



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SAFELY OUT™ PROJECT PROVIDES BREAKTHROUGH APPROACH TO
EVACUATE THE VULNERABLE DURING DISASTERS**

Pilot Project Unveiled on First Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina Aims for National Impact

(August 29, 2006 – Sacramento, CA) -- Citizen Voice, in partnership with the American Red Cross Sacramento Sierra Chapter, today announced a groundbreaking pilot project, SAFELY OUT™, to help safely evacuate the vulnerable during both natural and man-made disasters. SAFELY OUT is designed as a neighbor helping neighbor evacuation effort, assisting vulnerable populations in reaching safety and relieving the burden first responders and caregivers often shoulder alone. It is believed to be the first strategic approach in the U.S. targeting our most vulnerable during disasters that involves the entire community in the evacuation effort.

Sacramento has a critical need to develop enhanced evacuation plans in light of recent reports of dangerous levee weakness throughout the region. According to *The Sacramento Bee* on January 22, 2006, “More than 150,000 of Sacramento’s most vulnerable residents – the elderly, the poor and the disabled - live in areas prone to substantial flooding, and local officials acknowledge they don’t know whether they could quickly get them to safe ground.” The sooner these residents can be helped to reach safety, the quicker they can receive any care and treatment they need and reunite with loved ones upon whom they may depend.

Sacramento’s own Gary Dietrich, a broadcast political analyst and president of Citizen Voice, developed the idea for SAFELY OUT™ after Mr. Dietrich volunteered with the Red Cross to assist in the recovery effort following Hurricane Katrina and the evacuation effort for Hurricane Rita, in addition to broadcasting from the hurricane zone. “I saw how desperate some were and the danger facing the vulnerable who couldn’t get themselves out of harm’s way,” explained Dietrich. “One couple came up asking for help. They had just received a call from the morgue in New Orleans telling them that their father was dead. I was stunned. My heart sank. SAFELY OUT can help reduce those kinds of heart wrenching stories.”

“The Red Cross assists with disasters in all areas of the U.S. Natural and manmade disasters are a threat to any community,” explained Julie Van Dooren, Chief Executive Officer for the American Red Cross Sacramento Sierra Chapter. “We see SAFELY OUT™ as a great benefit to our community.”

The SAFELY OUT™ Kit is the foundation of the project. Elements of the kit include:

- SAFELY OUT™ Door Hanger (that can be used to signal for assistance using the red “NEED HELP” side, and let others know when the vulnerable are “SAFELY OUT™” using the green side)

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- SAFELY OUT™ Refrigerator Magnet Booklet (with essential contact and evacuation information tailored to the needs of each individual or family)
- SAFELY OUT™ Helper Information Sheets (giving those volunteering to assist a vulnerable person the information they need to help)
- SAFELY OUT™ Storage Bag (for keeping spare medicines, medical insurance information, etc. safe inside the refrigerator – a place that is air tight, water tight, and fire resistant)
- SAFELY OUT™ Wallet Information Card (carried by the vulnerable in the event of disaster while away from home)
- SAFELY OUT™ Kit How-To Brochure
- A permanent marker and erasable ink pen to complete the Kit contents
- An adhesive strip to hang the “NEED HELP” sign in a window should the front door not be easily visible

Kits will be available in a variety of ways beginning September 11, the fifth anniversary of 9/11, and can also be ordered starting then through www.CitizenVoice.org. A suggested \$10 contribution per kit is requested. Some kits will be sponsored by local churches, nonprofits, businesses and others and distributed for free, especially to those with limited means. Those interested in becoming a SAFELY OUT™ project sponsor can contact the project at info@CitizenVoice.org or (916) 503-3194. Project sponsors receive appreciation and public recognition in multiple ways based on their level of involvement.

ABOUT CITIZEN VOICE

Citizen Voice is a 501C3 nonprofit, nonpartisan movement with a mission to inspire, inform and involve citizens in the public arena on behalf of all, especially the vulnerable. Citizen Voice fulfills its mission by fostering active participation in the public arena as well as involving citizens in both practical immediate intervention and work towards long-term changes that protect the vulnerable. For more information on Citizen Voice, visit www.CitizenVoice.org.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN RED CROSS SACRAMENTO SIERRA CHAPTER

Founded in 1898, the Sacramento Sierra Chapter of the American Red Cross serves 2 million people in Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Tuolumne, East Yolo and East Nevada counties. The chapter responds to roughly one emergency each day, providing victims of disasters like wildfires, floods, earthquakes and house-fires with shelter, food, clothing and comfort in those crucial first days after a disaster. For more information on local Red Cross programs and services, visit www.sacsierrareddcross.org.

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