

At-a-Glance

Origin

The Pillowcase Project was created by the American Red Cross's Southeast Louisiana Chapter and implemented in New Orleans schools following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. New Orleans CEO, Kay Wilkins, had learned that Loyola University students carried their valuables in pillowcases when they were evacuated for Katrina. This inspired Wilkins and her team to work with an art therapist to create a program in which children living in makeshift communities across New Orleans during Katrina recovery decorated pillowcases to hold their belongings. Soon, their Pillowcase Project became a preparedness education program for elementary school students, and in just a few years had been adapted and implemented by several other Red Cross chapters with substantial success. In early 2013, the Walt Disney Company funded the design and development phase of a multi-year effort to build on this success by creating a standardized, state-of-the-art preparedness education program. As a result, the Pillowcase Project can now be customized for use by Red Cross chapters across the United States.



Vision

To create a generation of children who understand the science of hazards, are empowered to take action by practicing how to prepare for emergencies, and understand that by sharing what they have learned with family and friends, they can help create a prepared community.

Goals

The Pillowcase Project is a multi-year effort that aims to:

- Increase youth awareness of hazards and the importance of personal preparedness
- Build skills in hazard-specific protective actions to reduce the impact of emergencies on youth and their families
- Increase coping skills to manage emergencies and build resilience in youth
- Increase household preparedness levels
- Incorporate preparedness education into the elementary school curriculum

Learning Objectives

Students who participate in The Pillowcase Project will be able to:

- Increase youth awareness of hazards and the importance of personal preparedness
- Use their knowledge to act as advocates for emergency preparedness in their homes and communities
- Identify the best ways to stay safe during emergencies that occur in their region
- Use coping skills to help manage stress during emergencies and in every day situations
- Gain confidence in their abilities to be prepared for emergencies through hands-on activities
- Create an enhanced sense of community through collaborative preparedness activities
- Discuss the role science plays in emergency preparedness
- Understand and communicate the work of the Red Cross in their community



Program Structure

The National Pillowcase Project is:

- Implemented by Red Cross chapter staff and volunteers
- Presented in schools, after-school programs, summer camps, and other student programs and events
- A standardized curriculum that combines instruction with physical and small-group collaborative learning activities
- A program that meets many performance expectations for the Common Core Math and Language Arts Standards and Next Generation Science Standards for grades 3-5

Curriculum Components

The National Pillowcase Project consists of:

- A Learn, Practice, Share framework to discuss preparedness concepts
- Emergency preparedness skills and information specific to locally prominent hazards
- Age-appropriate Coping Skills for emergency situations
- Home and personal preparedness skills and tools
- A My Preparedness Workbook for students to continue learning and preparing after the presentations
- A student assessment
- Science of Safety Teaching Kit for teachers and program staff

Volunteer Engagement Opportunities

Chapter Contact Information