

## Ready for the Next Hurricane



Photo by Ammie Mulligan

### Texas

Every time she gets out of bed, Michelle Shelton remembers the night Hurricane Harvey flooded her apartment and she stepped into ankle-deep water. “It was coming in under the door,” she says.

Shelton was lucky: Her colleagues at the health center where she works came to the rescue, ferrying Shelton, her husband and their 3-year-old son to safety in a kayak.

Christ Clinic in Katy, Texas, where Shelton works is one of more than 50 Texas clinics Americares supported after Hurricane Harvey with emergency medicine, funds to restore and expand health services for survivors, and, most recently, disaster preparedness workshops that result in custom disaster plans for every clinic attending.



After Hurricane Harvey hit Katy, Texas, health worker Michelle Shelton had to deal with flooding at work and at home (top and above). Americares disaster drills in the Philippines (right), train health workers to be ready for any emergency.

In the days after Hurricane Harvey flooded Christ Clinic’s parking lot, patients called to find out where to get care, and clinic doctors treated survivors in local shelters. More people could have accessed health services more quickly, clinic director Lara Hamilton learned at the workshop, if there had been a better connection between the clinic and other community responders and shelters. Coordination with other groups, such as fire stations and shelters, can save lives. With Americares workshop plan in hand, Hamilton will now meet with other community groups to plan coordination of critical services ahead of disasters.

Americares also provided a mental health program for nearly 500 staff from Texas health centers, including Christ Clinic employees who were under extraordinary pressure. Many were living in damaged communities and, like Shelton, lost everything in the floods. Work offered no relief: Christ Clinic’s patient load doubled as hurricane survivors relocated from Houston to suburban Katy.

“After the training, people were talking and laughing together again,” says Shelton, who is the human resources administrator for the clinic. “That’s important. Prior to the training there was some tension and burnout.”

Hamilton is already acting on the preparedness plan she created at the Americares workshop. After all, the 2018 Atlantic hurricane season began June 1; the time to be ready is now.

## Earthquake? Blackout? Thanks to You, Health Centers Stay Open

After an earthquake struck Leyte, Philippines, on July 6, 2017, residents struggled for three weeks without electricity—the quake had toppled an electrical tower. But the power stayed on at Palompon Birthing Clinic; Americares had provided the center with a generator for just such an emergency as part of ongoing disaster preparedness work.

The Philippines is at high risk for disasters, including earthquakes, typhoons and volcanic eruptions. Americares staff in the Philippines works year-round to make sure that health centers can continue operating in an emergency. Recent projects include rehabilitating the Emergency Operations Center at the Provincial Health Office that serves the entire region.

Disaster training is a key part of disaster risk reduction and resilience. Americares Philippines staff have trained more than 600 health workers from 51 health facilities. Training includes first aid training and mock drills for handling large numbers of injured disaster survivors. Americares has been strengthening disaster preparedness in the Philippines since Typhoon Haiyan struck in 2013.





Friends,

June 1 was the start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. It's a date we take seriously here at AmeriCares: Last year, the season brought death and destruction to Texas, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Communities are still recovering—and thanks to the support of donors like you, AmeriCares is there, working alongside them to build back stronger.

Being ready for disasters happens at AmeriCares every day, 365 days a year. Earthquakes and epidemics don't have seasons, and to prevent health disasters, AmeriCares strengthens health centers around the world. Our health education programs—everything from healthy diet and lifestyle coaching in the U.S. to hygiene in schools in India—promote health and prevent disease.

AmeriCares is lucky to have committed donors who understand that being able to respond rapidly and effectively to disasters takes a year-round commitment—in staff, systems and supplies, including an emergency pharmacy.

I urge you to make a similar commitment to your family and community's disaster readiness. Be safe, be smart and be prepared. Have a plan. And adopt lifestyle habits that support good health.

We are counting on you, just as communities around the world are counting on AmeriCares.

Together, we are making a difference. Thank you.

Michael J. Nyenhuis  
President and CEO

## From the Field: Preparing for Future Disasters

by Kristin Stevens, AmeriCares Director, Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction

Everybody, every organization and every community needs to be prepared for a disaster! Preparedness is having a plan to be ready for and reduce the effects of an emergency. In your life, the disaster might be a storm, earthquake or power outage. You may need to have batteries and water on hand or know your town's evacuation route (see more tips below).

My job at AmeriCares is to help health centers and health systems around the world create disaster plans so they can restore health services for survivors as quickly as possible. After last year's hurricanes in Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico, AmeriCares preparedness workshops are in high demand.

After a hurricane or earthquake, health clinics must act quickly: In our workshops, we help clinics craft a custom plan. If the clinic can open its doors, who can show up to work? Armed with a good disaster plan, staff will know to cancel non-urgent appointments and expand services, such as tetanus vaccinations. The plan includes contact information for nearby health centers and hospitals: If the clinic can't open, clinic staff should know where to send patients.

The exact physical improvements each health center needs varies. In Nepal, the Philippines and El Salvador, clinics need basic equipment such as fire extinguishers and first aid kits. In the Philippines, generators are lifesaving. After major disasters, AmeriCares invests in stronger clinic walls and roofs to protect patients and staff. And everywhere—from Texas to Puerto Rico and Nepal—staff need regular preparedness training.

At AmeriCares, we maintain readiness 365 days a year so we can quickly respond to any global disaster. We have a global roster of trained emergency responders who can deploy at any time, an emergency pharmacy full of medicine most in need; and connections to other disaster and health organizations so we can coordinate actions immediately.

In the last year, since hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, I've worked with many health workers who have been through trauma and loss. For me, preparedness is about being empathetic with people, understanding how they are likely to behave in disasters and building systems around that. The goal is that we all help each other, every day, and especially in emergencies.

### Are You Ready?

Plan now, stay healthy when disaster strikes.

- Have a list of prescriptions you need.
- Carry your health insurance card and primary care doctor's contact information.
- Have back-up power for any medical devices or medicine that needs refrigeration.



Kristin Stevens helps a community in Nepal.



AmeriCares preparedness specialists Kayvia Pemberton and Mariel Fonteyn review workshop guidebooks.



In Dominica, recovery from Hurricane Maria includes rebuilding roots to withstand future storms.



AmeriCares has a history of preparedness work in the Philippines, including delivery of this generator in 2016.

## Partner in Profile: Patagonia

On April 25, 2015, the first of a series of powerful earthquakes struck Nepal, triggering landslides, toppling buildings and killing nearly 9,000 people. Among AmeriCares community of donors that made immediate commitments was outdoor clothing and gear company Patagonia. The company's support helped make possible immediate airlifts of medicine and medical supplies, emergency medical teams and the rebuilding of 16 health clinics in remote communities, all built to withstand future tremors.

Patagonia first supported AmeriCares emergency programs after the Southeast Asia tsunami in 2004 and is now an AmeriCares Emergency Response Partner, making annual commitments to support our readiness for disasters that include a roster of trained emergency response personnel, an emergency pharmacy, disaster preparedness programs and more.

Patagonia recognizes its manufacturing processes use resources and produce waste and sees its philanthropic work—a company-described “Earth tax”—as part of the cost of doing business. Patagonia's love of wild and beautiful places also compels it to participate in the fight to save them. Disaster-vulnerable

patagonia®



After an earthquake in Ecuador destroyed the local clinic in Pedernales, AmeriCares provided a structure to serve as a hospital.

communities are often in those places: Patagonia provided additional support after the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador and Hurricane Harvey in Texas in 2017.

“As an outdoor apparel company that started out making tools for mountain climbers, Patagonia has long acknowledged its corporate responsibility to protect the natural world and give back to the communities that businesses affect,” says Lisa Pike Sheehy, VP of Environmental Activism at Patagonia. “Partnering with AmeriCares fits with Patagonia's mission to use our business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.”

The company donates time, services and at least 1 percent of sales to hundreds of nonprofit groups worldwide that work to steward the health of the planet and its people.

## With Your Support, AmeriCares Builds Stronger Clinics

The monsoon rains in summer can turn the mountain roads in Makwanpur, Nepal, into rivers, making a trip to the health clinic almost impossible. But when patients arrive at the clinic, they do not worry about safety. The Makwanpur health center is one AmeriCares rebuilt to new standards after Nepal's devastating 2015 earthquake. The center is resistant to earthquakes, heavy rains and floods.

“The feeling of the building collapsing doesn't occur to me anymore,” says patient Fulmaya. “I am very grateful to the donors for building this earthquake-resistant health post!”

AmeriCares has followed up the quality construction with a disaster risk reduction and emergency management training program for



Patients of all ages enjoy health care at the 16 clinics AmeriCares has rebuilt in Nepal.

health workers at this and other clinics. The program is comprehensive, covering everything from first aid and managing disease outbreaks and mass casualties to coordinating disaster response with the local and national government.

“Now in case of any future events, our health post is very well prepared and can respond to the crisis,” says Makwanpur Clinic Director Pramod Rauniyar.

## Save Lives Every Day



Josh and Kierstie Rucci

As a media executive, Josh Rucci understands the importance of short- and long-term planning. He brings his knowledge to his family's philanthropy, choosing to make monthly sustaining gifts. “Having worked for subscription businesses during my career, I cannot understate how vital a monthly commitment is for organizational planning and investment,” he says. “Plus, it's super easy and convenient.” One of the organizations that Josh and wife Kierstie support is AmeriCares.

The Bronxville, N.Y., couple values AmeriCares mission and reach, both U.S. and global. “AmeriCares represents the best of America in its generosity and care for humanity,” Rucci says. Growing up in New Canaan, Conn., Rucci had a close-up view of AmeriCares founder Bob Macauley building the organization, and his parents, who are also supporters, often discussed the organization's activities. “Attending two values-based universities—Jesusuit-based Boston College for undergrad and entrepreneurship-focused Babson College for my MBA—affirmed the values of philanthropy and the keys to making giving organizations work,” says Rucci.

Now Josh and Kierstie are passing these values to their two children, making sure philanthropy is part of dinner-table conversation. Says Josh, “A large part of anyone's life is its impact on others.”

**For more information on becoming a monthly sustainer, contact AmeriCares at 203.658.9500.**

# Your Donations at Work—In Emergencies and Every Day

With your help, between March 1 and May 31, 2018, AmeriCares sent project support, medicine and medical supplies to the following countries and U.S. territories.

Afghanistan	Cameroon	El Salvador	India	Mali	Pakistan	Philippines	Sudan	Uzbekistan
Antigua	Chad	Eritrea	Ivory Coast	Mexico	Palau	Puerto Rico	Tanzania	Venezuela
Argentina	China	Ethiopia	Jamaica	Micronesia	Palestinian Territories	Romania	Trinidad	Vietnam
Armenia	Colombia	Fiji	Jordan	Mongolia	Panama	Rwanda	Turkey	Yemen
Bangladesh	Costa Rica	Ghana	Kenya	Montserrat	Papua New Guinea	Senegal	Uganda	Zambia
Belize	Dominica	Guatemala	Kyrgyzstan	Myanmar	Peru	Sierra Leone	Ukraine	Zimbabwe
Benin	Dominican Republic	Guyana	Lebanon	Nepal		Somalia	United States	
Bolivia	Ecuador	Haiti	Liberia	Nicaragua		St. Lucia	U.S. Virgin Islands	
Cambodia		Honduras	Malawi	Nigeria		St. Vincent		

## Emergency Response Partners

These organizations support AmeriCares year-round readiness for global emergencies.

- Alexion Pharmaceuticals
- AmeriSourceBergen
- Anthem Foundation
- Chevron
- FCA Foundation
- Horizon Pharma
- Medtronic
- MoneyGram International
- Northrup Grumman
- OdysseyRe Foundation
- Patagonia
- Southwest Airlines
- Vanech Family Foundation
- Voya Financial
- Anonymous



**United States**

The AmeriCares Free Clinics in Connecticut are the heart of caring community, where volunteer doctors provide care for 3,000 of the area's low-income, uninsured patients.



**Puerto Rico**

In May, players from the New York Giants football team, including Eli Apple, added helping hands to AmeriCares ongoing hurricane recovery work in Puerto Rico.



**United States**

AmeriCares distribution center is always stocked for emergencies. Last year, the staff managed shipments of medicine and more than 3.2 million supplies for emergencies in 19 countries.



**Tanzania**

Prenatal care is one step to a safe and healthy birth. Here, women wait for care in Kibondo, Tanzania. AmeriCares health worker safety program in Tanzania helps reduce infection.



AmeriCares is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine and medical supplies.

88 Hamilton Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902  
 203.658.9500 | 1.800.486.HELP | [americares.org](http://americares.org)  
 Editor: Kathy Kukula, [editor@americares.org](mailto:editor@americares.org)

Connect with us



@americares

Health is on the Way is a trademark of Tandigm Health, LLC.

