

Red Cross Club

Rarely does a university organization make an impact beyond its campus, but the American Red Cross Club @ USF has done just that. Since its inception in 2007, the award-winning, student-run chapter has aided and educated communities on local, national and international levels, and is the model for university Red Cross clubs across the country.

What makes this group so unique is that it is set up exactly like Tampa's Red Cross chapter. Representatives from the local chapter train the 1,200-plus members at USF to perform in the same capacity as off-campus volunteers. Mirroring every facet of Red Cross operations, USF's chapter is inextricably plugged into the community.

"The cool thing is that you are in real-life situations," says Natalia Vandeberg, the club's volunteer public affairs co-chair. "If you are a medical student and learning CPR, you have the ability to help save somebody's life. If you're studying psychology and want to learn how to help people on an emotional level, in Disaster Services you can help someone traumatized and support them. There are

so many ways Red Cross membership can translate outside of the classroom."

During last year's Great American Teach-in, club members visited 12 Hillsborough County schools over two days and trained 1,500 students in basic disaster relief and first aid. In 2010, 230 Bulls were certified in CPR at the club's Certify-a-Bull event. Members have also responded to fires in the Tampa area, visited soldiers at the VA hospital, and raised funds for disaster relief in Haiti.

"This club represents the best of connecting people with their communities, to be self-

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reliant, and feel empowered," says Robin Ersing, associate professor in USF's School of Social Work and the club's faculty advisor. "There are opportunities for students to carry knowledge back to any community that they're apart of. That's the reach of USF."

