



Published March 27th, 2024

Red Cross honored for local work

By Sora O'Doherty

In recognition of American Red Cross month, the Orinda City Council honored the group with a proclamation acknowledging their work in Contra Costa County. The proclamation was accepted by Ted Leong, who highlighted the many important projects that are ongoing in the County. Leong shared some statistics about what the Red Cross has accomplished in the County in the past year.

"With the help of over a thousand volunteers throughout the county, we have assisted or responded to 115 disasters, installed 583 free smoke alarms in homes making 205 homes safer, trained 577 individuals and families about fire prevention, (and) trained 617 youth through the Pillow Case and Prepare with Pedro projects," Leong explained. In addition, the Red Cross hosted 538 blood drives and collected almost 17,000 units of life-saving blood from county residents.

Leong went on, "We trained 6,522 residents in first Aid, CPR and AED [Automated External Defibrillator], and we helped 756 military members and their families receive support and services." The Red Cross could not have done all of this and more, he said, without the partnership they have with individuals, businesses, and government agencies, including the city of Orinda, which he thanked for its continued support. He ended his remarks by saying, "I hope you are also proud of the fact that the American Red Cross is a good steward of public funds, where 90 cents of every dollar that we receive is spent on support and services to fulfill our mission."

The Pillowcase Project is a preparedness education program for grades 3-5 that teaches students about personal and family preparedness and safety skills, local hazards, and basic coping skills. Prepare with Pedro is a 30- to 45-minute preparedness education program for grades K-2 that teaches students how to be prepared and take action for either home fires or a local hazard and complements the Pillowcase Project. Speaking on behalf of the city, Mayor Darlene Gee thanked Leong, saying, "It's a pleasure to have you with us here tonight, and I think in today's world where we receive so much bad news and so many sad and negative things, you are a wonderful reminder tonight of how many people contribute so many good things to our community." She included in her thanks the many volunteers of the American Red Cross.

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