

2017-K475

Assembly Resolution No. 475

BY: M. of A. Englebright

COMMENDING The American Red Cross on Long Island upon the occasion of celebrating its 100th Anniversary, and paying tribute to this year's honorees on June 15, 2017

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those organizations, and their employees and volunteers, that are devoted to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend The American Red Cross on Long Island upon the occasion of celebrating its 100th Anniversary, and to pay tribute to this year's honorees; and

WHEREAS, The American Red Cross on Long Island will commemorate this most auspicious occasion at its Centennial Celebration to be held on Thursday, June 15, 2017, at the Nassau Country Club in Glen Cove, New York; and

WHEREAS, This year's theme is "100 Years of Heroes" which recognizes the selfless American Red Cross volunteers across Long Island who

deliver both help and hope during a disaster; and

WHEREAS, The 2017 honorees include: Alan J. Murray, President and CEO of CareConnect who will be receiving the Corporate Leadership Award; Gwen O'Shea, recipient of the Superstorm Sandy Hero Award; James Aronson, recipient of the Home Fire Campaign Hero Award; and the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, recipient of the Service to the Armed Forces Hero Award; and the

WHEREAS, The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization, led by volunteers, that provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies; it does this through services that are consistent with its congressional charter and the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; and

WHEREAS, On May 29, 1917, Henry P. Davison chartered the Nassau County Chapter of the American Red Cross, the first chapter of many to form across Long Island; since its inception, its workers and volunteers have worked tirelessly to fulfill the mission of the American Red Cross; and

WHEREAS, In its first two years, the Chapter directed its activities almost exclusively to World War I; Camp Mills, later Mitchel Field, became the center of its Military Relief Program; and

WHEREAS, After the War, volunteers assisted returning soldiers in filing claims for disabled servicemen, widows and dependents, and collected and provided clothing and other articles for hospitalized veterans, needy families and victims of disaster; and

WHEREAS, The American Red Cross on Long Island then worked with other local authorities to improve community and individual health; free clinics were established at Red Cross headquarters for mental health patients, prenatal care, tuberculosis, and eye and heart patients; and

WHEREAS, In 1932, during the Great Depression, the production unit of the Chapter dispersed over 200,000 yards of government cotton and thousands of finished garments, and distributed innumerable bags of flour to needy residents; and

WHEREAS, With the onset of World War II, The American Red Cross of Long Island expanded and demands for Chapter services doubled, tripled and quadrupled; however, with a serviceman in almost every family, volunteers were always available to help; and

WHEREAS, In 1941, the United States Army officially requested the Red Cross to supplement existing production of essential hospital dressings; the Nassau Chapter Production workers filled gigantic quotas year by year; and

WHEREAS, As the Armed Forces swelled, so did the Chapter Home Service Program; volunteers became liaison between these recruits and their families back home, handling thousands of pieces of correspondence and countless calls through both Chapter and Branch offices to keep the lines of communication open between Nassau County and its fighting men; and

WHEREAS, The Chapter's Motor Corps grew to be one of the largest in the country during World War II, providing round-the-clock ambulance service to three hospitals, staffing the Mitchel Field Evacuation and Debarkation Service, driving police cars for messenger service, and aiding Chapter Service, day and night; and

WHEREAS, The first Red Cross Blood Session in Nassau was held at Meadowbrook Hospital on October 16, 1941; by the time the war was over, 65,507 pints of blood had been collected for the Armed Forces; today, the Red Cross supplies 40 percent of the nation's blood; and

WHEREAS, After the end of World War II, the Chapter focused on civilian programs; Disaster Service, organized during the war years to meet any national emergency, has turned to the relief of victims of fires, flood and storm; in 1954, the Office of Volunteers was established to recruit and train the men and women who make these programs possible; and

WHEREAS, During the Vietnam War, The Voice From Home Program, first offered in 1960, presented a new way of meeting its chartered obligation to servicemen and their families; by direct request of the Department of Defense, The American Red Cross on Long Island took on assigned quotas of blood for the Armed Forces, of hospital ditty-bags, sewing kits and recreational items; and

WHEREAS, In the 1970s, many Vietnamese refugees made a home in Long Island with the help of the Red Cross; in addition, both the Red Cross and Heart Association trained instructors to teach Nassau County employees how to perform CPR; and

WHEREAS, During the 1990s, the Red Cross responded to the crashes of Avianca Flight 52 and TWA Flight 800, and an AIDS Awareness Program was launched in partnership with AIDS Institute of the New York State Department of Health for teenagers and young adults; and

WHEREAS, The dawn of the 21st Century came with tragedy; after the horrific attacks of 9/11, the Red Cross immediately responded to lower

Manhattan and set up "Drop-in" Disaster Counseling services at the Garden City Hotel for impacted adults and children; and

WHEREAS, The American Red Cross on Long Island's diligent response to hurricanes and natural disasters, including Hurricane Irene in 2011, and Superstorm Sandy in 2012, strengthened partnerships with local government and community partners, as they managed shelters across Nassau and Suffolk counties for months and assisted in rebuilding efforts; and

WHEREAS, Preparing the community to respond to disasters remains a focus, with the launch of the Home Fire Campaign in 2014, and The Pillowcase Program in 2015, ensuring safer communities across Long Island; and

WHEREAS, As The American Red Cross on Long Island honors its past and looks to the future, they see a local organization with a national and international reach, powered by its volunteers to deliver its mission of alleviating human suffering; and

WHEREAS, The American Red Cross on Long Island is always there to help people, and to prevent, prepare for, and respond to life's emergencies; and

WHEREAS, This auspicious occasion presents a unique opportunity for this Legislative Body to commend The American Red Cross on Long Island, its expert staff and dedicated volunteers, fully confident that it will continue to play a leadership role in the community for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our

attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of the great State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend The American Red Cross on Long Island upon the occasion of celebrating its 100th Anniversary, and to pay tribute to this year's honorees on June 15, 2017; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The American Red Cross on Long Island, and the aforementioned honorees.