to be posted for convenience.

During an eventual re-evaluation of the home page, it was brought to the attention of the group that Give Blood was not a large focal point of the home page. This was problematic, especially seeing as this was a local website (as opposed to National) and people would likely be visiting this site for information regarding blood donations. The new layout put Be Prepared in the top bar of buttons, and Give Blood in the more prominent location as a Call to Action button. With the prioritizing done, the home page was all set for launch.

Chapter 6: Website Results and Analysis

In order to modernize their current infrastructure, the team combined four of the Mass Red Cross websites into one new web site that contains more information and flexibility at reduced cost. Currently if one wish to sign up for a class with a Central or Western Red Cross chapter, he / she needs to either call or walk into a chapter office in order to sign up for the class. The new host for the website allows for online organization and categorization of the classes provided by the different chapters, as well as a means of online sign up through the new website. With these changes to their current system, the Red Cross expects to increase the amount of revenue generated by making the classes easier to sign up for, while at the same time decreasing overhead resulting in a large new profit for the Central and Western chapters of the Red Cross.

In order to carry the team from the start of the project to completion, the overall project was divided into three meta-steps. First, a plan of attack was devised for the vast amount of work that is needed in order to create a website. In order to make work easier, the website was divided into a series of large and small sections that was then be further divided among the group members of the project. By dividing up the information so many times the team created easier deadlines and sections to accomplish while never losing momentum on the overall project. The team planned out who was going to do what and set deadlines for all the various sections of the website. The second stage of the project was the initial drafting of all the sections. The second stage however did not start directly after the first stage. The two had a general blending of dates due to the fact that some sections were easier to start while others took many hours of meetings before a foothold could be accomplished. As the various sections were drafted, the team was in constant contact with various business partners of the Red Cross who showed interest in specific sections of the project or the overall net result. The final stage of the project was the final implementation with the merchant bank and the go-live of the new website. Along with that

there was also the data collection after the go-live date of website usage and optimization compared to the old business practices of the chapters before our project. Throughout all of the stages the team primarily worked with one man, Tony Pini, who served as the volunteer liaison to the American Red Cross and its inner works. While the students were the primary decision makers, Tony took care of decisions that require more authority than what the team has been granted within the Red Cross in order to achieve the website goals.

The website built for the Red Cross fixed all of these issues mainly by centralizing the bulk of the information that is present multiple times on the four different websites. It also allows the four separate chapters to pay for one merchant bank service instead of four which is how it is currently set up. Possibly the largest improvement to the current system is that the new website allowed for online signup of classes. Previously, if one wanted to take a class he / she needed to call or walk in, which over the course of hundreds of classes and students was an enormous amount of overhead. The new system is simpler and more flexible, and allows a student to sign up for a class with just a few clicks instead of a long phone call or face to face conversation. Lastly, the cost of hosting all the websites was diminished greatly by centralizing them on one host instead of four different hosts. Cutting costs greatly is incredibly important for the Red Cross because they are a non-profit organization, and rely mainly on donations in order to fund the bulk of their endeavors. The new website helped to spread the good deeds of the Red Cross further through the local communities of Central and Western Massachusetts.

6.1 Go-Live

While originally thought to be one of the easiest sections of the overall website development, going live turned out to be one of the most problematic portions of the entire project. To originally prepare for the go-live of the website all of the sections were sent to their

corresponding business partners for final approval before putting them onto the new website. While this had been done beforehand, it took going-live to force business partners into explaining what they felt was wrong with the various pages. This delayed response caused the project group to think that all of their sections were done since there had been no feedback in weeks, to realizing that many changes were needed. The number of changes was large enough that the go-live had to be pushed back a month in order to accommodate the necessary modifications. Additional content was also needed for various sections of the site, there were also a host of delays involved with chapter neighborhood and the merchant bank.

When the merchant bank and Chapter Neighborhood were first contacted, a detailed plan of what services were expected and functionality was needed for the continued success of the website. Nearly all of the services required were “available” until the time of the go-live, when suddenly both Chapter Neighborhood and the merchant bank informed the Red Cross that the functionality desired was not directly available and a workaround would have to be implemented in order to have something relatively near the functionality desired. This worked in some cases such as the donation section where instead of four individual bank accounts there was actually one and at the end of every day the funds were divided. However volunteer had to go-live without the ability of online sign ups due to the fact that e-mails could not be sent to different people. All of these setbacks could have been easily averted with better communication between the Red Cross and both the Merchant bank and Chapter Neighborhood. Workarounds also had to be created for some of the various other sections of the website due to the Haiti crisis.

The earthquake in Haiti happened right before the original go-live date, which diverted a huge number of resources (mostly in the form of man hours from the Red Cross) away from the website creation and diverted it to the Haiti relief. The sections of volunteer and donate were left

to be completed later in the project, closer to the go live date. After the Haiti tragedy, it was very difficult to get answers and section information from both the volunteer and donations business partners due to the devotion to helping the Haiti relief. Overall, the web-site go live had to be pushed back approximately one and a half months due to miss-communication between the various parts, as well as the other unforeseen setbacks such as the Haiti disaster.

The physical go-live itself however was painless once all of the above mentioned problems were dealt with. It took around 3 days for the new website to completely take over, and currently three of the four central and western Massachusetts chapters have been re-directed to the new website. Only Pioneer Valley remains on their original host due to an event happening in the middle of the month of March which they are afraid transferring to the new website will interfere with. Once the event is completed they too will be re-directed over to the new website. There were also no troubles in the actual go-live process on Chapter Neighborhood's end. Ultimately it was akin to Chapter Neighborhood flipping a switch and the website moving from a temporary URL to the new, permanent one, www.redcrosscwm.org

6.2 Effects of the New Website on Massachusetts Red Cross Chapters

The new website for the American Red Cross of Central and Western Massachusetts has only been live for just over two weeks now. To estimate the effects would be very difficult, so much of the expected changes were compared to the similarly structured website of the Massachusetts Bay chapter. The Mass Bay chapter has gathered enough results to help predict the long term outcome of the Central and Western Mass site.

Currently, the four chapters involved with the Central and Western Massachusetts redesign are undergoing process changes to adapt the call centers and train employees. Call center representatives are learning the ins and outs of Chapter Neighborhood's registration

processes. This training is designed to effectively teach the employees what to do to sign up phone-ins, as well as walk-ins for any available Red Cross classes. Seasoned employees already know how to register any patrons into the Learning Management System (LMS, their database system), the national standard for class sign-ups.

One of the major changes to the system is consolidating the call center to the location in Worcester. After a quick debate during the last conference call in January with project members and Red Cross employees, it was decided that the most effective way to handle sign-ups over the phone was to use a single call center and a toll free 800 number. Since the Central Mass chapter already had a disproportionately large number of sign-ups compared to other chapters, it was chosen as the main location for phone-ins. None of the other chapters were planning on laying off their current call center reps, and each location needs at least one person to handle walk-ins regardless of the new setup. It was agreed that if the workload in the Central Mass call center was piling up, some of the registrations could be forwarded to the other three locations if need be. None of the chapters were willing to lay off employees when the site went live, but admitted it may be necessary to at least cut back hours if there is no work to be done in their position due to the process changes.

Once the process changes have been completed, the workload on Pioneer Valley, Greater Westfield, and Berkshire County should be lighter due to the centralized call center. However, this will not be the most efficient, or “lean” if that is the only thing changing. Unfortunately the three chapters with the lessened workload may have to cut some staff back to part time to make the changeover cost-effective. On the other hand, if the volume of course registrations increases, the number of cutbacks can be reduced to lessen the blow on the Red Cross staff.

After talking with Tony, it was determined that the four websites for the individual chapters for the four websites being unified was approximately \$10,000 each for a total cost of \$40,000. The new website costs approximately \$3,000 for all four the regions websites to be hosted on it. Overall that was an estimated savings around \$37,000 on just the hosting portion of the project. Additionally once more of the Red Cross' overall class signup procedures are transferred to online signup vs. traditional phone signup the hours of a few of the works might be able to be cut, further saving money. The ease of the online signup should also stimulate fuller classes bringing in increased revenue through the new system.

Since online course registration has been disabled due to the ongoing process changes, the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay will serve as an example. Using the same provider, and very similar online registration tools, Mass Bay has seen a tremendous change in the way people sign up for classes and donate. Red Cross employees working at the Mass Bay headquarters in Cambridge reported that over 50% of their course registration was done online from home after only 6 months since their site launched. Not only did over half of the class sign-ups occur online, but the overall number of people registering for classes increased by 10%.

This level of success is not guaranteed for Central and Western Massachusetts, but something reasonably close can be expected. The Mass Bay chapter has ten locations on the east side of the state fairly evenly spread. If that region had an increase of 10% in overall course sign-ups, a region with only five locations much more sparsely located can expect an even larger increase if the website receives enough publicity. The reason is due to the fact that before with walk-ins only it was very difficult to find out when classes were or sign up for them, with the new online system it is not very easy to determine when and where classes are, which should

mean a larger class turnout. A large portion of the traffic should be directed to the website as well due to the sparse locations as well, which will attest to the usefulness of this new website.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1: Conclusions

The Website Redesign project for the Central and Western Massachusetts chapters of the American Red Cross can be deemed a success. The new website has gone live as of March 1, 2010 with all major operations except for online registration, which will take effect within the following weeks. All former websites for the different chapters have also been redirected to the new website besides Pioneer Valley, which is waiting for their annual Hero's breakfast to be finished before switching over in order to avoid confusion. The chapters of Central and Western Massachusetts all intend to keep the new website and all embrace the unified and clean style the website presents. Currently, there are no foreseeable changes that will be made to the website in the form of content; however, this is always subject to change regarding the desires and decisions of the region as a website is a highly dynamic object.

The new website not only presents a unified approach for all regional chapters, but also displays the individual characteristics of each chapter. Every chapter has its own menu and is allowed to display any unique work it does. Following through with the idea of individuality, each chapter is allowed to post their own news and events so as to keep the general public informed of their affairs. All visitors to the website are allowed to choose to whom their donations will be given to—a local chapter of their choice, the American Red Cross, or the International Red Cross. This enables each visitor, and each donor to influence the works of the Red Cross as a whole. Visitors to the website are also able to find information on volunteering, and as such, can choose where they would like to volunteer.

Aside from maintaining chapter individuality, a unified presentation, and visitor influence, the new website also allows for online course registration, including online monetary

transactions. Though this option has not taken effect yet, all the necessary skeletal work has already been done, and the option awaits activation. Once in effect, people will be able to view the entire regional course catalog, decide which classes to enroll in, and where to take the class. Subsequently, they will be able to pay for classes online through a secure merchant banking system thus making the process of cataloging every individual who registers for a class, and all payments related to it, much simpler.

Overall there weren't many issues faced in the creation of the website. However, there were some problematic portions of the overall methodology and plan. For one, some sections took substantially more work than originally thought, making it extremely difficult to stick to deadlines. In addition to the content needed to be created by the project team another issue involved dealing with Chapter Neighborhood and the merchant bank. Clearer communication on both halves could have resolved many of the issues. Better research could have been performed regarding back end logistics of Chapter Neighborhood in order to avoid some of the workaround solutions that were created in the final weeks of the project. Communication between the Red Cross Business partners and the group could have also been better in regards to the Business Partners, as it was often weeks in between a group member sending an e-mail and receiving one back. Otherwise, most aspects of the website creation as well as the project as a whole went to plan.

The Red Cross Website Redesign Project has proven to be a significant improvement over the previous websites in not only cost, but in functionality, look and feel, and professionalism. The website was able to unify the layout and appearance while still maintaining each chapter's individuality as well as their influence over their own community. Using the

Massachusetts Bay chapter as a gauge, the future is hopeful for the Central and Western Massachusetts website.

7.2: Recommendations

There are a few aspects of the website where the framework was laid, however the sections remain unpopulated. The project group would recommend that these sections be turned on at a later date if content for them can be generated. There are also a few features that add additional functionality that were left unavailable due to various constraints, but could also be activated on a later date.

The largest piece of the new website that the project group would highly recommend turning on is the ability to sign up for classes online. This will definitely happen in the future once the chapter staff are trained on the new process for class registration. However this training process is currently in the works between the four different chapters and therefore the ability to sign up online should be available in a matter of weeks after the completion of the project.

The second aspect of the new site which should be turned on at a later date is the ability for volunteers to sign up online. Currently it is unknown whether or not this section will be turned on due to the fact that the volunteer volume for all four of the chapters is small enough that moving all the volunteer signups to be via phone instead of internet should not cause a problem for the people in charge of taking the calls. If the number of people calling in to volunteer increases; the ability to sign up online will become available. In order to have the online signup for volunteers, Chapter Neighborhood would need to change their built in system for tracking volunteers to be more customizable. Particularly, the forms that a potential volunteer would need to fill out currently ask for far more information than what is desired by the local Red Cross chapters and would need to be greatly simplified before being implemented.

Due to the Haiti crisis, there are a variety of sections that were also left turned off in the current implementation of the website. For one, there was originally going to be a FAQ for

volunteers however content was never created for it. Originally a section was also planned to display outstanding volunteers for the four Central and Western Massachusetts chapters however content was also never created for it due the crisis in Haiti. At a later date once the crisis has become manageable it would be highly recommended that at least the Volunteer FAQ section is created in order to limit the number of calls generated by lack of information. Another section that needs additional content is the “Right Class for You” section that details which class one should take to obtain the desired certification or skill set. Additional sections which were not activated at the go live date were Local Services and Business Partners of each chapter. These sections will describe which services are offered by a specific chapter, but are not universally offered by the other chapters.

Most of the other sections originally planned were created and are present on the new website. However, it is without doubt that more sections will eventually be added as new services, events, and content is created by the Red Cross of Central and Western Mass.

Appendix A

AED- Automatic External Defibrillator

ARC- American Red Cross

CPR- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

ICRC- International Committee of the Red Cross

IFRC- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

LMS- Learning Management System

Appendix B

Merchant Banking Tables

MERCHANT BANKING SAVINGS SUMMARY	
Today's Cost	\$7,003
U.S. Merchants	\$5,569
Annual Savings	\$1,435

Merchant Bank Comparison Costs and Savings													
	Merchant Bank Fees Monthly							Authorize Fees					Total Cost
	Avg \$\$	Avg # items	Fee %	Fee Cost	Per Item Cost	Item Cost	Total Bank Costs	Setup	Monthly	Per Item	Total Per Item Fee	Total Gateway	
Today's Cost	\$23,821	155	2.45%	\$584	\$0.00	0	\$584	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$584
Paymentech	\$23,821	155	1.99%	\$474	\$0.00	0	\$474	\$792	\$160	\$0.10	\$15.50	\$176	\$650
U.S. Merchants	\$23,821	155	1.41%	\$336	\$0.26	\$88.17	\$424	\$480	\$40	\$0.05	\$0.00	\$40	\$464

Note 1: Assumes 75% VISA and 25% MC

Current Transaction Volumes and Costs															
	Visa & MC					AMEX					Total				
	\$\$	# items	Avg item \$	Fees	Avg fee %	\$\$	# items	Avg item \$	Fees	Avg fee %	\$\$	# items	Avg item \$	Fees	Avg fee %
July	17,621	152	116	458	2.60%	5,855	14	418	132	2.25%	24,202	166	146	590	2.44%
August	18,103	135	134	470	2.60%	1,433	8	179	10	0.70%	20,275	143	142	480	2.37%
Sept	27,320	159	172	686	2.51%	5,930	9	659	133	2.24%	34,267	168	204	819	2.39%
Oct	14,089	132	107	400	2.84%	1,809	11	164	42	2.32%	16,537	143	116	442	2.67%
Total	77,133	578	133	2014	2.61%	15,027	42	358	317	2.11%	94,885	620	153	2,331	2.46%
Average	19,283	145	133	504	2.61%	3,757	11	358	79	2.11%	23,821	155	154	583	2.45%

Merchant Bank/Gateway Comparison								
Paymentech vs. U.S. Merchants								
Both with Authorize.net								
Vendor	Percent of each Transaction	Charge per Item	Authorize.net		Note 3		Batch fee	Number of accounts required
			Setup fee	Monthly fee	Per transaction fee	Batch fee		
			Note 5		Note 2			Note 4
Paymentech	Note 1	Note 1	\$792	\$160	\$0.10	0.25		8
U.S. Merchants	Note 6	Note 6	\$0	\$40	\$0.05	?		4
Note 1	Per Steve Casey memo weighted average cost is 1.99% for all charges. Actual charges are per pricing schedule, way too complex to confirm/summarize							
Note 2	For U.S. Merchants, there is no Per Transaction Fee for the first 250 transactions each month							
Note 3	Once we go live we principally deal with Authorize.net and not the merchant bank							
Note 4	Further investigation required, may be able to reduce Paymentech to 4 accounts. Not material to analysis, as transaction cost is key.							
Note 5	US Merchants proposed to absorb setup fees							
Note 6	Per U.S. Merchants; most common rate is VISA 1.36% plus .30 and MC 1.46% plus .15							

Appendix C

Website URL: www.redcrosscwm.org

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Please Donate to the Haiti Relief Fund





NEWS AND EVENTS

- ▶ [Central MA 20th Annual Golf Fundraiser](#)
- ▶ [Central MA 8th Community Heroes Breakfast](#)
- ▶ [Westfield State College Theatre Group Performance To Benefit The American Red Cross, Greater Westfield Chapter](#)
- ▶ [Greater Westfield 18th Annual Testimonial/Auction](#)

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Berkshire County

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About The Chapter

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It is hard to believe that a year has gone by since I became Chairman for the Berkshire County Chapter of the American Red Cross. By far, this year has been one of the most rewarding experiences for me. It makes me so proud to say that I am actively involved with the Red Cross. The dedication of all our volunteers along with that of the staff are the ones who have brought us to the level of being the best chapter in Western Massachusetts or should I say the best in the state. Under the leadership of Kathleen Phillips, our executive director, our staff and all of the volunteers continue to pride our chapter in being the best because of their care, warmth, devotion, and positive attitude towards mankind. As we close the door on another year and open another, we plan on looking at our strategic plan and continue to establish community partnerships with government, businesses, non-profit organizations and initiatives that will be considered are:

- Inspire a new generation of volunteers and supporters to enrich our traditional base of support (We currently have 716 chapter volunteers that make all of our services possible)

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

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Aquatics



Babysitter's Training



CPR/AED/First Aid



Disaster Training



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Workplace Training

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Home > Berkshire County > Annual Report

Annual Report

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See the documents below for the Annual Reports of Berkshire County.

Related Documents

Berkshire Annual Reports

- Berkshire Annual Report 2009
- Berkshire Annual Report 2007

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 - Contact Information
 - Annual Report**
 - Location and Directions
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Mr.

Name *

First

Last

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City

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Country

Phone

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Disaster Services and Emergency Services

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The core of the American Red Cross Disaster Services is to assist individuals and families affected by disaster in resuming their normal daily activities independently. Such disasters include fires, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and other situations that cause human suffering or create needs that those affected cannot alleviate without assistance.

When one of these disasters threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, health and mental health services to address basic human needs. If needed, the Red Cross provides the means to pay for needed items such as groceries, new clothing, temporary housing, emergency home repairs, transportation, essential household items, medicines, and occupational tools. The Red Cross also helps those in need of long-term recovery assistance when all other resources are unavailable or inadequate.

The American Red Cross works together with government, business, religious, and community organizations to ensure a coordinated and efficient response to any disaster that strikes. With our community partners, we help the public to anticipate, prevent, survive, and recover from all types of disaster.

Through our Emergency Services Canteen, Red Cross volunteers feed disaster victims and emergency workers, handle inquiries from concerned family members outside the disaster area, and help those affected by disaster to access other available resources.



For more information visit [How We Help](#)





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How Your Donation Helps:

The American Red Cross is not a government agency and depends on the generosity of the American people in order to provide vital programs and services.


Everyday your donation makes a difference by providing shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to those in need. Your donation of undesignated dollars to the American Red Cross of Central and Western Massachusetts will help us make a difference in the level of service we are able to provide to the community.

Your Donation Makes a Difference and Stays Within Your Community!
(Unless you choose to designate otherwise.)

Gifts in Memory or Honor of Someone Special:



When you donate you can choose to have someone be notified that your gift has been made in Honor or Memory of a loved one. Giving a gift in Honor or Memory of someone is a wonderful way to carry on their legacy.

Click below to Donate Online (Easiest and Most Efficient):



[Donate now to your local community.](#)

These donations will stay within your community and directly help the area. Your local Red Cross Chapter is committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of the people in your area, be it in disaster preparedness, disaster relief, first aid and CPR

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General FAQ's

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Who is the founder of the Red Cross?

Who founded the American Red Cross?

Is the American Red Cross part of the U.S. government?

How does the American Red Cross support the U.S. Armed Forces?

What are the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement?

Why are symbols other than a red cross used by other National Societies within the Movement?

What is the worst disaster the Red Cross has ever dealt with?

Why won't the Red Cross accept small, individual donations or collections of items such as clothing, food or cleaning supplies-doesn't every little bit help?

What can I do to help?

What are the requirements to volunteer?

Where can I give blood?

Can I get a disease if I give/receive blood?



How can the Red Cross help me?

ANSWERS: RED CROSS GENERAL INFORMATION

Who is the founder of the Red Cross?

The Red Cross idea was born in 1859. Henry Dunant, a young Swiss, witnessed a bloody battle in Solferino, Italy, between the armies of imperial Austria and the Franco-Sardinian Alliance. Some 40,000 men lay dead or dying on the battlefield and the wounded were lacking medical attention. Dunant organized local people to bind the soldiers' wounds and feed and comfort them. On his return, he called for the creation of national relief societies to assist those wounded in war, and pointed the way to the future Geneva Conventions.

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To find the most convenient blood donation facility, to schedule an appointment to donate blood, to find local blood drives or for more information about the blood donation process please:


call **1-800-GIVE-LIFE** or visit www.RedCrossBlood.org

A Simple Process

Donating blood takes a little more than an hour and includes registration, a brief medical history, and having your pulse, temperature, blood pressure, and hemoglobin checked. The actual donation only takes about 10minutes and is relatively painless.

Where to Give Blood Locally:



<p>Worcester Donor Center Five Biotech 381 Plantation Street Worcester, MA 01609 508-791-7444 1-800-462-4101</p>	<p>Springfield Donor Center 3500 Main St. Springfield, MA 01107 413-785-0901 1-800-462-2229</p>	<p>Berkshire Chapter House 480 West Street Pittsfield, MA 01201 MONDAYS ONLY 413-442-1506</p>
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How to Prepare


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From the flu virus to natural disasters, life is full of the unexpected. But one thing is certain. Being prepared makes life's challenges easier to handle. A little planning can help your family be ready for whatever comes along.

Your family is prepared for the little everyday emergencies, but would you be ready if a disaster struck close to home? One easy way to plan for the unexpected is to get your family Red Cross Ready for emergencies.

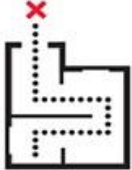
You can be Red Cross Ready in three simple steps:

Get a kit




1. Get a kit — Put together an emergency preparedness kit that includes food; water (at least 1 gallon per person, per day); extra cash; a first aid kit; a flashlight; a radio; a multipurpose tool; medications and medical items; copies of personal documents; a cell phone with chargers; a map of the area; an emergency blanket; emergency numbers; sanitation supplies such as disinfecting bleach; and other essential items.

Make a plan



2. Make a plan — Develop a plan for family communication in the event of an emergency. Agree on evacuation routes so everyone knows what to do and where to go.


Be informed



3. Be informed — Learn which disasters may naturally occur in your area and what actions to take to protect yourself. Make sure that at least one member of your household is trained in first aid and CPR and knows how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED).

Because it's easier to meet life's challenges when your family is prepared.

For more information, refer to the [Be Red Cross Ready Worksheet \[PDF\]](#)



CHAPTER NEIGHBORHOOD™

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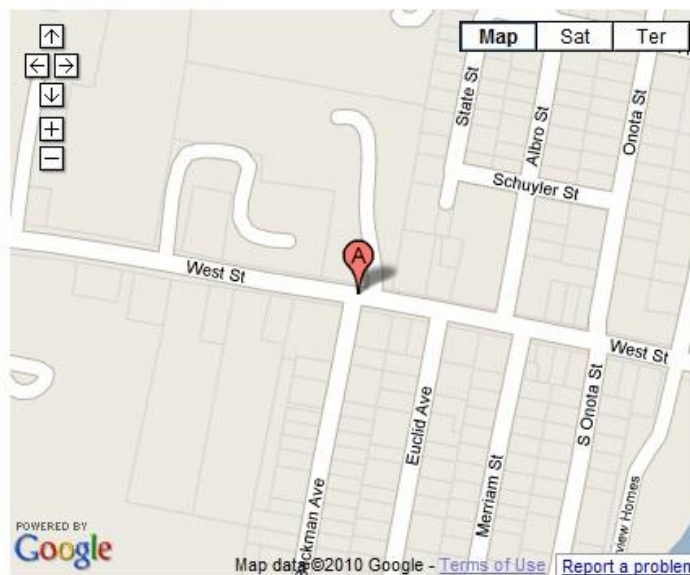


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Location and Directions



American Red Cross
Berkshire County Chapter
 480 West Street
 Pittsfield, MA 01201
 Phone: 413-442-1506



[View Larger Map](#)

From the north:

Follow Rte. 7 to Park Square in downtown Pittsfield. At the traffic light, go downhill on West Street, pass the Big Y Supermarket on the right, and turn left at the stop sign. Continue on West Street for 3/4 miles. The main entrance is on the right at the top of the hill just past Saint Mark's Church. The driveway and our sign sneak up on you so look for the yellow School sign on West Street which sits just past our driveway. Follow the driveway all the way to the parking area and main entrance.

From the east:

Follow Rte. 9 through Dalton and Pittsfield to the intersection with Rte. 7. Turn left at the traffic



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How We Help

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How We Help

- PRINT
- TELL A FRIEND
- SHARE

The Red Cross provides response services to people in Central and Western Massachusetts 7 days a week, 24 hours a day through our local chapter Community Offices. Click on the category that applies:

- I need **Immediate Medical Help** **Please Call 9-1-1**
- I have been [Affected by a Disaster](#)
- I have been [Separated from Family by a Local Disaster or by War or an International Disaster](#)
- I am seeking [Help for Military Personnel, Families or Veterans](#)
- I have been [separated from a U.S. citizen traveling or residing abroad](#), please contact the Emergency Services unit of the U.S. Department of State at 1-888-407-4747 for immediate assistance.

If you have **needs not addressed above**, dial **2-1-1**, or visit [Massachusetts 2-1-1](#). Sponsored by local United Way Agencies, 211 is a special three-digit phone number connecting those in need in our communities with those agencies and organizations that can assist them. It is not for life-threatening emergencies, it is a service providing information and referral to local services.

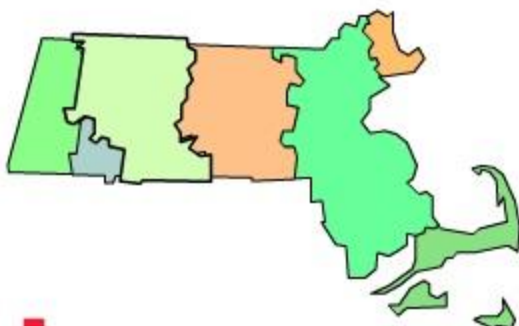
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Pioneer Valley





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username

password

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Volunteer Opportunities

PRINT
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As a volunteer-led organization, the American Red Cross always has many opportunities for everyday heroes to make a difference in our community.

Currently, our greatest need for volunteers is:

Administrative Support: Volunteer to help with Administrative support within the Red Cross. Volunteers are needed for test proctoring and other jobs necessary to support administrative services.

Disaster Response: Red Cross volunteers are **the first to the scene of a disaster and provide immediate relief assistance, such as shelter, food, and clothing**, to people displaced as a result of a disaster. You'll also have the opportunity for disaster assistance training. These classes include training in sheltering, mass care and feeding, logistics, and casework.

Health and Safety: Volunteer to enrich and protect your community by becoming a CPR, Babysitting, Lifeguard, Lay Responder and Professional Rescuer CPR AED and First Aid or Pet First Aid Red Cross Certified Instructor.

Support Military Families: Support our men and women serving in the military, as well as their families, through emergency communication and financial services.

Youth Volunteers: Today the involvement of youth in the mission of the Red Cross is more important than ever!

Voluntarios bilingues:
Hoy mas que nunca, hacen falta voluntarios bilingues para trabajar con la comunidad hispana. Especificamente, se necesita voluntarios para:

Ayudar en la oficina y interpretar para quienes no hablan ingles.

- Responder a desastres.
- Dar clases de salud y seguridad (RCP, Primeros Auxilios), trasladar materiales y asistir con preparacion comunitario.
- Comunicar con los medios de comunicacion hispanohablante.

For more information or to volunteer contact your local chapter:

Berkshire County: **Millie Blum** Blummi@usa.redcross.org

Central Massachusetts: **Ruth Bull** Bullr@usa.redcross.org

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