



# Disaster Speaks

**What it is** Disaster Speaks is a powerful school-based event that gives you the opportunity to personalize disaster. Large boxes will represent homes lost and will have stories attached about someone who has made the unthinkable journey through disaster. After viewing the boxes, students will have the opportunity to share the steps they will take to become prepared and fill out an American Red Cross Emergency Communication Card.

**How it helps** On average, the victims of nearly 70,000 disasters each year rely on the Red Cross for immediate help. By holding a Disaster Speaks event at your school, you can educate people on Red Cross disaster services and empower them to take control before a disaster strikes. You are also acting as a voice for those who have had their lives forever changed by disaster.

**Get started** Before beginning, contact your local Red Cross chapter or Service to the Armed Forces station for assistance. They will be able to guide you to available resources that can make this an impactful event for your school. Once you have established contact with your chapter, there are three steps you should complete to begin:

- 1 Decide on a location and date for your event. Choose an area of the school that is visible to students, such as the main hallway or the cafeteria. Be sure to follow your school's procedures to get permission. September is National Preparedness Month, so consider participating by holding this event and reinforcing the importance of preparedness.
- 2 Get in touch with local appliance or big-box stores about having large boxes donated. You will need these for the display, as they will represent the homes lost to disaster.
- 3 Create a display board to place at the event. You should include the name of the event (Disaster Speaks), the Red Cross logo and the question: "What will you do to prepare?" Students will reflect on the stories and the things they will do to become prepared on this board.

**Want more information?  
Email us!**

[youthinvolvement@redcross.org](mailto:youthinvolvement@redcross.org)

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Only 53% of Americans think they know what to do during the first five minutes of a natural disaster.

## What next?

The steps to put a Disaster Speaks event into action are simple! Just do the following things, and you're on your way to making a big impact:

- Print out the stories that have been created for this event. Feel free to use local stories in addition to the ones provided. Your chapter can help you get these. This is your event, so customize it! The more boxes and stories you have, the better.
- Attach the stories to the front of the donated boxes. You don't need to put anything inside the boxes; they are simply intended to represent homes lost to disaster.
- Place the display board in a place where students can participate after viewing the stories. This will lead to a more meaningful response from them. Have markers on hand so that students can share how they will take steps to prepare themselves.
- Print out enough Emergency Communication Cards for your peers to complete. This will be a great first step in becoming prepared. Talk to your chapter about getting additional preparedness information to hand out, as well.
- Have some items on hand that will attract people to your event. Candy, Red Cross gear, baked goods or other creative giveaways will work well.

By following all of the provided steps and starting with your local chapter or station, you can coordinate a successful Disaster Speaks event that moves students to prepare for a disaster. Don't stop here, though! Check out the other available activity guides to help your school stay involved. Remember, if we wait, it's too late.

Before beginning, get in touch with your local Red Cross chapter or station for assistance. You can find contact information at **redcross.org**.

### SHAKE IT UP!

- » Talk to your chapter about using local stories in addition to the standard ones.
- » Combine this event with Preparedness Week to make an even bigger impact.

### SHOW AND TELL

- » Download the Red Cross preparedness apps and share them with your friends and family! Go to **redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps**.
- » Share your pictures and videos of your Preparedness Week by sending them to **youthinvolvement@redcross.org**.
- » Do you know about Schooltube? **schooltube.com** Let others see your Disaster Speaks event by making a video.

### RESOURCES

- » Disaster Speaks Stories
- » American Red Cross Emergency Contact Card