

Historical Overview of the Heartland Chapter

Two very caring, yet very different individuals are responsible for creating the Red Cross organization—a Swiss businessman and philanthropist named Henri Dunant, and a compassionate American woman named Clara Barton. Although separated by continents and years, both tirelessly and undauntedly sought a means to alleviate the suffering of the sick and wounded during times of war.

Henri Dunant

The concept of comprehensive humanitarian service on an international scale was largely the result of the vision and perseverance of **Henri Dunant**, a young Swiss businessman. While traveling through northern Italy in 1859, Dunant happened upon the scene of one of history's most savage battles-- the Battle of Solferino. Appalled by the neglect of almost 40,000 wounded and dying soldiers, Dunant recruited volunteers from nearby towns to attend to their suffering. These horrors were so haunting and unforgettable that Dunant vividly recounted them in his book, *A Memory of Solferino*, which helped give credence to his idea that there should be a neutral organization devoted to the care of the sick and wounded of armies at war.

Eventually, his untiring efforts met with favorable response. A preliminary conference in 1863 was followed in 1864 by a convention in Geneva for final consideration and a decision on Dunant's proposals. From this conference evolved the Geneva Conventions. Sixteen governments sent delegates to the conference and 11 signed the treaty; however, it was not until 1882 --for reasons of "avoiding foreign entanglement"-- that the United States became an active participant in the international agreement. The fledgling organization chose as its symbol **a red cross on a field of white**—the Swiss flag in reverse.

Clara Barton

While the Red Cross was in its formative stages in Europe, the United States was being ravaged by Civil War. The forerunner of Red Cross efforts in this country was under the aegis of the United States Sanitary Commission and the individual efforts of **Clara Barton**.



On the battlefields and in military hospitals, Miss Barton cared for both Union and Confederate soldiers. Because of her vigorous personality, she was able to inspire others to join her. She was one of the most celebrated and ubiquitous of the independent Civil War relief workers.

After the war, Miss Barton traveled to Europe, where she learned of the Red Cross and took part in relief efforts during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. As a result of those experiences, and after a thorough study of Dunant's writings, Miss Barton returned to the states, determined to organize a Red Cross Society in this country.

In 1881, with a group of friends, she formed the American Association of the Red Cross. At the same time, she continued her efforts among government leaders to install the United States officially into the world organization.

The following year, President Chester A. Arthur signed, and the Senate ratified, the Geneva Conventions, a treaty giving official recognition to the Red Cross and pledging nations to humanitarian treatment of the sick and wounded in battle.

The Red Cross flag was flown officially for the first time in this country in 1881, when Clara Barton was appealing for funds to aid victims of forest fires in Michigan's "Thumb" area. Faced with \$2 million of devastation, Clara Barton herself directed the building of shelters and the distribution of food and clothing for the Michigan fire victims. The work of the American Red Cross centered largely on disaster relief for the first 20 year of its existence, and the American Society introduced the idea of disaster relief to national Red Cross societies in many other countries.

In the Spanish-American War of 1889, the 76-year old Miss Barton was in Cuba providing nursing care, medical supplies, food, etc., for civilians and military forces. This was the organization's first war service.

The idea of an organized program of voluntary relief for disaster victims was the unique contribution of Clara Barton to the Red Cross movement worldwide. Probably her most endearing characteristic was her lack of interest in reforming anything or anyone. She did not launch crusades to end wars, fires, etc., but simply met emergencies as they arose. She wanted to give temporary help to people who were victims of abnormal misfortunes.

Clara Barton retired in 1904. Her successor was Mabel T. Boardman, who brought a new and much needed dimension to Red Cross. Like Clara, Mabel was a great leader; however, her particular talents were in organization and administration, areas in which her predecessor had little taste or talent.

American National Red Cross Chartered

Re-incorporated as the American National Red Cross in 1893, the organization was given charters by Congress in 1900 and 1905. The second charter, which is still in force today, provides for close working relations between the Federal government and the American Red Cross. **It should be remembered that the Red Cross is not a government agency and does not receive any Congressionally-appropriated funds.**

Legal Status

The American National Red Cross is a single, national corporation throughout the United States that is organized and exists pursuant to a charter granted by Congress. The charter also designates the legal name to be the American National Red Cross, and this designation appears in the charter and in all legal contracts and documents. However, the more popular term "American Red Cross" is universally used whenever the full legal name is not required.

Although Red Cross has the legal status of both a Federal instrumentality and a qualified, tax-exempt charitable organization, and is subject to prescribed federal supervision and protection, it is not a part of, nor controlled by, the executive branch of the United States Government. All of its programs, services and activities are based on humanitarian considerations apart from cultural, economic, ethnic, religious or political factors.

The legal status of the American Red Cross as a unique "Federal instrumentality" provides two major benefits: first, the Red Cross is free from liability for many forms of taxation that would otherwise drain its resources; secondly, the Red Cross is free from various forms of state regulations which would limit its ability to operate nationwide.

The status of the Red Cross as a charitable corporation has been confirmed by a unanimous decision of the U.S. Supreme Court: *Department of Employment v. U.S.* 385 U.S. 355 (1966). No public funds are appropriated to the American Red Cross to carry out its services and programs, although substantial material aid and assistance by government agencies is provided. Although closely associated with the government in the promotion of its objectives, the American Red Cross is independent in organization and is financially supported by voluntary public contributions and cost-reimbursement charges. The American Red Cross has no counterpart in other humanitarian or charitable organizations in the United States.

Early Peacetime Programs

Jane Delano, a nurse who was appointed superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps in 1910, had helped the Red Cross recruit nurses during the Spanish-

American War. Realizing that there was no organized effort in this country to cope with the day-to-day illnesses that ravage health, she founded the Red Cross **Nursing Service** and was appointed its first national committee chairperson. This service brought visiting nurses into American homes to offer skilled nursing care, health instruction in elementary hygiene, and home care for the sick. Red Cross classes offering information on home dietetics followed. In 1912, Jane Delano resigned from the Army Nurse Corps to become a full-time Red Cross volunteer.

In 1910, under the leadership of Major Charles Lynch and Dr. Matthew Shield, the Red Cross **First Aid** program began, and first aid training was introduced in a wide variety of industries. Manuals and training guides were issued, and the Red Cross first aid handbook was translated from English into other languages for distribution to many immigrant workers who had recently come to America.

The Red Cross **Water Safety** Program began in 1914 under the leadership of Commodore Wilbert E. Longfellow. At the turn of the century, the Commodore was among the first to see that, unless curbed, the rapidly mounting toll of deaths from drowning would reach tragic proportions. Largely through his efforts, a nationwide program of swimming and lifesaving instruction was launched. As a result, the drowning rate was cut in half.

World War I – National

When the United States entered World War I, the Red Cross followed the troops to Italy. Working with the U.S. Army, it set up 41 ambulance sections to transport the wounded from field to hospital. At the request of the Surgeon General of the Army and Navy, the Red Cross set up 50 base hospitals and furnished them with trained health professionals. Twenty thousand Red Cross nurses provided service to the Armed Forces, while thousands of volunteers provided counseling and acted as channels of communication between servicemen and their families at home.

Millions of adults volunteered, but the organization needed young people too, and they were eager to offer their services. The **Junior Red Cross** was formed in 1917, with the strong support of President Woodrow Wilson. Now known as Youth Services, it has enlisted the time and energy of young Americans ever since.

In 1919, the United States joined with other countries to form the League of Red Cross Societies, a mutual self-help organization of National Red Cross societies.

World War I- Local

In 1917, four days after America entered World War I, the Omaha chapter of the American Red Cross was formed. Local businessman Gould Dietz served as Chapter Chairman, organized chapter services and conducted roll call fundraising drives for members. The first membership drive gathered the support of 29,000 persons. A second drive in December increased membership to 107,384.

From headquarters at the Douglas County courthouse, hundreds volunteered to carry out chapter services. Much attention was devoted to the needs of servicemen. The Army Hospital Attention Committee made personal visits to the sick at the Fort Omaha hospital to help them write letters, furnish them with music, books, flowers and magazines, and serve ice cream, cake, fruits and candy. Canteens were staffed at Fort Omaha and railway stations.

Servicemen were given postcards, free telephone and baggage service and street directions, as well as a place to rest and clean up. Volunteers tried to make the serviceman's stay in Omaha as pleasant as possible. As each serviceman left Omaha, he was provided with comfort kits made up by the Comfort Kit Committee. The Home Service Section of the Civilian Relief Department was created to see that no family suffered as the result of having a man in the service and absent from the home.

To better care for servicemen overseas, the Omaha Chapter organized Base Hospital #49 in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Medical School. From March, 1917 to January, 1919, doctors, nurses and attendants cared for the wounded of some of the largest battles in France. The hospital was ranked as the second-best equipped among all hospitals sent overseas. An ambulance company, No. 335, was organized in 1917 and served in France until April, 1919.

The company was stationed near St. Michel and evacuated wounded from some of the heaviest fighting near the close of the war. More than 45,000 knitted garments were produced locally for servicemen and shipped to them by the Knitting Committee. More than 19,000 glasses of jelly and jam were personally inspected for "ground glass" by the Jelly Department.

Between the Wars- National

By 1917, with the impact of World War I and the resulting demands, the American Red Cross had grown to a nationwide network of 3,287 chapters. During the postwar period, the organization broadened its program of peacetime activities, developing new techniques in disaster relief and services to veterans and to expanding health and welfare services.

In fact, there was distinct expansion in all service areas. The Florida Hurricane of 1926 and the Mississippi Valley Flood of 1927 called for more extensive relief operations than had been conducted up to that time. As doughboys became veterans, Red Cross continued to assist through a program that included counseling, emergency financial assistance, and help in claiming government benefits.

As veterans' hospitals opened, Red Cross provided services similar to those provided in military hospitals. Work in these hospitals branched into new fields—especially that of psychiatric activities of the Red Cross. Also during this time, Junior Red Cross grew and developed into a viable entity.

During the nightmarish drought and depression years of the 30's, the Red Cross was called upon to once again assist in the distribution of food and clothing. It was in this same time period that Red Cross took the first steps in blood donor recruitment that eventually led to the formation of the Red Cross **Blood Services**.

Between the Wars- Local

Local Red Cross activities after World War I continued at a greatly reduced rate. A fire in 1919 destroyed Red Cross offices at the Douglas County Courthouse and forced relocation to several temporary spaces. Dr. A. C. Stokes became Chapter Chairman in 1921 and served in that capacity for the next 16 years. Nursing and Home services were ongoing programs, as were first aid and lifesaving programs; however, first aid had only two volunteer instructors.

Junior Red Cross virtually ceased to operate locally by 1922. Red Cross joined the community chest and conducted its last Roll Call drive for members in 1922. Junior Red Cross was reactivated in 1931. Children collected bushels of buttons, quart jars, canned goods and jellies, dolls and games, and made Christmas baskets.

Under the leadership of Rosemary Tuttle, Executive Secretary, programs and services of the chapter expanded rapidly. Home Service extended services to the servicemen at Fort Omaha and Fort Crook to such an extent that a Field Director had to be assigned there. Rural areas were organized with a representative from each town and a general rural chairman appointed. The first Roll Call since 1917 in rural areas of Douglas County was conducted in 1935. As if to symbolize the new spirit of growth, the Chapter changed its name to the Douglas County Chapter.

Interest in first aid classes grew and first aid stations were established at four of the county's most dangerous highway intersections. Water safety programs showed a similar increase in public interest and an extensive learn-

to-swim summer program began in 1939 with free, 45-minute swim lessons each week. The first year, 2,300 children enrolled.

The sewing and kitting of garments for the sick and convalescent in Army and Navy hospitals began in 1935. This was expanded to include garments and surgical dressings for local hospitals in 1936, and by 1939, the civilian sufferers of the war in Europe began to receive many of the items. Braille transcription for the blind in Omaha began in 1936, and Bibles, telephone directories, handbooks, recipe books and hymnals were transcribed.

To better meet the financial needs of these expanding programs, the Red Cross withdrew from the Community Chest in 1939 and conducted its own membership and fund drives. Gray Lady service to hospitals began and Motor Service was reactivated in 1940.

To provide adequate space for new and expanded services, the Chapter chose to centralize its activities in a Chapter house located at 208 South 33rd Street, which was purchased in 1941. The Chapter prepared for disasters by developing a countywide disaster response plan and a Block Preparedness Plan in 1941. The goal was to have someone trained in Red Cross skills on every city block.

World War II- National

By the time the United States entered World War II in 1941, military services were organizing their own hospitals and providing their own hospital staff. But there was still work for the Red Cross.

The organization recruited more than 70,000 registered nurses for military duty. It provided a wealth of volunteers and paid personnel to military hospitals. It assigned field directors to major U.S. war zones, where they supervised Red Cross activities in the field. It supplied American servicemen and women with nearly 13.4 million units of blood for plasma. It operated clubs and clubmobiles for service people in overseas rest and recreation areas.

World War II- Local

The onset of World War II brought a flurry of activity to the chapter. Home Nursing eventually became a part of the curriculum of every school. The Chapter cooperated with the National Red Cross in recruiting nurses for the Armed Forces. Home Service provided assistance to servicemen and their families by serving as communication liaisons, interpreting military regulations to servicemen and performing counseling.

The needs of servicemen passing through Omaha were met by **Canteen Services**. Later in the war, refreshments were served at Offutt Field to air evacuees on hospital planes. A headquarters canteen served volunteers and staff at the Chapter House. Recreational equipment and materials, homemade cookies for parties, flowers, musical instruments, games, records and birthday gifts were some of the services provided by the Hospital Committee.

Gray Ladies served at all local hospitals, conducting recreational therapy and library services, and logging more than 100,000 volunteer hours. The need for a Nurse's Aide Corps was evident. When most of the trained nurses left for the war, there was a shortage of trained graduate nurses. Recruiting and training volunteers as nurse's aids began in January of 1942. Nine area hospitals cooperated with the Red Cross in this venture and 593 women put in a total of 102,240 volunteer hours during the four years of war. Together with the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, nurse aides were given additional training to work with the growing number of polio victims.

The pace of the Production Corps increased dramatically. Their duties ranged from sewing and knitting garments for shipment overseas to mending clothing for local servicemen. Bathrobes, bed jackets, pajamas and slippers were shipped to Army and Navy hospitals. Surgical dressings were also made for these hospitals by over 5,000 women working day and night. Halted in late 1944, the program resumed in May of 1945. Local hospitals continued to be the recipients of hospital dressings and related items. From January of 1940 to July of 1945, close to one million volunteer hours were spent on these projects.

Staff Assistants took care of the tremendous amount of detail work in each of the Chapter's programs. They assisted with the work of the Ration Board and helped with the Mobile Blood Bank.

Disaster preparations were well-established under the Douglas County Disaster Preparedness Committee. In April of 1943, the Missouri River flooded. Working with other local agencies, the Red Cross established shelters for more than 450 victims and workers. When the Elkhorn River flooded in June of 1944, a well-prepared corps of trained volunteers helped 60 families. Ak-Sar-Ben donated a mobile cafeteria to supplement the work of the mobile canteen.

Braille Unit members made Easter and Christmas cards for the blind. Books and other written articles were transcribed, including calendars. More than 46,000 youth belonged to the Junior Red Cross during the war years and more than 100,000 articles were produced for shipment to camps and hospitals throughout the nation. Junior Red Cross members worked as staff assistants, made toys for children in Europe, and assisted in numerous fund drives. They were active in hospital services, worked as childcare aids in orphanages and with the elderly. They collected food for the canteens and

371 bags of milkweed floss for use in the life jackets worn by fliers and sailors.

First aid training was carried out through an extensive program to reach people of all ages, in all areas of the chapter. The chapter met and surpassed the goal set by the Office of Civilian Defense to have five percent of the population trained. First Aid stations were maintained at dangerous highway intersections and Mobile First Aid Units were established to care for the injured on streets and highways. A program in accident prevention was developed for industries and other organizations. Water safety instruction continued at local pools through an intensive summer program of swimming and lifesaving courses. Instruction during winter months was held at private pools.

The Mobile Blood Donor Unit from Kansas City visited Omaha in 1944 and 1945. Local chapter volunteers were utilized. Gray Ladies served as hostesses; Nurses Aides performed technical tasks; the Motor Corps ran errands and picked up donors; and the Canteen Corps served snacks to donors and volunteers.

POSTWAR DEVELOPMENT – NATIONAL

Side by side with Red Cross Societies of other lands, the American Red Cross carried on an extensive relief and rehabilitation program for civilian victims of war. When peace was restored, the American Red Cross reunited families all over the world and helped war-torn nations put their Red Cross societies back together.

At home, the American Red Cross helped veterans establish claims for benefits or changes in military records. During the wars in Korea and Southeast Asia, the Red Cross stepped up its social welfare and recreational programs for the Armed Forces.

During the 1970's, the organization participated in more than 600 large-scale disaster relief operations and assisted in almost 40,000 smaller, local emergencies.

Together with various government agencies, the Red Cross started programs which taught how to mobilize national resources in the event of disaster: how to provide shelter, food, clothing, blood and blood products, and medical and nursing care to victims and their rescuers. Other programs were aimed at supplying necessary household furnishings, interim housing and transportation to those stripped of their essential possessions.

In 1970, Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act to protect workers from industrial hazards. The Department of Labor contracted with the Red Cross for first aid training for employers and employees. In 1974,

the Department of Transportation asked the Red Cross to merge its separate programs of first aid training into one program. That same year, in cooperation with the League of Red Cross Societies, the American Red Cross held a conference on first aid training for the Red Cross societies of 17 Spanish-speaking countries.

The Red Cross modified its services significantly during postwar years, reaching out to more and more people with the latest advances in health information. The Red Cross issued a new textbook and course on **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)** in 1975. A year later, it developed its first modular course for CPR, a program encouraging students to learn at their own pace. An instant hit, the modular concept of learning soon spread to other Red Cross courses.

The Red Cross entered the 1980's with a colorful, dramatic and inspiring track record. By 1983, more than 1.4 million volunteers were working out of Red Cross chapters across the country, and an increasing number of high school and college students and older, retired people were joining the largest volunteer organization in the nation.

POSTWAR DEVELOPMENTS – LOCAL

Throughout 1947, discussions were held between the Chapter, the Omaha-Douglas County Medical Society and local hospitals concerning the feasibility of establishing a blood center in Omaha. On February 18, 1948, The Omaha Red Cross Blood Center opened at 2549 Farnam.

The Omaha Blood Program became the Nebraska-Iowa Regional Red Cross Blood Program on July 1, 1948, becoming the 10th regional program within the National Red Cross Blood Program. From July to December, 1948, the original region (comprised of three counties) grew to 15 counties; and, by 1950, there were over 40 counties, with 62 hospitals served. In 1951, the Gallon Club was chartered for persons donating eight or more units of blood.

The Korean Conflict necessitated a major increase in blood donations. The Nebraska-Iowa program had a quota of 30,000 units of blood for the Armed Forces. in cooperation with the United Pacific Railroad, a **Blood for Freedom Train** operated from November, 1951, until October, 1953, collecting 41,289 units of blood in the small towns of Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and Kansas. The already-crowded conditions at the blood center necessitated using other sites as donor centers while the building at 25th and Farnam was used for processing and distribution of the collected blood.

The Braille program was phased out in 1947, but the Learn-to-Swim program continued and was extensively promoted by the Omaha World-Herald. In early 1948, six polio victims attended the first handicapped swim program. First aid instruction continued to be available to the public, industries and

federal agencies. In addition to the highway first aid stations and mobile units, first aid stations were staffed by volunteers at large civic events.

The 1960's to the 1980's

During the 1960's and 1970's, Service to Military Families and Veterans (SMF&V, formerly Home Service) worked extensively with military personnel going to **Vietnam**. Military families were helped with emergency communications, financial assistance and hardship grants. Comfort kits were assembled locally and sent to personnel in war zones. These ditty bags contained common articles not easily obtained in the jungles of Vietnam.

A National Red Cross Field Director was stationed at **Offutt** to handle many of the military cases from Offutt and Strategic Air Command (SAC). Local volunteers met incoming planes carrying refugees and made it possible for families to send recorded messages to their loved ones. Refugee assistance was given in locating sponsors, traveling and communications. In the early 1970's, SMF&V provided volunteers to conduct Project Find, which assisted those on Social Security in receiving food stamps. Then came the SSI Alert to reach those eligible for Social Security who had not yet applied.

Disaster Services increased, due to single-family fires, chemical fires and major disasters. The Big and Little Papillion Creeks flooded in June of 1964, resulting in 200 volunteers giving 45,000 hours of service to victims. One-hundred seventy-eight families received assistance. **The May, 1975 tornado** devastated a large part of Omaha and hundreds of volunteers contributed to this \$349,950 operation. In March of 1978, 600 victims of flooding in Valley, Nebraska received services due to flooding of the Platte River.

Nursing and Health classes expanded beyond the basic offerings to include a modified Multiple Sclerosis Home Nursing class, as well as Prenatal, Parenting, Vital Signs, Babysitting and Mother's Aide classes. The chapter began an extensive program of blood pressure screenings. Working with Baker's Supermarkets, thousands of Vial of Life forms were distributed in the late 1970's. The Vial of Life program goal was to have vital medical information in secure places in the home, particularly for people living alone, which would be readily accessible to emergency medical personnel.

The Omaha Central Labor Union trained volunteers in a three-day Build and Repair disaster course, the first in the nation. Volunteers were to serve as advisors in case of disaster, a program reflective of the early 1970's emphasis on the importance of Red Cross and Labor working in harmony to deliver community services.

In 1973, Safety Services added a Multimedia First Aid course, a shortened version of its predecessor, and a course for school-age children, basic First

Aid. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes began locally shortly thereafter, and area lakes provided locations for small craft and water safety courses.

The national organization sought to serve its chapters through an arrangement called Combined Service Territories (CST). The Douglas/Sarpy County Chapter was designated as a headquarters chapter for a 30-county territory that eventually grew to 44 counties. In July of 1971, SCT was replaced with the Division Plan and the Douglas/Sarpy County Chapter became headquarters for the Heartland Division. The Division consisted of 50 chapters in western Iowa and eastern Nebraska. National staff and volunteers were charged to lend guidance, support and leadership to the chapters through Division Headquarters. This organization was utilized until July of 1983, when the Field Service Plan was introduced. Large chapters considered Key Resource Chapters (DRC's) lent support as available to neighboring "territorial" chapters.

By the late 1970's, expanded services required additional space. A small apartment building was purchased across 39th Street from the chapter, but it was soon evident that even this expansion would not be sufficient. Plans were drawn, funding secured, and a new facility across the street, **3838 Dewey Avenue was dedicated on May 3, 1980**, at a cost of slightly over \$2 million.

In the 1970's, Cass County was a relatively inactive chapter, but had many human service needs, especially from the military. On July 1, 1981, Heartland Chapter was formed by merging the Cass County and Douglas/Sarpy County Chapters.

In 1980, the Chapter worked with the National Association of Letter Carriers to institute the Carrier Alert program whereby postal workers would check the homes of homebound persons for possible trouble. The Omaha Federation of Labor and Red Cross worked to convert an old building into the St. Vincent DePaul Family Shelter, which opened in November of 1984.

In 1981, Offutt Air Force Base, through a contract with National Red Cross, became a part of the Heartland Chapter, rather than receiving service reliant on the National sector. This arrangement continues and is one of a few such agreements in the country. In 1984, when the Missouri River and its tributaries flooded, hundreds of Red Cross volunteers served more than 8,000 meals and gave \$215,482 in assistance to families in 11 counties.

Following National Red Cross trends, in 1987, a major reorganization of services occurred within the Heartland Chapter. The Office of Volunteers and Personnel were combined to form Human Resources, responsible for recruiting new volunteers and paid staff. Two mandated programs, Service to Military Families and Veterans and Disaster Services, were merged to form Emergency Services. Safety Services, Youth, labor Participation and Nursing

and Health Services were merged to form Community Health Services. A new program of HIV/AIDS Education was added to this department.

In 1987, Heartland University was implemented, primarily to assist young people in obtaining skills for summer jobs as lifeguards. For approximately three months in the spring, prior to the pools opening to the public, extra classes in life guarding, Water Safety Instructor and Standard First Aid are offered. Throughout the year, classes in CPR, First Aid and Babysitting are offered to the general public. Additional classes and programs are offered to companies and organizations through Workplace Programs.

In 1988, the chapter collaborated with the Junior League of Omaha to develop a program specifically designed for childcare workers called SafeCare for Kids. Due to increased interest in wellness programs, the chapter began offering cholesterol screenings. First Aid Tips, a quick reference to first aid and safety, was developed for coping with emergency situations and became very popular nationwide.

Emergency Services formed a **Disaster Action Team (DAT)**. Teams of two or three persons respond to fires and interview the victims to determine their emergency needs. In support of DAT efforts, the Omaha World-Herald donated a Ford mini-van in 1987. (The National Red Cross had already stationed an Emergency Response Vehicle in Omaha in 1986.) Due to these multiple changes, remodeling the Dewey Avenue facility was necessary. Eventually, Emergency Services rented space at 2515 St. Mary's Avenue and the Community Health and Safety Department moved to 11626 Nicholas Street in Miracle Hills Park.

The 1990's

In 1993, Heartland Chapter separated from Midwest Region Blood Services. The change meant that Heartland Chapter no longer shared support services with the blood region and that no chapter services were housed at 3838 Dewey Avenue. Two separate boards of directors were formed. All remaining chapter departments moved out of the Dewey Avenue location, to either the St. Mary's Avenue location or a site in the Miracle Hills Office Park area.

On October 28, 1996, all chapter offices were reunited at **2912 South 80th Avenue**. The chapter raised nearly \$3 million to build a facility where all chapter services could be housed. The new headquarters includes modern classrooms, a Disaster Operations Center, a retail center for health and safety supplies, and room to grow.