



**American
Red Cross**

Cape Cod and Islands Chapter

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Media Alert

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Cape and Islands United Way and Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank to Challenge Martha's Vineyard Community to Support Red Cross Preparedness Initiative

Hyannis, MA, May 25th, 2010 – With hurricane season officially starting on June 1st, the American Red Cross is pleased to announce that the Cape and Islands United Way and Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank Charitable Foundation have supported the American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter with a Challenge grant to support the Red Cross Martha's Vineyard Preparedness Initiative, aimed at benefiting every resident on the Island.

Chris Wells, President of the Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank says: "*We are pleased to support this Preparedness Initiative as it supports and further expands the Red Cross Delivery of services to our Island residents.*"

Greg Orcutt of Vineyard Haven, Cape and Islands United Way board member, says: "*We are pleased to issue this challenge and ask Martha's Vineyard to join us in supporting this Preparedness Initiative so that our Island residents can be ready for disaster.*"

The amount left to raise to support the initiative is \$53,000. The plan consists of pre-positioning the equipment and recruit, train and equip the volunteer team necessary to be prepared and respond to an emergency when the need arises on Martha's Vineyard.

- Pre-position the materials and equipment to support shelter and mass care for 1,000.
- Incorporate current communications and data equipment to support a major shelter operation.
- Modernize the emergency support vehicle to support response requirements
- Expand volunteer recruitment and training initiatives enabling each member of the Martha's Vineyard community to be part of the preparedness solution with specific focus on the youth and diverse members of Martha's Vineyard.
- Demonstrate that the Red Cross is committed to partner with other organizations and residents within the Martha's Vineyard community through Memoranda of Understanding
 - With other response agencies such as the Medical Reserve Corps and a through a close working relationship with Emergency Managers on the Island.
 - Provide improved access training systems through targeted outreach programs increasing the number of residents trained in critical life saving skills training.

The ultimate success of the initiative will be measured by having Red Cross volunteers trained, equipped and ready to operate disaster response shelters and the community to be prepared to respond to local emergencies if the need arises.

In the past two years, the Cape Cod and Islands Chapter has actively worked to build its disaster volunteer team on the Island. The chapter now has 22 trained disaster volunteers in place, led by Zone Leader Jim Thomas from Oak Bluffs.

To donate or for more information about the Martha's Vineyard Preparedness Initiative, to become a volunteer or to find out more about disaster preparedness information in English, Portuguese or Spanish or to find out more about training programs, both online and in person, please contact the American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter, American Red Cross, 286 South Street, Hyannis, MA 02601 or via www.cciredcross.org or toll-free at (508) 775-1540.

NOTE: All disaster relief support provided by the American Red Cross is free of charge. The Chapter does not receive government funding. It is totally dependent upon local support from foundations, individuals and businesses. Your gift supports the lifesaving mission of the American Red Cross in your community, across the country and around the world.