



Samaritan's Purse™
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

News Release

Samaritan's Purse sends Disaster Relief Units to Okanagan region in response to flooding

Christian relief organization will recruit volunteers and help with flood recovery on Okanagan Indian Band reserve near Vernon

CALGARY, AB – July 10, 2017 — Samaritan's Purse Canada is sending one of its specially equipped Disaster Relief Units to B.C.'s Okanagan region, and will recruit volunteers to clean homes in response to flooding in the Okanagan Indian Band reserve near Vernon. Band leaders have welcomed the assistance.

"Our field teams have been assessing the situation to gather information about the damage, and we are in contact with churches, municipal officials, and other non-government partners in the area to provide a coordinated response," said Tammy Sutor, Samaritan's Purse Canada's Canadian Disaster Relief Manager.

The Christian relief and development organization is moving its Calgary-based Disaster Relief Unit to Vernon, then staff will meet with local homeowners and recruit and train volunteers.

Disaster Relief Units are tractor trailers outfitted with essential disaster recovery equipment including generators, pumps, hand tools, and safety gear for volunteers. They also serve as volunteer coordination centers, and are equipped with a self-contained office, communications system, and other supplies.

"We are thankful that Samaritan's Purse has offered to help us recover from this flooding," said Colleen Marchand, Emergency Operations Centre Director for the Okanagan Indian Band. "This is a difficult situation for many of our residents and having an organization here, with a lot of experience in disaster relief, will make a positive difference."

Heavy rainfall in the central Okanagan caused Okanagan Lake to flood in May. As a result, more than 400 homes were damaged in the reserve, 200 of them badly enough to force residents to leave. Recovery work is possible only now because floodwaters have been very slow to recede.

Anyone needing assistance or wishing to volunteer to clean flooded homes can call **1-866-628-6565**.

Samaritan's Purse has two other Disaster Relief Units based in Ontario and New Brunswick.

In recent years, the non-profit organization has assisted victims of a wide variety of natural disasters including the catastrophic 2016 wildfire in Fort McMurray, Alberta; and flooding in New Brunswick, Quebec, southern Alberta, Nova Scotia, and in British Columbia. Its "sister" organization, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada, often helps by providing specially trained chaplains to comfort and pray with disaster victims. Billy Graham Rapid Response Team chaplains will visit the Okanagan reserve.

Samaritan's Purse also helps victims of international disasters including the 2011 earthquake/tsunami in Japan, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, and Hurricane Matthew in Haiti last September.

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 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, providing safe water, teaching vocational skills, and providing agricultural supplies and training to families in the developing world. Learn more at SamaritansPurse.ca.

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