

## Red Cross Offers Help and Comfort Following Landslide

A rain-soaked hillside collapsed suddenly on March 22, 2014, engulfing a rural neighborhood four miles east of Oso, Wash., in a tidal wave of mud and debris. The landslide destroyed 49 homes, leaving survivors in this tight-knit community facing tragic losses and an uncertain future.

Tim Ward, an Oso fire commissioner and a former U.S. Army helicopter pilot, was with his wife Brandy in their home the morning the hillside gave way. About to take a shower when he saw the lights flicker, Tim went into the hallway to investigate. That's when he heard his wife calling his name as the walls around him disintegrated. Dragged nearly a quarter of a mile by the landslide, Tim ended up in a neighbor's yard at the bottom of wood pile. Tim survived his severe injuries, but Brandy lost her life.

Tim's heartbreaking story reflects the experiences of many families in this close community, who were left to pick up the pieces of their lives after the sudden terror and devastation caused by the landslide. American Red Cross volunteers quickly arrived to help, offering warm meals, shelter and—just as importantly—emotional counseling and words of comfort for those affected, as well as for their families and first responders.

As survivors struggled to come to grips with their losses in the days following the mudslide, more than 500 Red Cross workers and volunteers—half from Washington State—were by their side, providing comfort and relief items, as well as over 8,500 health and mental health contacts for those affected. And as residents move on from the immediate aftermath, Red Cross caseworkers are coordinating with local officials and the affected individuals and families to determine how to best meet the short and longer-term needs of those who lost so much.

## Red Cross Supports Affected Families, Communities as They Recover

Thanks to our compassionate donors, the American Red Cross has raised \$4.2 million to assist landslide survivors and affected communities as of June 26. The Red Cross already has spent or made commitments to spend \$1.9 million on emergency relief and initial recovery support—and recovery plans have been developed for much of the remaining funding, including support for outreach efforts by our non-profit community partners.

We know that it will take time for people in these communities to recover, and the Red Cross will be with them. Trained Red Cross workers continue meeting with residents to learn about unmet needs, create personal recovery plans and help them locate available assistance. The Red Cross is providing direct financial support to people who need extra aid, including help with funeral expenses, travel and housing expenses for out-of-town relatives and mental health counseling. We are also supporting residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the landslide with resources to help replace furniture and pay for security deposits, rent and utilities.



A Red Cross emergency response vehicle delivers food and water to searchers and emergency workers at the scene of the mudslide near Oso, Washington.

Our supporters help make this vital Red Cross assistance possible for landslide survivors—including Tim Ward. After an extended stay at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, Tim spent time recovering at a rehabilitation facility. Red Cross financial assistance helped offset his insurance co-pays and deductibles. We have also paid for a special bed to be delivered to his daughter’s home, along with other medical equipment that he needed after leaving the rehabilitation facility. In addition, the Red Cross helped cover travel expenses for relatives from around the U.S. when they flew in for Brandy’s memorial service, which took place on the three-month anniversary of the landslide.

The Red Cross will use remaining funds to assist with the long-term recovery of survivors in Oso and other

communities in Snohomish County. We are working with local partners to identify areas of need, which include additional financial support for affected residents moving into new housing situations, grants for continuing mental health and counseling services, ongoing disaster case management, and resiliency and preparedness projects in affected areas, including Oso, Arlington and Darrington.

The Red Cross works to spend donated funds quickly, but also wisely and carefully. We are committed to honoring donor intent—donations designated for the Washington landslide will be applied only to our response and recovery work on this disaster.



Jordan Scott/American Red Cross

Jennifer Ramieh speaks with Disaster Spiritual Care volunteer Tim Serban about the ongoing efforts to provide emotional support to family members as they are allowed to visit the disaster scene.

### Washington Landslide Relief and Recovery

#### Expenses and Commitments

As of June 26, 2014, the Red Cross has spent or made commitments to spend \$1.9 million on initial emergency response and recovery efforts in Washington, including:



**\$542,000** on emergency food, shelter and relief items



**\$534,000** on immediate physical and mental health services



**\$706,000** on individual recovery planning and assistance



**\$98,000** on disaster preparedness and community rebuilding

## Thank You

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of nearly 70,000 disasters per year—including single-family or apartment home fires, severe weather, floods and wildfires. Those in need turn to the Red Cross in their darkest hours because they know they can depend on us right after the disaster and through their recovery. Your donation helps us fulfill this promise. We are grateful for your trust.