

## Super Bowl Hero Inspires Hometown



**Kurt Warner has fun with 2-year old Mathew Conayecye at Cedar Rapids shelter.  
Photo Courtesy Dave Knoer/ American Red Cross.**

By JILL GORIN, American Red Cross

**Wednesday, July 09, 2008** — The American Red Cross holds a special place in the hearts of Kurt Warner, quarterback for the Arizona Cardinals, and his wife Brenda. The Iowa natives visited Cedar Rapids Tuesday to help the Red Cross hand out meals, bottled water, smiles and hugs.

Driving through the hardest-hit flooded areas of downtown Cedar Rapids and the Czech Village neighborhood, Kurt couldn't believe what he was seeing.

"How does this happen?" Kurt said. "How does the water get that high? I just don't understand. I don't think you really realize how bad it is, and then you see it and the whole road is affected. Everyone has all of their stuff out in front of their house."

Kurt has firsthand knowledge of the flooding from his mother Sue Warner and stepfather Tom Miller.

"They called to tell me how high the water was getting and I could just hear the amazement in their voices," he said.

It wasn't their home, but their business that was directly affected. Kurt joined his family for a firsthand look at Schumacher Carpets, his parents' carpeting business on First Avenue, which was flooded by more than six feet of water.

Brenda has her own connections to the devastation that affected her home state this year.

The May 25 tornado wiped out her childhood home in Parkersburg, Iowa. The next month, floods destroyed the home where she was raised in Cedar Rapids.

But Brenda said her relationship with the Red Cross goes beyond replacing material belongings.

"I lost my parents in a tornado in Arkansas 12 years ago," she said. "The Red Cross was there for me. I was on food stamps and Kurt was my boyfriend. And now for Kurt to be able to put a face out there to help others and give back, that is a really great feeling."

Kurt visited with hundreds of Cedar Rapids residents and volunteer workers, signed autographs and posed for pictures at every corner. Local Red Cross volunteers said he renewed their spirits.

"He builds a lot of attention," said Angela Schmucker, CEO of the Grant Wood Area Chapter in Cedar Rapids. "He brings a boost to our community in our hour of need from our hometown boy."

**About the American Red Cross:**

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and counsels victims of disasters; provides nearly half of the nation's blood supply; teaches lifesaving skills; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization – not a government agency – and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its humanitarian mission. For more information, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or join our blog at [www.redcrosschat.org](http://www.redcrosschat.org).*