

Samaritan's Purse preparing to assist Fort McMurray's devastated forest fire victims

Christian relief agency readying staff, volunteers, and emergency equipment to help struggling victims of Fort McMurray's massive forest fires

CALGARY, AB, May 4, 2016—Samaritan's Purse Canada is preparing to send staff, volunteers, and a variety of emergency equipment to Fort McMurray to help victims of forest fires that have destroyed 1,600 homes in the northern Alberta city of 60,000, and forced thousands of anxious people to be evacuated.

Samaritan's Purse is closely monitoring reports from emergency personnel at the scene—waiting for when the fires are under control, and the evacuation order has been lifted so residents and business owners can return to their hard-hit community to assess the damage. The Christian relief organization, in partnership with local churches, will assist with the post-fire clean-up.

After similar forest fires in Slave Lake, AB, in 2011 destroyed more than one-third of the town 435 kilometres southwest of Fort McMurray, Samaritan's Purse assisted in a variety of ways.

“As we prepare for our next steps, we invite Canadians to join with us in prayer for the struggling residents of Fort McMurray, and also for the firefighters, emergency responders, and medical staff who are diligently working to prevent further loss,” said Fred Weiss, Samaritan's Purse Canada's executive director. “We seek your prayers, and we seek your donations to help us do this important work.”

Donations Needed: Canadians can support Samaritan's Purse Canada's disaster relief work in Fort McMurray and where other domestic disasters occur by [visiting the Samaritan's Purse Canada website's "Donate" page](#) and selecting “Canadian Relief Projects” or by calling 1-800-663-6500.

Samaritan's Purse's “sister” organization, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada, is also preparing to deploy several of its crisis-trained Rapid Response Team chaplains to the safe sites where Fort McMurray residents have been evacuated. The chaplains will provide emotional and spiritual support. They will continue in that role after the evacuation order has been lifted and residents return to determine what is left of their homes, and deal with the emotional toll the fires have caused.

About Samaritan's Purse Canada

Samaritan's Purse is a Christian relief and development organization that takes its name from Jesus Christ's biblical story of the Good Samaritan. Like that Good Samaritan, who found a beaten man and helped restore him, we aid victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution. Besides disaster relief, our work includes collecting and distributing gift-filled Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes, and providing vocational skills and agricultural supplies and training to families in the developing world. Learn more at SamaritansPurse.ca

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