

Humbling Hurricane Support Effort Echoes Reuter-Stokes' Service Culture

For Michael Claus, U.S. hurricane season means something a bit different for him than it does for many others.

Claus has twice spent two weeks assisting displaced hurricane victims as an American Red Cross volunteer. He recently worked at a shelter in Louisiana in the aftermath of October's Hurricane Delta.

"When hurricane season rolls around, the Red Cross pulls volunteers from a database to support all areas of disaster relief," says Claus, a manufacturing engineering manager at Reuter-Stokes, a Baker Hughes company. "Volunteers have an online account and list their deployment availability for the season."

Claus has been dedicated to the Red Cross for over 12 years as a long-time blood platelet donor, as well as serving on the region board of directors. He first became involved as a Disaster Relief Red Cross volunteer in 2016. That summer, he followed storm coverage in the news and "felt the pull to assist with hurricane season" as a volunteer. He signed up and underwent the necessary training.

"The next thing you know, I was on a plane to North Carolina," he says. "Apart from being a husband and a father, it was one of the most fulfilling things I had done. To see how a team of people who are total strangers come together is amazing. You arrive as strangers and become instant friends as you have a single purpose while you're there: to help people who have been beaten down get back on their feet."

Since then, Claus felt the pull to again make the difference with the Red Cross. He started to make a plan to volunteer again for the 2020 hurricane season. He knew the need for volunteers would be greater due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hurricanes would happen, pandemic or not.

Claus knew that Reuter-Stokes is actively involved in community outreach. "Both Reuter-Stokes and Baker-Hughes are highly supportive of group and individual volunteer efforts in the community," says Reuter-Stokes HR Partner Jessica Virant. "We work the concept of giving back into our recruiting process and provide the opportunity for group volunteer days with Habitat for Humanity and charity drives."

Rod Martinez, Reuter-Stokes Business Unit vice president and general manager, comments, "We're an organization



that recognizes there is a human element behind every role we fill and every number that we look at, analyze and talk about. For every product we make, there is an engineer, a welder and others behind it. We recognize that our 150+ employees here at Reuter-Stokes are part of a community. We can't forget this."

Once Claus got the greenlight to serve as a 2020 hurricane season volunteer, he updated his Red Cross account to let them know he'd be available for a two-week deployment in September or October.

The Red Cross called him on Oct. 7. The next day, Claus headed to a shelter in New Orleans. He spent two weeks helping evacuees address day-to-day needs. This ranged from helping them get food and diapers to arranging transportation for appointments.

"Two words describe my trip: humbling and fulfilling," Claus says. "You're trying to be a positive force in a negative situation and realize even small things can help people get back to a normal way of life."

As someone who follows the creed to live, lead, give and serve by example, Claus says he appreciates Reuter-Stokes' support. He hopes that sharing his positive experiences as an active volunteer inspires others in the company to explore their own opportunities.

"If it prompts a few more people to ask how they can help and take action, we will be a better country for it," Claus says.

To learn more about becoming a Red Cross volunteer, contact 1-800-REDCROSS or www.redcross.org.