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AUGUST 2014

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Born to Ride

Josh Lippard is racing toward his future

Lakeside Refuge

At Home With Tom and Lauren Melton

A Helping Hand
Aquatic Adventure
Finding Metal Lines
In the Kitchen
With Pennie Miller

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ON THE COVER



With support from his family, Josh Lippard is following his Motocross dream.

Photo by Sarah McVean.

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Editor's Note

Hi, Friends!

Summertime is winding down, and parents and children alike will soon be getting back into the school routine. Local students head back to class on August 25, so practice safe driving in and around school zones and near buses.

Until then, why not make the most of the final days of summer? Enjoy what the Weatherford area has to offer — a picnic in the park, a swim at Lake Weatherford or a show

at a local theater. Once the sun goes down, cuddle up on a blanket to stargaze. Point out a few constellations to your friends and loved ones. If you're lucky enough to see a shooting star zoom past, don't forget to make a wish!

You may be ready for the hotter temperatures to subside, but winter will be upon us soon. Soak up the sun — slathered in sunscreen, of course.

Enjoy yourselves!

Amber

Amber D. Browne
WeatherfordNOW Editor
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A HELPING Hand

— By Amber D. Browne

Growing up along the Gulf Coast in Corpus Christi, Larry Bushwar became familiar with the threat of tropical storms and hurricanes. His parents rode out a few of the storms when he was a child, and he saw first-hand the destruction caused by Mother Nature. “Disasters do not discriminate between races, gender or economic status. I saw how people from all walks of life stood together to help their fellow neighbors in tough times,” Larry explained. “Even though I was a child, those things stick in your mind forever.”



As an adult living in Wichita Falls, Larry experienced another brush with a natural disaster. He had recently graduated from The University of Texas at Austin and was working for the Internal Revenue Service. A massive tornado touched down near his apartment complex during the spring of 1979. “That was my first time to see a tornado up close. I actually saw the tornado. It was huge,” Larry explained. As an IRS representative, Larry worked with residents who had been affected by the destruction of the tornado. “I guess this is where I really realized how helpful I could be in a disaster,” he said. “I saw how all these people and organizations all came together for the common good of our fellow neighbors.”

That instinct and determination to help others led Larry to the American Red Cross. He volunteers with the Red Cross as a government operations liaison and a disaster assessment coordinator. His primary focus is working with state and city officials during a disaster.

The Red Cross wasn't Larry's first experience with volunteerism. Larry moved to Willow Park in 1984, after being promoted within the IRS. While in Willow Park, he became active on



“It is hard to describe how good you feel after *helping someone.*”

various city committees and boards. He joined the Willow Park Volunteer Fire Department in 1988 and served there for seven years. He also obtained his Basic Firefighter Certification and Emergency Care Attendant Certification and served in the EMS Unit. In the 1990s, he served two terms on the Willow Park City Council.

After retiring from the IRS in 2007, he decided to spend more time serving his neighbors. “When you retire, you have to find something to do to stay active,” he chuckled. “I was looking for an organization that gave back to the community. Red Cross was one that I was interested in. There happened to be an office here in Weatherford.” In 2008, he showed up at the office to find out more about becoming a volunteer. He filled out an application, had a background check, went through the training process and got to work.

Larry has done his fair share of training over the years to take on the position of liaison. He is the Red Cross’ direct link to government officials at disaster sites. He stays up-to-date on training through emergency management meetings, online Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) courses

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and classroom training. Communication is key when boots are on the ground at a disaster site. He must decipher questions and answers from local authorities and Red Cross officials to make sure he is relaying the correct information about such things as damage assessment and shelter, food and supply needs. As a supervisor and manager, Larry has also trained volunteers over the years and often mentors them through their first few disasters.

“There’s a whole gamut of courses you can sign up for to volunteer. You can do things from disaster assessment and government liaison, to disaster action team, logistics, public affairs and fundraising. The list goes on and on,” Larry said. When volunteers are accepted into the Red Cross organization, Larry helps prescreen them based on their preferred volunteer role, qualifications and training. “You have to make sure the people are a right fit for that area,” he added. In Parker County, the Red Cross has about 30 volunteers. Not all are active all the time. During a disaster, usually only about 10-15 percent of volunteers are available, due to family or work commitments, so the Red Cross is always looking for good volunteers to help when called.

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of hours you want,” Larry explained. He volunteers about 25-30 hours each week. A volunteer must be willing to commit to the organization and be on call when disaster strikes. “There’s always something going on,” he said.

Once the disaster site is deemed safe, Red Cross volunteers are some of the first responders on the scene. They provide damage assessment to determine what type of help is needed in affected areas. The Red Cross helps victims during the first 24-48 hours with necessities, including shelter. The nonprofit also provides clothing, medical necessities, food and water.

As mentioned before, Larry is no stranger to disaster scenes. He has worked wildfires, structure fires and severe weather events. “One thing you have to be aware of is the necessity of



being available to disaster victims,” Larry explained. “What are their needs? What can we do to help them?”

When Hurricane Ike made landfall near Galveston in September 2008, the Red Cross opened a Parker County shelter for evacuees. Larry was the overnight shift supervisor at the shelter. “Some of the evacuees had difficulty sleeping, so we would sit and talk, sometimes for hours. Some of their concerns were whether their house was still standing, would they have a job when they got back home, were their neighbors all right. You just let them get it off their chest and talk about it. I’m not a counselor, but I’ll just sit there and listen to what they have to say,” he said. “That part really affected me.”

Red Cross volunteers across the North Texas region stay busy with all types of disaster relief efforts, from hurricane

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shelters and structure fires to floods and tornadoes. Larry also volunteers with communication services at several major events in Parker County throughout the year, including Ride for Heroes, Peach Pedal and Ride United. He also helped put disaster awareness kits, dubbed Masters of Disaster, into elementary and middle schools throughout Parker County. The kits increased student awareness about safety issues related to everyday life.

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"It is hard to describe how good you feel after helping someone," Larry admitted. Through his volunteer efforts, he has found the American Red Cross is the perfect humanitarian organization for him. "You get to see people come from being very low to the joy in their eyes when we provide them help. It's just a good feeling inside that you can help somebody." **NOW**

Editor's Note: Visit www.redcross.org or call the Weatherford office at (817) 341-4516 for more information about the American Red Cross.