

# LYNNWOOD TIMES



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*Real News* ⚡  
*Real Impact*

## Red Cross NW volunteer, Deb Phelps, is just one of many who save lives nationally

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EVERETT, Wash. - Deb Phelps got a call from the Red Cross NW on a Monday morning last fall, informing her she was needed in Reno, Nevada, to assist evacuees fleeing California wildfires. She departed within 24 hours.

When she arrived in Nevada the next morning, Phelps entered the Reno Convention Center, which had been converted into a mega-shelter amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, servicing 300-400 evacuees who were driven further and further east by what the state of California deemed “unprecedented fire conditions.”

The 2021 wildfire season in California experienced an unusually early start amidst an ongoing drought and historically low rainfall and reservoir levels. By January 2021 alone, 297 fires burned 1,171 acres on nonfederal land, almost triple the number of fires and more than 20 times the acreage of the five-year average for January.

Phelps keeps a bag packed at all times in anticipation for calls like these as a Disaster Health Service co-lead volunteer for the Red Cross Northwest and has every day since joining in 2017, after hearing of the California wildfires from her daughter. Within one year of that conversation, Phelps “dropped everything,” including her career as a nurse, to help any way she could.



Red Cross NW volunteer, Deb Phelps. Source: Deb Phelps.

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## Nat'l inflation jumps to 40-year high at 7.9% in Feb, Seattle area at 8.1%

By MARIO LOTMORE

WASHINGTON D.C. - The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics announced on March 10, that consumer inflation rose by another 0.8 percent in February after rising 0.6 percent in January, bringing national inflation to 7.9 percent over the last 12 months — the highest jump since January 1982. Inflation of food is the highest it has been since July 1981.

Increases in gasoline, shelter, and food were the largest contributors to the increase. Gasoline rose 6.6 percent in February and accounted for almost a third of all the items monthly increase. Food rose 1.0 percent as the food at home index rose 1.4 percent; both were the largest monthly increases since April 2020.

The 12-month increase has been steadily rising and is now the largest since the period ending January 1982. The all items less food and energy index rose 6.4 percent, the largest 12-month change since the period ending August 1982. The energy index rose 25.6 percent over the last year, and the food index increased 7.9 percent,

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## Snohomish County Council honors Judge Cassandra Lopez-Shaw's legacy

By MARIO LOTMORE



Snohomish County Judge Cassandra Lopez-Shaw

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash.**—During its Administrative Session on February 28, the Snohomish County Council unanimously passed Resolution 22-010 honoring the life and legacy of Judge Cassandra Lopez-Shaw.

The resolution, introduced by Council Vice Chair Jared Mead (District 4) and seconded by Councilwoman Stephanie Wright (District 3) reads:

*WHEREAS*, the Snohomish County Council joins the family, friends, and colleagues of the Honorable Cassandra Lopez-Shaw to honor her life, legacy, and commitment

to public service; and

*WHEREAS*, at the age of eight, she and her family came to the United States, and she grew up in the suburbs of Los Angeles. She then attended the University of Washington where she graduated with honors before earning her Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School; and

*WHEREAS*, Judge Lopez-Shaw's commitment to vulnerable populations was unwavering. She provided extensive volunteer time in educational settings for young people, especially children from disadvantaged communities. She routinely volunteered

with the YMCA Mock Trial Program, Bothell Youth Court, and in classrooms in public schools across Snohomish County; and

*WHEREAS*, her commitment to public service led to over 200 hours per year of pro bono work within the community, and recognitions and awards including the Domestic Violence Advocacy Award for her work with domestic violence victims; and

*WHEREAS*, Judge Lopez-Shaw's 17-year legal career spanned across public defense, private practice, and most recently she was elected as Snohomish County's first Lat-

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from page 1 **RED CROSS**

“We’re so quick to move on to the next big news story that we just forget that, after a terrible event, these people are just left for weeks and months trying to recover. . . . But we’re just on to the next disaster it seems like,” Phelps said.

When she arrives on-site after being called to action, Phelps typically meets with the supervisor to get the lay of the land and hear whether she will be working in a shelter or in a management position.

Each shelter has 2-6 licensed nurses or physicians who spend about 12-14 days employed until the torch is passed to the next group of volunteers. At that point, the first thing Phelps does is take a nap for a couple of days, she joked.

Through the Red Cross, victims of environmental disasters are connected to caseworkers who help find housing, provide pet assistance, long-term medical assistance, and even mental health services and counseling to deal with the more everlasting effects of trauma.

“It’s a drop in the bucket of course because sometimes these people need \$50,000, and the Red Cross doesn’t have that kind of money, but they give them enough to get them started and point them in the right direction for long-term recovery,” Phelps said.

Before joining, Phelps didn’t know much about the Red Cross or what was being done for disaster relief, she was just going off her daughter’s assessment of a Facebook post that said they were looking for help.

“Once I got there, I saw that the Red Cross had everything really well in hand. It was a really well-oiled machine. They were serving hundreds and hundreds of evacuees in Santa Rosa and the surrounding areas,” Phelps told the Lynnwood Times.

Phelps has many titles and roles as a volunteer. She is an instructor for new disaster volunteers, she teaches community preparedness education, provides disaster health services, prepares for disasters, trains new nurses, and readies supplies in case an evacuation is in order. If there is a disaster or an emergency, she first responds by providing whatever medicine or medical equipment that may have been lost.

“Wherever I’m needed, I roll up my sleeves,” Phelps said.

On her very first deployment, she was excited but did not exactly know what to do. She was assisting a family that was in the process of losing their farm and noticed the farmer had one shoe that was “just a few steps away from falling apart.”

She asked the farmer if she could fix his shoe and, to some hesitation, he agreed. Although Phelps has since been deployed all over the country, includ-

ing Texas, Delaware, South Carolina, and California, dealing with flooding, earthquakes, tornadoes, and wildfires, she informed the Lynnwood Times that seeing how such a small gesture could make a difference was one of her favorite memories working with the Red Cross.

“That took ten minutes of my time, but it made this guy’s day. Was I trained to do this? No – you just think on your feet. I did that within the first day of my deployment, and I felt so happy that I was able to make a difference in this guy’s life,” Phelps said.

Although Deb Phelps is currently preparing for the wildfire season in the Pacific Northwest and California, she said it’s “killing” her not to provide her services to the Ukraine or Poland right now.

Phelps shared with the Lynnwood Times that dropping everything in her life, quitting her job, and joining the Red Cross five years ago has been “worth it on a daily basis.”

She leaves for Santa Monica next month to take a class on mass casualties to further her expertise to deal with mass shootings, hurricanes, or whatever catastrophe leads to a large loss of life.

Deb Phelps is just one of over 300,000 volunteers offering their services to the Red Cross, more than 90% of their workforce, assisting in anything from blood donations to providing services for veterans all over the world for more than 140 years.

More recently, the Red Cross needs volunteers more than ever after suffering from staffing shortages and increased environmental disasters due to climate change. Despite these challenges, Red Cross volunteers continue to prepare supplies in between breaks from catastrophe in every way they can, always awaiting their next call to action.

“It used to be that we only had a few disasters a year, and now disasters are getting more frequent and more severe than ever before. I admire that the Red Cross is planning for the effects of climate change and this new mentality of ongoing disasters. I like that they’re looking forward and not just reactionary – they’re planning for the future,” Phelps said.

March is considered Red Cross Month and March 23 is Giving Day. You can donate to the Red Cross for disaster relief by visiting <https://www.redcross.org/donate/giving-day.html/>.

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from page 5 **TOM JORDAL**

Jordal said. “Developing there is tricky so we’re really lucky to be working with the Port of Everett with all their experience they have with these things.”

Another challenge, Jordal noted, is the limited parking which he says requires a reasonable approach to make use of the, already, limited land.

Increasing parking is one of Jordal’s top personal visions for the waterfront, while staying true to its history, whether tribal or geological, maintaining an educational component, and being inclusive to a wide variety of different people.

On the subject of parking, Jordal informed the Lynnwood Times that the parklet issues Ivar’s faced last year have since been worked on and Ivar’s should be allowed to have their outdoor seating in place by this upcoming summer.

As far as the parking lot on front street, which is still currently fenced off, Jordal hopes to see if it can be used for parking on a temporary basis but said he needs to learn more about why it cannot operate as consumer parking first.

Jordal has already had one meeting with the Waterfront Redevelopment Group which plans to hold a public outreach on May 5 at Rosehill Community Center from 4-6 p.m. to lay the groundwork for the planning process.

There are a lot of limitations on what can and can’t be done to the waterfront, which Jordal hopes to both inform the public of, but also hear what they have to suggest within the parameters of those limitations.

“As a group, we’re getting together to plan how to get public input because really the idea is to figure out what people in the community want, and get those guiding principles in place before doing any planning,” Jordal said. “You can’t build a marina for pleasure boats, for example, so we want to give an idea of what the possibilities are, in a meaningful way.”

Just this past weekend, Councilman Jordal and Kevin Stotlz, who he ran against for city council Position 2, spent time walking the city’s waterfront area educating themselves on the different property owners, limitations, and discussed visions of what they hope to see become of the area in the near future.

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