

News Release:

Samaritan's Purse and Billy Graham association assisting Goderich's devastated tornado victims

Organizations partner with Mennonite Disaster Service, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

CALGARY, AB, Sept. 2, 2011 — Samaritan's Purse Canada and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada (BGEAC) are partnering with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) to help residents in Goderich recover from the worst tornado to hit Ontario in a decade.

Samaritan's Purse, MDS, and CRWRC will work with volunteers and churches in the region to help Goderich's hard-hit residents clean up their homes after the Aug. 21 tornado that killed one person and injured at least 37 more, while damaging and destroying dozens of homes, businesses and public buildings.

The clean-up will include cutting up and removing fallen trees, branches and other debris; boarding over broken windows; and installing water-proof tarp over damaged roofs, followed by some repairs and rebuilding. Samaritan's Purse will provide overall coordination of volunteers for all volunteers during the clean-up phase.

Meanwhile, BGEAC's specially trained Rapid Response Team volunteer chaplains will be in Goderich, joining other organizations and volunteers in offering emotional and spiritual support to residents and volunteers as the recovery work continues.

Specially equipped disaster response units provided by Samaritan's Purse and MDS are being established at Bethel Pentecostal Church at 321 Bayfield Rd. to coordinate the clean-up and recovery efforts. The units contain a variety of equipment including chain saws, safety gear, ladders and hand tools. The Samaritan's Purse unit includes a phone line (**1-866-628-6565**) which Goderich and area residents can call to receive help.

"The Town of Goderich is grateful that Samaritan's Purse, Mennonite Disaster Service, and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee are able to coordinate volunteers to assist homeowners in recovering from the tornado damage." Mayor Deb Shewfelt.

"This partnership between our Christian organizations is designed to ensure we are as responsive and efficient as possible in helping the people of Goderich recover from this natural disaster," said Samaritan's Purse Projects Director John Clayton. "Our joint focus will be on those most in need – the elderly, the disabled, and others who might be unable to clean up on their own."

Nick Hamm, MDS' Canadian Director, said: "Our strength is in long-term recovery – rebuilding – so we intend to work with our partners to do clean-up, then find residents who need additional help and that could be long-term. Every time we work with Samaritan's Purse and CRWRC, we learn from them and improve our relationships. The overall response to the community is a lot stronger and more efficient."

Donations Needed: Anyone offering financial assistance to Samaritan's Purse, BGEAC, MDS or CRWRC to help with their disaster assistance can make donations through their websites.

Samaritan's Purse Disaster Relief Unit

Samaritan's Purse's Disaster Relief Unit in Goderich is based in Moncton, NB. It is a truck and trailer outfitted with disaster recovery equipment including electrical generators, chain saws, ladders, pumps, hand tools, and

safety gear. It serves as a volunteer coordination center, and is equipped with a self-contained office, communications system and other supplies.

Samaritan's Purse has another Disaster Relief Unit based in Calgary. The two units have responded to many major disasters in recent years. The most recent include last spring's floods in Quebec and last June's forest fire in Slave Lake, AB. Samaritan's Purse also helped clean up after a tornado in Leamington, ON, in 2010. Samaritan's Purse responds to international disasters too – including after Hurricane Ida in Nicaragua in 2009, the enormous earthquake in Haiti in 2010, and the devastating earthquake/tsunami in Japan earlier this year.

Samaritan's Purse Canada

Samaritan's Purse Canada is an international Christian relief and development organization working in more than 50 countries to provide aid to victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution. The Calgary-based charity also operates Operation Christmas Child, which sends gift-filled shoe boxes to needy children worldwide each year. Go to www.samaritanpurse.ca for more information.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada (BGEAC) is well-known for the powerful outreach ministry of its founder, Billy Graham. It is non-denominational – partnering with churches and Christian communities in Canada and around the world to share the life-saving message of Jesus Christ. Go to www.billygraham.ca for more information.

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is the relief and development arm of the Christian Reformed Church. CRWRC reaches out in God's name to people, both in North America and around the world, who are struggling with poverty, hunger, disaster, and injustice to help them find lasting ways to improve their lives. Go to www.crwrc.org for more information.

Mennonite Disaster Service

Mennonite Disaster Service is a volunteer network of Anabaptist churches that responds in Christian love to those affected by disasters in Canada and the United States. For more information, please go to <http://mds.mennonite.net/>

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