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AMERICAN RED CROSS IN GREATER NEW YORK AND THE ISLAMIC CIRCLE OF NORTH AMERICA RELIEF USA ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIP THAT WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS TO HELP NEW YORKERS DURING EMERGENCIES

New York – May 31, 2007 -- A signed memorandum of understanding between the American Red Cross in Greater New York (ARC/GNY) and the Islamic Circle of North America Relief USA (ICNA) has established a partnership between the organizations that will help the Red Cross strengthen its already comprehensive local emergency response and assistance services for people affected by emergencies.

ARC/GNY responds to more than 3,000 local emergencies each year and helps nine million people in New York City and Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Sullivan Counties prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. ICNA, from its headquarters in Jamaica, Queens, addresses the basic human and social service needs of the underserved communities in the United States.

ARC/GNY worked closely with ICNA to provide assistance for the families affected by the tragic Bronx fire last March that claimed the lives of one adult and nine children. Under this new collaboration, which was signed by ARC/GNY Chief Executive Officer Theresa A. Bischoff and ICNA Director Ayub Badat, the Islamic Circle becomes a participating partner of ARC/GNY's *Ready When the Time Comes* program. This program trains volunteer teams from local companies and organizations in disaster relief services, deploying them during a local emergency to provide sheltering, mass feeding, bulk distribution of supplies, or operate an emergency call center.

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ARC/GNY already has trained 13 ICNA members as Red Cross disaster volunteers. These ICNA volunteers participate in New York Disaster Interfaith Services, which coordinates inter-agency collaborations for disaster preparedness. ARC/GNY will provide comprehensive training for additional ICNA members who volunteer to assist Red Cross emergency response during Level II disasters. A Level II disaster consists of emergencies involving apartments with a minimum of 40 units as well as storms, floods, extreme heat/cold weather conditions, the loss of utility services and transportation accidents.

Red Cross trained ICNA members are engaged with the greater Islamic community in New York City and will help the Red Cross train many others to assist during emergencies in neighborhoods in New York City and surrounding counties. As a vision and value-led organization, ICNA operates under the principle that all people are created equal and when given the tools, will thrive and bring about change in their own lives and the lives of their communities. ICNA's mission is to promote justice through creating opportunities with young people and families to lead healthy and productive lives.

ARC/GNY provides immediate aid to more than 100,000 people affected by 3,000 emergencies a year, including fires, floods, building collapses and blackouts. Given the uncertainties of today's world, the chapter is accelerating its collaboration with partner agencies to develop and implement readiness plans to respond to major natural and man-made disasters. The chapter also helps New York residents and businesses prepare for emergencies by offering hundreds of courses in first aid, CPR and aquatics and free emergency preparedness training programs and resources.

ARC/GNY is not a governmental organization and relies on individual and corporate gifts, special events and grants from foundations and local, state and federal government to fund its essential programs and services. For more information about volunteering, donating and training, call 1-877 REDCROSS (1-877-733-2767), or visit www.nyredcross.org.

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