

## **Fran Edwardson, CEO of American Red Cross of Chicago & Northern Illinois, To Retire in 2016**

Chicago, July 7, 2015. Fran Edwardson, CEO of the American Red Cross of Chicago & Northern Illinois, today announced that she will be retiring in early 2016. Edwardson has led the nonprofit organization, which currently serves more than 9.5 million people in 21 counties in Northern Illinois, for more than a decade. This Red Cross region is one of the largest within the national American Red Cross network.

"I am tremendously grateful for the opportunity to have led the Red Cross in our community for the last ten years," said Edwardson. "It's truly been the capstone of my career. A strong Red Cross, made up of skilled and committed volunteers and a robust network of government, community and funding partners, is vital to the well-being of our communities. We have grown to become one of the most well-respected and innovative Red Cross regions in the country. I feel confident in making the decision to retire now, when the organization is healthy and vibrant and a seasoned leadership team is in place.'

In the past decade, the American Red Cross in Chicago & Northern Illinois has helped more than one million people become proficient in life-saving skills, improved the resiliency of our blood supply by bringing a state of the art blood distribution center and reference lab to Chicago, helped more than 50,000 people recover from local disasters such as home fires, floods and tornadoes, and supported nearly 20,000 military families in times of emergency.

Prior to joining the American Red Cross, Edwardson held senior positions in the air transportation and legal fields, having served as Senior Vice President and General Counsel for UAL Corporation (predecessor to United Continental Holdings, inc.) and United Airlines and a partner in the Chicago office of law firm Mayer Brown.

"Thanks to Fran's leadership, Chicago and Northern Illinois are better and safer places to live and work," said Grant Hellwarth, American Red Cross of Chicago & Northern Illinois Board Chair. "With her strong commitment to volunteerism and the humanitarian mission, the Red Cross is well positioned to continue to be a critical resource to our community."

“The American Red Cross plays a critical role in the well-being of the people in our region and has been a long-standing partner to United Way,” said Wendy DuBoe, President and CEO of United Way of Metropolitan Chicago. “Fran has been a strong leader and committed community partner, and has guided the Red Cross to even greater impact in our communities during her tenure.”

Edwardson plans to remain in her current role until a successor has been identified. There will be a national search to identify qualified candidates for this important role.

#### **About the American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross) and locally at [@ChicagoRedCross](https://twitter.com/ChicagoRedCross).

###