



## **Red Cross to close Madison Chapter House to focus on community programs**

**By Independent Press**

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The Colonial Crossroads Chapter of the American Red Cross has unveiled a new strategic plan to bring programs and services directly into its service area. As part of this new model, the Madison Chapter house at One Madison Avenue will be sold to consolidate administrative functions and deliver cost-efficiencies.

"As an organization serving more than 128,000 people, we are constantly looking at ways to better serve our residents and bring our programs and services – like health and safety training, blood drives, educational classes and community support – out into our services area. We cover a wide geographic location and realize that by partnering with community organizations in our ten towns we can become more visible and more useful to all of our residents," said Mike Wattick, chairman of the board. The chapter covers the towns of Berkeley Heights, the Chathams, East Hanover, Florham Park, Long Hill Township, Madison, New Providence, Springfield and Summit.

The move will centralize administration of the Colonial Crossroads Chapter of the American Red Cross at the Summit Chapter House on Springfield Avenue

The model is already moving forward in Madison, where the Chapter has partnered with the Madison Ambulance Corps for blood drives, the Madison Pool for Water Safety and Lifeguarding Classes and the Community House for Youth Safety Training. The Chapter has formed a committee to reach out to neighborhood organizations like the Rotary, Elks, YMCA, high schools, public pools and others to advance this same type of model in all of the Chapter's service area.

Christy Hodde, executive director of the Colonial Crossroads Chapter, said "I believe we can have a greater impact if we can bring our services to each "Main Street" in these towns. We will still hold health and safety classes at our Summit Chapter house which is quite large, but unfortunately our space at the Madison house was very limited and was unable to meet the growing demand of our blood drives and classes."

Community organizations who partner with the Chapter will be offered health and safety training classes for their staff or board and be included in all media and public relations communications issued by the chapter. The sale will greatly reduce the organization's overhead and expenses and these savings will be redirected to instructor training and the purchase of new training equipment.

Madison resident and board member Bruce Groves, stated, "While the Madison house provides us with visibility in the community, our chapter has really outgrown that property. Even though the chapter will not be physically located at One Madison Avenue, the Red Cross will very much remain in Madison and continue to serve the residents as it has done since 1917."

The Colonial Crossroads Chapter represents the merger of the Southeast Morris and Summit Area Red Cross Chapters in 2007. That alliance strengthened and increased services through the consolidation and the chapter had its busiest season this last winter when it assisted 93 individuals in a three month period, mainly due to house fires. Through its Health and Safety Program, more than 18,000 individuals were taught life-saving skills like First Aid, CPR and AED, Water Safety and Babysitting Skills over the past year.

Jeannie Tsukamoto, Madison Council President and a long-time Red Cross volunteer says, "I applaud the Red Cross chapter's efforts in seeking partnerships with other Madison organizations to deliver enhanced services in these challenging economic times." Tsukamoto, also Madison Council's public safety liaison this year, adds "I encourage other community groups to explore collaboration opportunities with the Red Cross to help prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. It's a win-win for our community."

Local Red Cross programs and services include disaster preparedness education and response services; life-saving skills training such as CPR, AED, First Aid, and water safety; armed forces emergency services, transportation and blood services. To find out more about how you can donate your expertise, time, money or blood; or to help your family, business, or community prepare for emergencies, visit [ccnjredcross.org](http://ccnjredcross.org).

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