

Proclamation 5938 of February 28, 1989**American Red Cross Month, 1989**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The Red Cross, as a symbol and an ideal, has meant help and reassurance to millions of Americans and people around the world. To Henry Dunant, founder of the International Red Cross 125 years ago, help meant a bright red cross on a white banner, carried onto battlefields by those tending wounded soldiers and civilians innocently caught in conflict. To Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, help meant all that Dunant envisioned plus a system by which people could voluntarily help each other cope during times of disaster, not just during war. Today, we need only look to the success of the American Red Cross to see how both visions have become realities.

Whether it has been in a major emergency like the tornadoes that struck North Carolina last fall or in the aftermath of the terrible death and destruction of the earthquake in Armenia, the Red Cross has been there extending the hand of help. In 1988, 4.2 million people were given emergency food, clothing, and shelter by more than 76 thousand Red Cross disaster volunteers.

Clara Barton's dream of mitigating the suffering of disaster victims also brought an understanding of the need to help the entire population to be better prepared for day-to-day emergencies. This has meant teaching 7.1 million people first aid, Red Cross CPR, swimming, and water and boating safety. Now, perhaps more than ever, we realize how education can mean survival as we and people around the world face the deadly threat of AIDS. The Red Cross has helped us understand this health crisis by disseminating AIDS prevention information.

Thousands of persons needing blood owe a debt of gratitude to the American Red Cross. From recruitment of volunteer donors to collecting and testing that ensures the safest blood possible, last year the Red Cross was able to provide our ill and injured with 6.4 million units of blood.

Our American Red Cross also provides important humanitarian service to our military personnel and their families, including counseling and assistance and referral services for active-duty military, veterans, and their dependents. Our young people, too—more than 3 million of them—have made a valuable commitment to public service through the Red Cross. From organizing high school and college bloodmobiles to visiting patients in hospitals and retirement homes, youth programs are another reason why we should appreciate the work of this remarkable organization.

From the visions of Henry Dunant and Clara Barton have come one of the greatest volunteer movements in history. The strength of the Red Cross can be seen every day, everywhere, through the work of people who believe that a successful life must include serving others. It is through their commitment that a bright red cross on a white banner continues to mean hope, dignity, and compassion to thousands of people in need, both here at home and around the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American National Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the month of March 1989 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all Americans to continue their generous support and ready assistance to the work of the American Red Cross and its nearly 3,000 Chapters and stations on military installations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 5939 of March 1, 1989

Save Your Vision Week, 1989

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Vision is a precious gift—one we too often take for granted until it is impaired or lost entirely. For thousands of Americans, this is a needless loss because sight-saving treatments are now available for many disorders that once caused blindness. Generally, the earlier a disease is detected, the better the chance of interrupting its destructive process. Therefore, if we take some simple precautions, most of us can expect to enjoy good vision all of our lives.

A periodic examination by an eye-care professional is the best way to detect an eye problem before it impairs or destroys vision. This is especially important for young children; diabetics, who are at increased risk for several eye diseases; and older Americans, who are at higher risk for glaucoma, aging-related retinal degeneration, and cataracts.

Because visual problems in young children are often difficult to detect, a professional eye examination is vital. An untreated eye problem in a child may needlessly interfere with learning or play or lead to permanent visual loss. At a minimum, children should have their vision checked by their pediatrician, family physician, or an eye specialist at or before age four.

For the more than 11 million Americans who have diabetes, regular eye checkups are especially important for preventing loss of vision. For years, diabetic retinopathy has been the leading cause of new cases of blindness among middle-aged Americans. Now, however, improved treatments for this disease can save many thousands from blindness—if treatment is begun early.

Because many aging-related eye diseases begin in the middle years, periodic eye examinations are important for everyone older than 40. For example, glaucoma can begin unnoticed in middle age and gradually progress to blindness. A simple, painless test to measure pressure within the eye is used to screen for possible glaucoma. If the disease is