

## 2009 Humanitarian Village Frequently Asked Questions for American Red Cross youth (version 3)

The following information is an **unofficial** summary of the details which are available on the official event website at <http://www.solferino2009englishversion.cri.it/>. Please refer to the website for the latest information.

Please note that **none of these events are official American Red Cross events**, and there is no official American Red Cross delegation to the Humanitarian Village. The events are being run by the IFRC and the Italian Red Cross, who have invited all American Red Cross volunteers and staff to participate. All ages are welcome to attend on a private, non-official, individual basis. Youth under 18 should follow their local chapter's guidelines regarding chaperones.

### What is it?

The Humanitarian Village is an annual Red Cross and Red Crescent event, hosted by the Italian Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). It is designed to train and energize volunteers and enable members of the movement to celebrate our global successes.

This year, the Humanitarian Village has a special focus on youth because the IFRC World Youth Meeting is being held at the same time. The World Youth Meeting is held every ten years and provides an international forum for youth leaders from all Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to learn, collaborate and share best practices. This decade, the World Youth Meeting is called "Youth on the move".



The Humanitarian Village also includes the *Fiaccolata*, a 10-kilometer candlelight procession from Solferino to Castiglione to commemorate the 1859 battle that inspired Henri Dunant to start the Red Cross movement. Following the close of the Humanitarian Village, some youth will be participating in the *March to Geneva / Journey of an Idea*, a symbolic event sponsored by the Swiss Red Cross that is designed to highlight the importance of youth involvement in the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.



Registration for the Humanitarian Village closed on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. As of May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 26 American Red Cross volunteers and staff of all ages are scheduled to attend. Participants in the “Youth on the move” World Youth Meeting and the March to Geneva / Journey of an Idea have also already been selected and no additional spaces are available for these two events.

### **Who is going?**

The Humanitarian Village is open to all Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and employees of all ages worldwide. Attendance at this year's Humanitarian Village is expected to be approximately 5,000 (five thousand) people. Of that, at least 1,000 (one thousand) are expected to be youth and young adults.

American Red Cross volunteers and staff who are planning to attend the Humanitarian Village are encouraged to collaborate on their travel plans. Please contact us at the email addresses below if you would like to get in touch with the other participants.

### **What are the dates?**

The Humanitarian Village opens for guests on Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Participants may arrive anytime on the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, and must depart on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>. For a full schedule, download the following document from the Italian Red Cross website:

[http://www.cri.it/code\\_new/websites/629\\_cri\\_Solferino2009EnglishVersion/Humanitarian\\_Village\\_programme\\_and\\_practical\\_information\\_%E2%80%93\\_February\\_2009\\_\(EN\).pdf](http://www.cri.it/code_new/websites/629_cri_Solferino2009EnglishVersion/Humanitarian_Village_programme_and_practical_information_%E2%80%93_February_2009_(EN).pdf)

### **Where do I stay?**

Lodging will be in military-style campaign tents in a campsite that the IFRC and the Italian Red Cross will construct especially for Humanitarian Village participants, just as they do every year. The campsite layout is based on a modern IFRC refugee camp and uses the same kind of tents and facilities. The campsite is very large, and has a very friendly and welcoming environment.



Participants may be able to request spaces in the same tent by contacting the Italian Red Cross. Cots, sinks, showers and toilets will be provided. You should bring a sleeping bag, or you can buy disposable sheets once you arrive. There are no secure storage facilities, so it is strongly recommended that you do not bring any valuable items. You can also pay an additional fee to stay in a hotel nearby, instead of the campsite. Further details are available on the Solferino 2009 website.

### **How do I get there?**

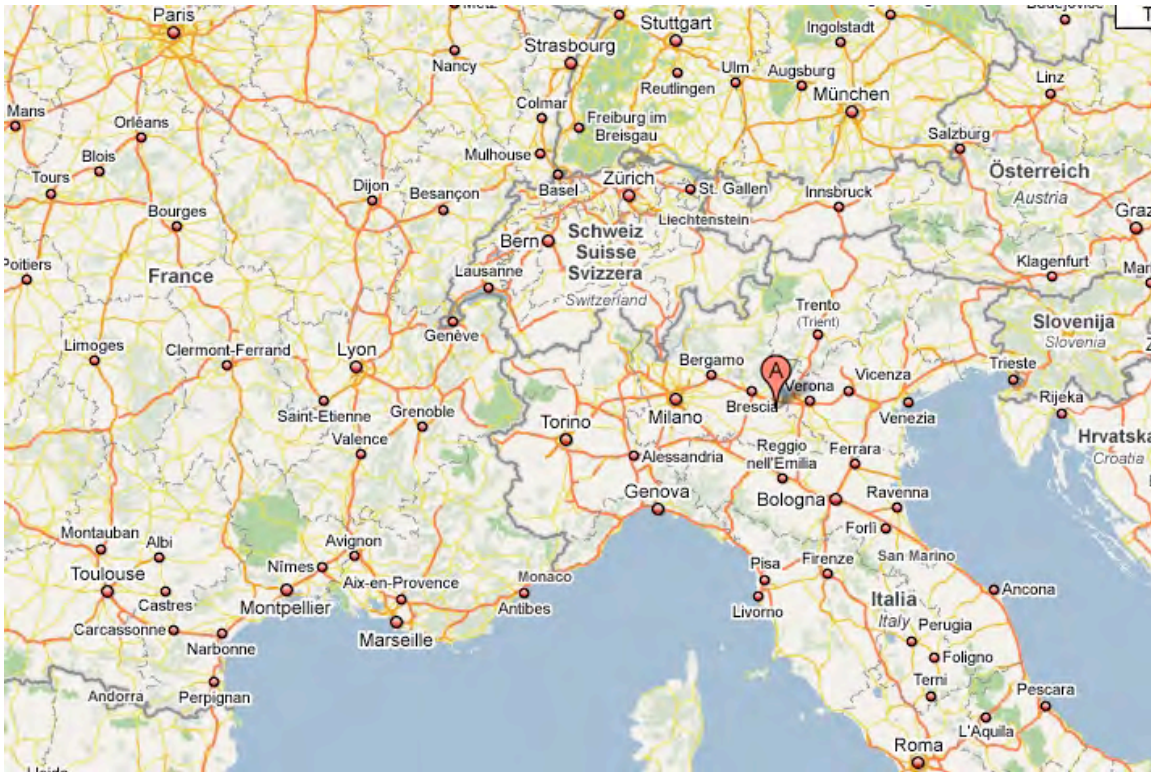
Participants should make their own travel plans to the *Desenzano del Garda* train station just to the east of Milan, in northern Italy. The Italian Red Cross will operate shuttle buses from this train station to and from the Humanitarian Village. You can also pay for your own transportation directly from the local airports. The closest airports are Brescia Montichiari (airport code VBS, 25 minutes away), Verona Villafranca (airport code VRN, 45 minutes away), Bergamo Orio al Serio (airport code BGY, one hour away), Milan Linate (airport code LIN, 1.5 hours away) and Milan Malpensa (MXP, two hours away).

You can book train travel within Italy on the Italian national trains website, <http://www.ferroviedellostato.it/>. Click on the “English” link on the top of the page if you don’t understand Italian. Note that discounts are often available for young people and students on European railways.

You are not advised to fly into Rome, because it is very far away. The closest major international airports are in Milan (LIN or MXP). From the United States, it may be much cheaper to book a round-trip ticket to London, and then get a ticket to the Milan area on one of the many budget airlines that operate out of the London airports (for example, Ryanair or EasyJet). There are many airports in the London metropolitan area, and it is easy to transfer between airports using trains or the National Express bus service (<http://www.nationalexpress.com/>).

Here is a Google Maps link to the Humanitarian Village location:

[http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s\\_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Via+Nosetto,+Solferino,+Italy&sll=45.363393,10.558827&sspn=0.00692,0.018239&ie=UTF8&ll=45.365685,10.564556&spn=0.01384,0.02017&z=15](http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Via+Nosetto,+Solferino,+Italy&sll=45.363393,10.558827&sspn=0.00692,0.018239&ie=UTF8&ll=45.365685,10.564556&spn=0.01384,0.02017&z=15)



### What does it cost?

The cost of participation in the Humanitarian Village is subsidized by the Italian Red Cross to make it easier for everyone to attend. The fee of 35 Euro per night (approximately forty-six dollars per night) includes all meals, lodging and activities, including the *Fiaccolata*. This cost also includes ground transportation to and from the local railway station, *Desenzano del Garda*, on your arrival and departure dates.

### How do I register?

Although registration closed on May 1st, 2009, you may still log in to change your travel details. To do this, visit <http://www.solferino2009englishversion.cri.it/> and click on "Humanitarian Village... Register now!" Enter your login username and password at the top of the page (you had to choose these when you registered).

You will be asked for your arrival and departure details. **Please ensure that the travel details you entered on the website are correct so the Italian Red Cross will know when to expect you.**

Also, if you haven't yet, please **let us know if you have registered for the event**, so we can connect you with other American Red Cross participants.

### Is any financial or travel assistance available? What about using donated air miles?

The Humanitarian Village is not an American Red Cross event, and the American Red Cross is not sending an official delegation to the Humanitarian Village. Therefore, no travel assistance is

available. However, we encourage you to plan fundraising events and work with your chapter's youth coordinator to raise the money you need. We hope to be able to offer travel assistance in future years.

### **What should I bring?**

The weather in Solferino in late June is usually sunny, with temperatures as high as 90°F during the day and as cold as 70°F at night, so be prepared with clothing that is appropriate for those temperatures. The interior of the tents will be very hot during the day – this is important to keep in mind for any training you may attend. It may also rain. If you don't want to buy disposable sheets for your cot, then you should bring a sleeping bag. Do not bring any valuables, because there are no secure storage facilities (you could bring a lock for your suitcase, though). Electricity will be available for charging your mobile phone or camera, but remember that the European electrical system and electrical outlet size are different from what is used in the US.

The dress code will be casual, but please remember that casual in Europe is more dressed-up than casual in the US! It's also important to remember that you will be seen as representing the American Red Cross, so it's important to make a good impression.

For the *Fiaccolata*, bring comfortable walking shoes, a sweater, and maybe a light raincoat. Please also make sure you **bring a current-issue DSHR vest** (red nylon mesh with reflective tape). This will be worn during the *Fiaccolata* and other group events. If you don't have a current DSHR vest, you can borrow one from a friend or from your chapter (all chapters should have these by now). Just ask your youth coordinator or your chapter's disaster office. Here's what a current issue vest looks like:



Please make sure you bring this version of the vest, and not an older one!

In general, you should bring as much American Red Cross apparel as possible. Most participants will be wearing clothing that represents their national society. Also, you might want to bring

some American Red Cross items to trade. Anything with an American Red Cross logo will work – clothing, pens, pins, toys, hats, etc. Generally, in the evenings, participants will walk around and meet each other and this is an excellent opportunity to trade.

### **Presentations and events**

The American Red Cross will have a presentation booth on the “Humanitarian Boulevard” within the Humanitarian Village. It will be a collaborative effort run by the participants and we will all need to pitch in to help keep it up and running.

There will also be a “cultural night” on the evening of June 24<sup>th</sup>, where we will be encouraged to share games, cuisine and other ideas representative of the USA. We will be in touch with you to ask for your assistance with both of these opportunities.

### **What are the rules about chaperones?**

Your local chapter's guidelines should be followed when it comes to chaperones. There are no age restrictions for the Humanitarian Village. If you have any questions, please contact us.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions, please contact Aubin Dupree, National Youth Council Alumni Board First Vice-Chair, at [dupreea@usa.redcross.org](mailto:dupreea@usa.redcross.org) or Sandy Tesch, National Youth Council Alumni Board Second Vice-Chair, at [teschs@usa.redcross.org](mailto:teschs@usa.redcross.org). Both Aubin and Sandy have participated in this event in the past, as youth volunteers, and they will be happy to answer your questions.

Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you in Solferino in June!

