

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

American Red Cross Guam Chapter Presents One-Year Report on Typhoon Mawar Response

Hagåtña, Guam – June 17, 2024 – The American Red Cross Guam Chapter, led by Chairman of the Board Marcos Fong and Executive Director Chita Blaise, presented a comprehensive report from the National Headquarters detailing the assistance provided to Guam in the aftermath of Typhoon Mawar. The presentation took place at a gathering attended by members of the Board of Directors, Red Cross volunteers, mayors, and other government and community partners.

Governor Lou Leon Guerrero, who received the report, expressed her gratitude to the organization for its significant role during the recovery process. She emphasized the importance of community collaboration with organizations like the Red Cross and the government to ensure a swift and effective recovery.

Key Highlights from the Report:

- The American Red Cross spent **\$13,100,000** for Guam's recovery, with contributions from local and national communities.
- Over **380** Red Cross disaster workers were deployed to assist in the relief efforts.
- More than **342,000** meals and snacks were served in partnership with local restaurants.
- The Red Cross provided over **30,400** overnight stays and reached **27,700** individuals with recovery support, including financial assistance.

"Typhoon Mawar was the strongest storm to impact our islands since Typhoon Pongsona in 2002. The response to this disaster required a unified effort, and we are immensely proud of the resilience and dedication shown by our volunteers and the community," said Marcos Fong.

Upcoming Event:

The American Red Cross Guam Chapter is celebrating 108 years of serving Guam and will be hosting the 22nd Annual Red Ball fundraising gala on September 28, 2024. This event is the most important fundraiser for the local chapter to support the ongoing efforts of the Red Cross in our community.

For more information about the American Red Cross Guam Chapter and how you can support their ongoing efforts, contact Chita Blaise at 671-688-0280.



Presentation of the Report: Board Members, Staff, and Volunteers of the American Red Cross Guam Chapter gather to present a post-incident report of Typhoon Mawar to Governor Lou Leon Guererro (center).

***Attachment*:** Official Red Cross Typhoon Mawar One-Year Report

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**American
Red Cross**

Typhoon Mawar Guam | Rota, CNMI

One-Year Update
June, 2024

The American Red Cross Island Response

The Largest Typhoon in Decades

On May 24, 2023, Typhoon Mawar passed by the islands of Guam and Rota, impacting communities with hurricane-force winds and heavy rain. Mawar was the strongest storm to affect the islands since Typhoon Pongsona in 2002.

The storm flooded buildings, tore roofs off homes, downed power lines and affected water wells. Several areas were without power and water for long periods of time, with many people unable to return home due to safety concerns caused by the damage.

Response Hurdles

While every disaster response is unique and comes with its own challenges, responding to a disaster on island communities, like Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, are arguably some of the most complex and costly disaster responses the American Red Cross carries out. Connectivity for communications, lodging for the disaster workforce and major time differences between National Headquarters and the operation on the ground are just some of the complexities that the response team must overcome.

Preparation for the Storm

Before the storm struck the islands, the Red Cross moved hundreds of disaster volunteers thousands of miles to Guam to support communities as they prepared for the storm. In fact, **over 380 volunteers** from nearly every Red Cross region outside of the Pacific Islands supported this relief operation.

At the same time, the Red Cross staged supplies and personnel on the continental United States to deploy once travel was possible after Mawar moved into the Philippines Sea. With higher-than-normal costs to deploy each individual, responders committed to over 3 weeks (a week longer than other relief operations) to bring relief to those impacted.

National Community

The tight-knit and resilient communities that make up the people of Guam are the real strength of the islands. The Red Cross has been honored to assist by uniting as a nationwide organization to raise support for those impacted. In Guam, the people raised **\$540,078**; **\$1,000,457** was raised throughout the Pacific Islands region; and across the organization, **\$13,100,000** was spent on behalf of Guam's recovery. The assistance has included the distribution of clean-up kits, tarps, coolers, flashlights and personal hygiene items. Additionally, physical and mental health services were made available, along with providing a safe place to stay in Red Cross shelters.

The response to Mawar saw the Red Cross come together nationwide in a unified effort to fulfill our humanitarian mission. With Guam's local talent and resiliency bringing everyone together, our larger network was able to combine talents from across the organization to deliver the highest level of comfort and care to individuals and families impacted by the storm.

Locals Helping Locals

Ellery Paz is an American Red Cross volunteer in Guam who is intimately familiar with life on the island territory located thousands of miles from the continental U.S. He is a teacher in the Guam school system, knows his island home like the back of his hand, and is no stranger to severe weather. Not much surprises him, but when asked what strikes him most about the Red Cross response to the disaster, he was quick to answer.

“I was not expecting all these volunteers from the Red Cross to fly out here to serve Guam.”

When Typhoon Mawar devastated the island in late May of 2023, Ellery quickly pivoted from his profession as a teacher to assume a role as a Red Cross shelter resident transition triage volunteer. He then moved to the distribution of emergency supplies team to provide kits that included tarps, shovels, mops, brooms, disinfectants — all the things a family needs to begin cleaning up after a disaster.

Ellery says he is motivated to volunteer with the Red Cross because it sets an example for the youth he interacts with in his profession as a teacher. “I volunteer for the opportunity to help others, and to show the future leaders of our island — my students — that volunteering will help better our society.”

“The most rewarding part to me,” he said, “is seeing the smiles of the children’s faces, knowing we are there to lend a helping hand.”

As a Red Cross volunteer, Ellery has been most impressed by seeing the best come out in people during

the biggest challenges. “The willingness of others to help in time of crisis is something that constantly amazes me,” he said.

Two weeks after Mawar hit Guam, nearly 300 Red Cross volunteers had arrived to provide disaster relief for those affected. Working together with volunteers from many states, local volunteers like Ellery Paz increased Red Cross capacity and provided invaluable local knowledge to make the operation as efficient as possible.

Ellery urged all volunteers to follow the advice he gave his students during the height of recovery: “Be open-minded...and serve the people with empathy and compassion.”



Ellery Paz and son step up to help the community with the Red Cross. Ellery Paz / American Red Cross

RESPONSE AT A GLANCE

More than 380 Red Cross disaster workers mounted a massive response to help people impacted by Typhoon Mawar, including:



More than **30,400** overnight stays provided with partners



More than **342,000** meals and snacks served with partners



Reaching **27,700** individuals with recovery support, including financial assistance

—Cumulative figures as of June 10, 2024