

Junior Red Cross Participation In The Ohio - Mississippi River Flood

Mrs. Harwood Boney, Chairman Junior Red Cross work for Du-Bois County urges all school children to read the following:

When the Ohio and Mississippi rivers went on an unprecedented rampage the last of January many thousands of people in West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Il-

linois, Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana were driven from their homes. The Red Cross was called upon to perform rescue and relief work in one of the greatest disasters of recent years. More than a million and a half persons were affected

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The Red Cross issued an appeal for funds to be used in teaching, feeding, clothing and housing the refugees. Immediately there was a response by the members of the Junior Red Cross in every part of the country which proved conclusively that know and understand their responsibility. They contributed thousands of dollars to the flood relief fund. They emptied their banks, they gave entertainments, held sales, gave clothing and food, performed volunteer service for Chapters and in innumerable ways aided throughout the emergency period.

Numerous concentration centers were set up where flood refugees could be gathered in public buildings. Here was presented a real need for the Junior Red Cross these as there were thousands of children in these centers who were homesick and frightened suffering from shock and exposure. They needed mental and moral rehabilitation as badly as they needed food, shelter and clothing, if they were to be restored to normal.

The large sum of money contributed to the flood relief fund by the Junior Red Cross made possible for the first time in Red Cross history, a systematic effort to meet the problems presented by refugee children. Experienced Junior Red Cross workers were sent to the largest concentration centers and camps in the ten states affected by the flood. Before they could reach their destinations, the members of the Junior Red Cross, spurred by the emergency, had contributed a vast number of toys, games, books and magazines. The speed with which Chapters collected and shipped these gifts are truly amazing. The Junior Red Cross was in action.

As soon as the Junior Red Cross workers reached the camps, they assembled from among the refugees teachers, playground supervisors and others experienced in handling children. Other group leaders were supplied by the Federal Government through the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration. The children were divided into age groups, and activities to occupy the entire day were planned. Order was established and parents were relieved of much of their anxiety.

Money contributed by the Junior Red Cross paid the cost of keeping the trained workers in the field and made possible the purchase of pencils, crayons, paper, sissors, paste, cloth for making toys that make children happy. The story hours, hikes and health instructions accomplished wonders and the refugee children were delighted when told that all of this came to them because of the unselfish interest of the girls and boys of the Junior Red Cross.

The camps were rapidly disappearing by the middle of March, as the Red Cross is returning the refugees to their homes and is providing furniture and restoring the wrecked houses. The children took their toys, games, and books home with them; reminders not of the dark days of the flood but of the happy hours they spent because of the thoughtfulness of the children who escaped the disaster and who set up "camps" in places like Paducah and Jeffersonville, where the damage was the greatest and hundreds of children will be living in tents for many more weeks, the Junior Red Cross will continue to serve them until they go back to their homes.

Most Appreciative

A little girl in one of the refugee camps wrote: "I left my home on January 23 when the water came up in our front yard. With my family I went to the Jefferson School and stayed two weeks until the water was raging around us. Then the Red Cross took us to Wingo where I stayed two weeks. I next went to Mayfield where I now am. I am trying to show my thanks for the things they have done by writing this so other children will know. The Junior Red Cross has sent us all kinds of material to work and play with such as books, toys, drawing books,

sissors, pencils, crayons, drawing paper, and many other things. They also have given each of us wash-cloths, tooth-brushes, and ways to keep clean. I hope the Red Cross will last forever and I feel sure it will in order of help everybody that needs help. When we get back to our own schools I know we will all want to become members of the Junior Red Cross." Here Are A Few Extracts From Reports of The Field Workers:

"I had a rather touching little experience yesterday. A darling little raggedy girl by the name of Opal Virginia came up to me (we had been on a tramp up the side of the mountain and were singing at the top of our voices the Junior Red Cross song) and said, 'Lady can I kiss you?' Of course I assented and she continued, 'You know, I have a baby puppy back home and when the water started coming in and we had to leave, everybody had so much to carry we couldn't take him. So I put him way up high and I left him some bread so he wouldn't be hungry, and when I go back I am going to name him Junior Red Cross after you.'"

A Happy Evening
"This evening I visited the children at one of the churches where refugee families were assembled. I found only the basement of a church building but the Red Cross flag hung over the door. It was comfortable and warm inside and many adults were lying on cots and seemed to be very ill. In one corner of the room 30 children were eating their supper. They had come over from another church center and it was a great occasion when the big toy box I brought was opened. The boys' eyes popped when they saw marbles and balls and the girls loved the small china dolls. They were very appreciative and made little speeches of thanks.

"They gathered around the piano on the platform and sang. Then a talented boy of fourteen sang and recited some poems. Everyone joined in acting out the songs and the older people enjoyed a few requested hymns. I was invited to come again and everyone felt their spirits were a little lifted and all were a little happier because of this touch of Junior Red Cross."

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