

Samaritan's Purse helping flood victims on Alberta's Siksika Nation reserve

Christian relief organization providing specially-equipped Disaster Relief Unit, volunteer teams

CALGARY, AB – July 10, 2013 — Samaritan's Purse Canada has begun cleaning up and preparing 130 Siksika Nation homes for reconstruction, in response to an invitation from leaders on the reserve 100 kilometers east of Calgary. The homes in six communities were damaged during the same June 21 flooding that damaged or completely destroyed an estimated 30,000 homes in several parts of southern Alberta.

Samaritan's Purse has already moved one of its three Disaster Relief Units—specially equipped transport trucks that serve as local headquarters for emergency equipment and supplies, and for training and managing clean-up volunteers—to the Siksika Nation High School, south of Gleichen. The relief unit was relocated from Calgary, where volunteers expect to finish later this week the last clean-up requests from flooded homeowners.

In Siksika, the unit will backstop hundreds of volunteers during the next few weeks as they work at the damaged homes—hauling out mud and debris, removing ruined drywall and insulation, and carefully spraying disinfectant to prevent dangerous mould growth so reconstruction can begin.

“We invited Samaritan's Purse to assist us because of their experience in and dedication to helping people in need,” said tribal manager Romeo Crow Chief. “We need their help to remediate many homes.”

“The need on the Siksika Nation is enormous,” said Fred Weiss, executive director of Samaritan's Purse. “We're positioning our Disaster Relief Units so we can help those who've been hit hardest by this catastrophe.”

The first teams of volunteers have arrived in Siksika. They're part of more than 1,000 volunteers Samaritan's Purse has already mobilized in southern Alberta, including Calgary, High River, Medicine Hat, and Black Diamond. Two more Disaster Relief Units are serving flood-stricken residents in High River and Medicine Hat.

At all of the flood response sites, Samaritan's Purse staff and volunteers are partnered with trained Billy Graham Rapid Response Team chaplains who provide emotional and spiritual support to flood victims.

Flooded homeowners in Siksika and High River who still need help rehabilitating their houses for rebuild can phone Samaritan's Purse at 1-866-628-6565. Anyone wanting to volunteer can call the same number. Each clean-up—including a thorough spraying of anti-mould disinfectant, costs an average \$2,000. Very few home insurance policies cover flood damage, so victims are primarily reliant on volunteers and government aid.

Donations Needed: To support Samaritan's Purse's disaster relief efforts, please visit SamaritansPurse.ca (click on “Donate”) or call **1-800-663-6500**.

About Samaritan's Purse Canada

Samaritan's Purse Canada is an international Christian relief and development organization working in about 40 countries to help victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution. The Christian charity also operates the well-known Operation Christmas Child program that sends gift-filled shoe boxes to needy children around the world each year. In addition, we build and install thousands of life-saving BioSand Water Filters in the developing world. For more information, please visit SamaritansPurse.ca.

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