

## Q|A

Cuthbert Langley,  
Communications Director  
Red Cross SC



### How do donations to the Red Cross help the areas affected?

What we do in a middle of big disaster, say Hurricane Florence for example, 91 cents of every dollar we raise will go to support the people impacted by that storm. That will be supplying cots, food, comfort items and other supplies in our shelters. That is also distributing clean up kits, those are very important especially after a big rain event like Florence. The kits have bleach, mops, brooms, trash bags, those kinds of things. And then it also goes into the long term recovery as well, because this is not going to be a recovery effort that ends in a month. It's gonna take months if not more than a year to continue helping people impacted by the storm.

### What are ways for people to help?

The best thing to do is either giving your time -- you can go to [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) and sign up to help us out.

And then also blood drives, we are always in need of blood. Every two seconds someone in this country needs blood, so it's essential we are out in communities supplying much needed blood to area hospitals.

### Are you guys doing a lot with Hurricane Michael?

We are. We just sent 18 volunteers from the South Carolina Red Cross down to Georgia and Florida to help with the recovery effort there. The volunteers from South Carolina who are going will be helping to run the shelters, they will be out in the communities delivering hot meals to folks in need. And then also a really important aspect of a recovery is disaster mental health. We have trained volunteers who go and help people process what they're going through.

### Where and how should people donate?

[Redcross.org/donate](http://Redcross.org/donate) is the easiest way to donate and people can also text the word [redcross](http://redcross) to 90999. That will go to our disaster relief fund, so that goes to help us prepare for and respond to disasters. ...The money is really needed year round as we prepare for and wait for...disasters.

To see the entire interview,  
check out

[www.tribaltribune.com](http://www.tribaltribune.com).

■ Ted Fairchild

# 'Home' is where the heart is

HALEY  
HAVELOCK  
Column



The only home I had ever known was 1021 Harvard Ave., Panama City, Fla. It wasn't even a home. It was my refuge.

The way my nana would wheel down her ramp to smother me in love, the carving of all of her grandchildren's name in the driveway, her neighbor Mr. Hope's smile when he saw that we were coming to visit.

This was home.

I stayed there for three months when my little sister was dying in the hospital. I stayed there when I needed to be near family. I stayed there when I just needed to go away.

This was my home. This was my refuge.

I was scrolling through Facebook and saw that Hurricane Matthew took a pretty big toll on the Panhandle, which is where they lived. I saw big trees that have fallen on houses, I saw some of my favorite restaurants were destroyed. I saw what looked like a post-apocalyptic town.

I heard my mother's voice crack when I called her telling that I was worried about them.

"I am, too," she said.

Her voice was not reassuring. She didn't tell me that things would be okay.

When I got home, I saw her on the couch. She was anxiously dialing her parents every minute. Still no answer.

The only thing we knew was that a tree fell on their house that was built in the 1970s; we heard this through the grapevine. One of their neighbors told their children, who told my mom.

I felt hopeless, knowing my nana would not leave until the wind would take her away.

My mom called them every hour, and when she heard my nana's voice, she broke down.

Nana told everyone that she would not leave her house, no matter what.

The tree that fell on her house was holding the roof together. It split through their living room.

My granddaddy chimed in and told my mother not to worry. He saved all the pictures of his grandchildren, and they were safe from harm.

However, my grandparents weren't safe.

A group of men came into their house with flashlights looking to steal whatever was left in the debris of chaos. My nana, who is stronger



Shirley Wommack and Haley Havelock sit down for the first time since Hurricane Matthew. photo // Haley Havelock

than any one woman I know, told them to take whatever is left because there was nothing.

The pictures of their neighborhood looked post-apocalyptic. It looked like a nightmare. It looked as if this once beaming town had lost all light.

Nanny and Pop own a cute little restaurant called "Pop's Dogs." The news showed the picture of their restaurant. It looked haunting. The hotdog statue that greeted every customer was gone, the trailer knocked over.

This wasn't a "hurrication" for me. This was devastating for me. It made me sick to my stomach.

My two best friends, Deshawn Mazyk, Ben Sarle and my mother drove down to Panama City and went to go assess the damage and try to drag her out of her house.

Ben texted me: "This is bad, super bad."

I didn't even get the text until they were on the way home from Panama City because all the cell towers were down.

Ben and Deshawn spent their weekend helping my parents deliver food and water and supplies to people in Panama City. They helped gather things from the house and gave my mother support. They are not just friends, they are family.

My nana showed up with my granddaddy and my Aunt Terry at 6 p.m. on a sunny Saturday. They were exhausted, their van packed

with everything that they owned and was salvageable.

My nana told me that some looters came to their house but got scared off. A neighbor down the street got shot because of someone robbing their house. Their neighborhood was truly a warzone.

My cousin Erin came to my house and we are all still stuck. They are having to replan their whole life and start from scratch. Her boyfriend Adam even lost his dog in the hurricane.

A lot of what they have has been destroyed which is upsetting because a lot of things have been in my family for generations. A lot of the stuff represents our family, like the dining table we would all eat at, or even the Lazy Boy chair my granddaddy always sits in.

A lot of what they loved was blown away, lost or stolen. There is one thing that no amount of devastation can take, and that is family.



A tree fell after Hurricane Michael on the Wommack family's home in Florida. photo // Haley Havelock