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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AMERICAN RED CROSS IN GREATER NEW YORK
SALUTES ITS OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS**

Award Winners From All Five Boroughs, Rockland County
-- High School Students To Senior Citizens --

Hosted by Actor Elisabeth Rohm from NBC's *Law & Order*

New York – May 30, 2006 – Twenty-three volunteers from New York City and Rockland County, along with Citigroup Inc. and the Flushing Chinese Business Association, will receive special honors from the American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY) for their extraordinary commitment to helping New Yorkers and those in need elsewhere with disaster relief services, preparation and safety education. The 2006 awards will be presented at the annual volunteer recognition ceremony held at the chapter's headquarters in Manhattan this Thursday, June 1, 2006.

Hosted by actor Elisabeth Rohm, a New York Red Cross volunteer who is best known for her role as an assistant district attorney on the NBC hit program *Law & Order*, the event will mark the beginning of ARC/GNY's second century of service to the people of New York City and Rockland, Sullivan Orange and Putnam Counties.

During the past year, chapter volunteers responded to hurricanes in the Gulf Coast States and more than 3,000 local disasters and emergencies with effectiveness and compassion to bring crucial relief to thousands of people. During 2005, ARC/GNY provided more than 115,000 New Yorkers with emergency preparedness information and lifesaving training, assisted 102,577 adults and children at disasters and emergencies, and trained 86,212 people in lifesaving skills.

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“All this could not have been accomplished without the support of nearly 5,000 volunteers who give their time, energy, caring and commitment to ARC/GNY and the people of this area,” said Theresa A. Bischoff, CEO, American Red Cross in Greater New York. “Our volunteer family provides our community with dedicated people who enable us to achieve our mission to comfort those who are affected by emergencies and educate everyone about the importance of being prepared should an emergency occur. They work tirelessly responding to fires, teaching lifesaving safety skills, and performing many other important duties. Each and every one has something special to offer, and we are all the richer for their dedication to our well-being.”

Now in its 100th year, the American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY) helps nine million people in New York City and Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan Counties prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. ARC/GNY provides immediate aid to more than 100,000 people affected by more than 3,000 emergencies a year – from fires and water main breaks, to building collapses and blackouts. The Red Cross also helps New Yorkers stay prepared for emergencies by offering hundreds of health and safety courses on such subjects as first aid, disaster preparedness, swim safety and adult/child CPR throughout the region. For more information, call 1-877 RED CROSS (1-877-733-2767), or visit www.nyredcross.org.

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AMERICAN RED CROSS IN GREATER NEW YORK 2006 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

Clara Barton Award - Sally Phipps

ARC/GNY’s most prestigious award recognizes an exceptional volunteer who has made outstanding contributions by serving the organization in multiple capacities for at least five years.

Under this **Manhattan** resident’s leadership, the Monday night Disaster Action Team (DAT) in the borough has been a cornerstone of the chapter’s DAT program, offering superb client assistance and becoming a training ground for new DAT members. Ms. Phipps also helped develop and implement a successful ride-along program that has oriented and educated members of the ARC/GNY board of trustees, local and national reporters and celebrities about the vital mission of volunteers in the chapter’s daily disaster responses. Ms. Phipps has unfailingly demonstrated leadership, compassion and grace consistent with the principles and spirit embodied in this award that bears the name of Clara Barton, the American Red Cross founder and American ideal of leadership and compassion.

“I think it’s important to live your life for something that’s bigger than you,” said Ms. Phipps. “For me it’s relieving human suffering. To be able to do this through the organization that does it best is amazing.”

Lifetime Achievement Award - Laura Strobel (awarded posthumously)

Honors an exceptional life-long volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution to the organization.

When Laura Strobel of **Staten Island** was a child, her mother and one of her mother's friends were Red Cross volunteers. Deciding to become a volunteer just seemed natural. Ms. Strobel, who recently passed away at age 89, volunteered for the American Red Cross in Staten Island for nearly 30 years. Her first responsibility was to drive people from their homes to the doctor. Then, she became a disaster worker and responded to floods. A dedicated member of the Thursday night patrol group – a community outreach program that staffs tables, provides Red Cross information and answers questions at street fairs and parades – she also was a willing responder to any disaster. She served her community during 9/11, the Exxon Mobil explosion in February 2003 and helped victims and emergency personnel after the Staten Island Ferry crash in October of that year. On August 14, 2003, when the NYC blackout occurred, Ms. Strobel assisted in all areas of logistics and was a chapter shelter manager to help people cool down that evening and the following day. A fellow volunteer called Laura “an outstanding unbelievable lady” and “my idol.”

Partnership Award - Travis Betz and Belinda Peng:

Exemplifies and promotes outstanding job performance and cooperative partnership work between a volunteer and staff member.

These **Manhattan** residents make a terrific pair. Travis Betz, ARC/GNY director of logistics, is a former military field medic who has done relief work in Nepal and Uganda. Belinda Peng is a pre-med student and former investment banker. Since August 2004, they have worked together to strengthen the chapter's response capacity. They reorganized a variety of logistics procedures to allow the chapter to respond to disasters more effectively and appropriately.

“Volunteers become dependable when you inspire them,” said Ms. Peng. Mr. Betz agreed, and added that motivating volunteers works best when “matching their interests with Red Cross' needs.”

Support Services Award - Dr. Ann Merlino

Honors an exceptional volunteer who has served for a minimum of one year and who functions in a support services role.

A retired dean of the College of Staten Island, City University of New York, and a **Staten Island** resident, she has volunteered with that borough's area office for 31 years. As a Staten Island advisory board member, she has guided the fundraising program and doubled the size of the advisory board. She introduced "Red Cross Sunday in March," with board members hosting fundraisers at their homes, and she has become involved in functions that reach out to the community, raise funds, educate residents and recruit volunteers.

Youth Services Award - Dmitry Miretskiy

Recognizes an exceptional youth volunteer within ARC/GNY who has served for at least one year and has demonstrated creativity in developing youth services, organization and leadership in an activity that reflects honor on the youth volunteer and on the Red Cross, and/or an accomplishment of exceptional merit that enhances the Red Cross.

Now a senior at Midwood High School in **Brooklyn**, Mr. Miretskiy began his volunteer work for the chapter in 2003 as a ninth grader. As a youth leadership board member, he volunteers to support community outreach, accounting, health and safety services and disaster services. He loves science. He has worked at Sloan Kettering in preparation to enter the Intel Science Talent Search competition and will attend Rutgers University this fall to major in biology and medicine.

He said the youth group, which has 1,900 members, is "...a huge collaboration of volunteers who want to help the community. You see that the kids really care and they're out there and it's genuine. Your work pays off. You don't need an award—that is your reward."

John McGee Memorial Award - Suzanne Lutz

This new award recognizes the work of a paid staff member, nominated by a volunteer, who has made an outstanding contribution to strengthening ARC/GNY's volunteer program. It is named in memory of John McGee, who as a volunteer and staff member served as a disaster services training instructor, a Queens disaster action team (DAT) member, a volunteer resources coordinator, a youth services volunteer and much more.

Suzanne Lutz became director of the Staten Island Area Office in April 2004. A resident of **Staten Island**, Ms. Lutz is involved in all volunteer activities and includes volunteers in many aspects of area office activities. She solicits their thoughts and input, and welcomes them at all Red Cross Staten Island functions. Not one to stand on ceremony, when Ms. Lutz works with volunteers on a community project or at a disaster scene, doing the same things that volunteers have done for years but that are new to her, she always says, "Teach me, you guys are the experts."

“I love the Red Cross,” said Ms. Lutz. “This is my favorite of all the jobs I’ve ever held. I love the idea that I’m helping the people in my community and I love being able to help my volunteers with anything that they need.”

Disaster Services Award - Nanci Hodash

Exceptional leadership that has had a measurable impact on the delivery of service in the area of disaster service.

In February 2000, Nanci Hodash was a **Palisades (Rockland County)** stay-at-home mom with two children. As a volunteer, she initially handled administrative duties but soon began offering assistance at the scene of nearly every Rockland disaster. Shortly after 9/11, she registered for 24/7 on-call duty, working 12-hour shifts to support rescue workers at the triage site and helping at the Family Assistance Center at Pier 94. When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, Ms. Hodash, now a seasoned Disaster Action Team (DAT) volunteer, assisted with casework, feeding and sheltering at the disaster assistance service center five days a week for three weeks. To those in the emergency services field in Rockland, her name is synonymous with American Red Cross.

“I want to give back,” she said. “I like being able to give someone in trouble a place to stay so that they can get their thoughts together and figure out where to go from here.”

Health and Safety Services Award - Frank Contrera

Presented to an exceptional volunteer who has served for at least one year and has made outstanding contributions to the area of health and safety services.

During his first 20 years of volunteer service, Frank Contrera of **Staten Island** also was a New York City police officer who rose to the level of detective first grade. Following retirement a year ago, he decided to give back to his community as a Red Cross volunteer health and safety instructor. Quickly, he became one of the shining stars of the growing volunteer instructor program. His attention to detail and concern for students keeps people returning for additional Red Cross training. When he broke his ankle shortly after his retirement, Mr. Contrera continued to teach every class for which he had committed – on crutches, hauling his large folder and typewriter to each class.

Corporate Community Partnership Award - Citigroup Inc.

Presented to an organization that strives to help the American Red Cross in Greater New York help others.

Following the landfall of Hurricane Katrina, Citigroup Inc., its subsidiaries and affiliates responded generously and creatively to the needs of the victims of this country's worst natural disaster. In addition to Citigroup's commitment of up to \$10 million for hurricane disaster relief, it also pledged to provide substantial volunteer support from employees.

The New York Hurricane Call Center operated by ARC/GNY was one of the first beneficiaries of the concern and compassion of Citigroup team members. Following orientation and training, the Citigroup volunteers became part of a long-term operation that ultimately handled in excess of 19,000 calls. In addition to making substantial personal donations, later matched by Citigroup, employees made numerous inquiries about how they could be directly involved in providing relief to victims in the Gulf Coast.

Citigroup committed to assembling a team that would be trained and deployed to volunteer with the American Red Cross. Thirty employees were chosen, trained by ARC/GNY and deployed to Louisiana for two weeks last November, helping to rebuild communities and provide relief to hurricane survivors. Citigroup was the first company to ever provide this type of direct service support to an American Red Cross relief operation. As a result, a new paradigm has been developed for disaster response that engages corporate volunteerism with the American Red Cross.

"Citigroup is proud to be the first company ever to provide this type of direct service support through the American Red Cross," said Charles Prince, CEO of Citigroup. "We are committed to helping the affected communities recover and rebuild and this program reflects that commitment through the power of our people and the values embodied in our shared responsibilities."

Community Services Award - Harris Lam

Recognizing an exceptional volunteer who has served for at least one year within areas such as community outreach, the emergency communications center, international training services, or other sectors.

Since he began volunteering in January of 2005, Mr. Lam of **Brooklyn** has made an enormous contribution to the community outreach team. In the past seven months, he has taught more than 22 *Prepare New York* and *Ready New York* programs to deliver important emergency preparedness information to hundreds of New Yorkers. He also distributed ARC/GNY preparedness brochures to thousands more at street and health fairs, and has helped the chapter reach special needs populations such as seniors, people with disabilities and people living in flood zones.

“Volunteering was something that I wanted to do,” said Mr. Lam. I’ve enhanced my skills in public presentations, which I’ve found to be very valuable. If it helps even one person to meaningfully think about how to prepare for another disaster, the program will have done its work.”

Good Neighbor Award - Flushing Chinese Business Association

Presented to an individual or organization outside of the American Red Cross for making a significant humanitarian contribution to the local community in support of American Red Cross in Greater New York.

The Flushing Chinese Business Association (FCBA) is a 300-member non-profit organization formed in 1982 to improve the local business environment and benefit the Chinese community in Flushing, Queens, New York. The day after Hurricane Katrina reached land, FCBA’s board decided that it was imperative to help people affected by the storm. Within days, FCBA held the first of three press conferences for local media. As a result, between September 8th (just 10 days after the hurricane) and September 16th, the association collected \$80,000. Ultimately, the organization raised \$140,000 from its members for Hurricane Katrina relief, well beyond its ambitious goal of \$100,000.

“When there’s a disaster, Red Cross is the best place to give to,” said FCBA President Peter Koo. “They have the experience, the people and offices around the world. I always encourage people to give to Red Cross.” “Even in good times, the Red Cross needs our support. It does so much for people affected by fires and floods. It might not always be in the news, but American Red Cross in Greater New York is doing more than most people realize.”

Kathryn Walter Stein Award - Alexander Stavis

Honors the generous donation of its namesake, recognizing an individual who has served for at least one year and who has done exemplary work in aquatics and/or service to the elderly.

Alex Stavis of **Manhattan** has volunteered with ARC/GNY since 1975 and is dedicated to teaching lifeguard training, first aid, CPR, AED and swimming. He teaches under the condition that qualified candidates who cannot afford to enroll in ARC/GNY courses are never turned away. He feels that this is important for students, because certification and lifeguard experience will stand out on a college application. Alex also believes that when students have the opportunity for a higher-paying job, they can work fewer hours, leaving them more time to study. Alex manages to volunteer many hours with ARC/GNY while holding two jobs. Above all this, Alex also remains on call 24/7 as a caregiver for his dad, who will turn 100 in June.

Diversity Award - Kathleen Donnelly, Sylvia Gordon, Miriam Herman, Maria Iglesias, Lisa Kasper, Teresa McCarthy, Mercedes Payano, Anne Walsh, Carolyn Wilkerson

Honors a volunteer or group of volunteers who has served for at least one year and whose official job duties do not encompass diversity-related responsibilities, but who incorporates diversity-related tasks into the job.

This dedicated team of volunteers – Ms. Donnelly, Ms. Herman, Ms. Inglesias, Ms. Kasper, Ms. McCarthy and Ms. Wilkerson from **Manhattan**; Ms. Gordon and Ms. Walsh from **The Bronx**; and Ms. Payano from Corona, **Queens** – are from different ethnic backgrounds and have sustained the chapter’s Telephone Reassurance Program since its inception in 1996. This little-known effort fulfills the chapter’s mission to serve a diverse community. The volunteers provide community outreach by maintaining regular telephone contact with primarily homebound and socially isolated senior citizens who reside in the New York City area. They develop long-standing, supportive relationships with their listening skills and offer each person a gentle, sympathetic ear when family support is lacking. These volunteers regularly go above and beyond expectations, coming to the chapter on holidays or in adverse weather conditions because they know people are waiting to hear from them.

First Year Award - Jerry Hymowitz

Honors an exceptional volunteer who has served for less than one year and has made an outstanding contribution to the success of a particular service area or project activity.

What do you do when you’re diagnosed with liver cancer and know that you’ll probably need a transplant? If you’re retired optician Jerry Hymowitz from **Brooklyn**, you throw yourself into helping others by volunteering while you wait for news. Right after Hurricane Katrina, over the protests of his doctor, but with the blessing of his wife and two children, Mr. Hymowitz became a volunteer. For three weeks, he served in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Slidell, Louisiana, learned to drive a 30-foot-long boxcar that he helped to load with food and supplies, and distributed these items in New Orleans’ devastated 9th Ward. He became acting assistant manager at a Red Cross shelter and helped serve three meals a day to shelter residents. He spent 13-hour days on the phone, tracking down supplies and helping find apartments and homes for more than 1,630 storm survivors.

“It was one of the best things that I’ve ever had happen in my life,” said Mr. Hymowitz. “I promised God that I’d give back a little bit of what he’s giving me. I want to help the New York Chapter with the next hurricane.”

Youth College Scholarship Award - Damien Abreu and Karen Kwan

Recognizes two exceptional youth volunteers within ARC/GNY who are currently high school seniors, are planning on attending accredited four-year colleges or universities, and have served for at least two years.

Damien Abreu of **The Bronx** is a senior at Brooklyn Technical High School and joined the ARC/GNY youth group in June 2003. He serves as an office assistant in the volunteer resources department and as executive board co-chair of the special events area. Mr. Abreu supervised two youth coordinators and helped to lead this team as they prepared, coordinated and planned two major annual fundraisers. He has dedicated 300 hours to the Manhattan youth group, and has always been willing to lend a hand in other departments. He will attend Yale University this fall, plans to double major in English and biochemistry, and wants to become a physician.

“What I like best is seeing the collaboration among the volunteers,” said Mr. Abreu.

Karen Kwan of Fresh Meadows, **Queens**, is a senior at Manhattan's Hunter College High School. She became a member of the ARC/GNY youth group in November 2002. Since then, she has shown herself to be a true leader, a dedicated volunteer, a charismatic personality and a role model for her peers. As executive board co-chairperson of community outreach, Ms. Kwan has overseen the training and community event participation of more than 150 youth participants, and has directly supervised two youth coordinators. She works with community outreach paid staff to develop program objectives for youth volunteers and she oversees the development of recruitment procedures and activities, screens and interviews prospective volunteers and coordinates volunteer orientation programs. Ms. Kwan has dedicated more than 320 hours of community service to ARC/GNY. She will attend Barnard College in the fall and looks forward to majoring in classical civilizations. She also wants to become a surgeon.

“The community outreach walks are my favorite activity,” she said. “They're interesting and rewarding.”

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