

Pillowcase Project Helps Local Students Prepare for Emergencies

Red Cross, LG&E highlight program importance during National Preparedness Month

(LOUISVILLE, Ky.) — When natural disasters strike, being prepared and having necessary emergency supplies in place can make all the difference. For elementary school students across the region, preparing for an emergency starts in the form of a single white pillowcase, a decorating kit, crayons, glow sticks and first-aid supplies.

Since 2010, the American Red Cross Kentuckiana Region, with support from area partner Louisville Gas and Electric Company, has proactively led an engaging, age-appropriate emergency preparedness program, called the Pillowcase Project, for about 12,500 elementary students in 33 schools across the region.

“A disaster can be a frightening experience for a child, but having a family plan in place alleviates some of the emotional stress that individuals face following tragedy,” said Jennifer Adrio, American Red Cross Kentuckiana Region CEO. “Thanks to the support of LG&E, the American Red Cross has been able to teach thousands of Kentuckiana children how to prepare themselves and their families before disaster strikes.”

Through the Pillowcase Project, Red Cross volunteers guide students through an interactive presentation about the importance of being prepared for natural disasters most common in Kentucky. The program also encourages students to share the lessons learned during the presentation with their family members and to discuss having an emergency preparedness plan for their home.

Each student receives a pillowcase printed with suggested essential items students may need in the event of an emergency. Several items, including first-aid supplies, glow sticks and crayons, are provided during the Pillowcase Project presentations to help students start their collection.

The students are then encouraged to continue gathering personal items and precious keepsakes at home that they would want with them during an emergency. If kept in a secure, easily-accessible location such as under their beds, the pillowcases enable a child to act quickly with all their important items in one easy-to-carry bag.

“Public safety during emergency situations is always our priority,” said Greg Thomas, vice president of Electric Distribution for LG&E. “The Pillowcase Project is a great program that emphasizes how important emergency preparedness is for a younger audience and helps students feel prepared in the event of a disaster.”

“Our students enjoyed preparing their pillowcase but they also learned valuable safety information,” shared Angela Boone, Family Resource Center Coordinator at Breckinridge-Franklin Elementary School. “It helped our students to think about safety and discuss a safety plan with their guardians.”

The Pillowcase Project was created as a result of a heightened need for emergency preparedness support for children following major disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

LG&E and the Red Cross are long-standing public protection partners, especially during major restoration events and emergency situations, like the 2008 wind storm and 2009 ice storm.

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Louisville Gas and Electric Company and Kentucky Utilities Company, part of the PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) family of companies, are regulated utilities that serve a total of 1.2 million customers and have consistently ranked among the best companies for customer service in the United States. LG&E serves 321,000 natural gas

and 397,000 electric customers in Louisville and 16 surrounding counties. KU serves 543,000 customers in 77 Kentucky counties and five counties in Virginia. More information is available at www.lge-ku.com and www.pplweb.com.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org/Louisville.

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