



Samaritan's Purse™
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

News Release

Samaritan's Purse helping B.C. wildfire victims

Christian relief organization sending specially equipped Disaster Relief Unit to train/equip volunteers

CALGARY, AB – July 25, 2017 — Samaritan's Purse Canada is aiding families who lost their homes and belongings in catastrophic wildfires in the British Columbia interior.

The Christian relief and development organization, in partnership with municipal emergency agencies, is sending one of its specially equipped Disaster Relief Units to B.C.'s Thompson-Nicola region (west of Kamloops) to train and equip clean-up volunteers.

"Our experience helping fire victims in Fort McMurray last year has taught us that the opportunity for residents to return to their homes with trained volunteers to help them recover whatever wasn't burned is a critical step in their recovery," said Brent Davis, Response Director for Samaritan's Purse Canada. "We are honored to be able to help these people."

More than 100 wildfires are burning in B.C., threatening many communities. In the village of Boston Flats, almost all of the 50 homes have been burned to the ground. Other nearby communities have also been damaged by fire, and Samaritan's Purse is assessing them to determine potential assistance.

Once evacuation orders have been lifted, Samaritan's Purse will partner with local churches and other organizations to recruit, train, equip, and deploy volunteers who will be managed from the Disaster Relief Unit. The volunteers will help homeowners in Boston Flats and other fire-damaged communities recover keepsakes and other personal items that survived amidst the ashes of their homes, and help clean up the properties.

Any homeowner needing help should call 1-866-628-6565. Volunteers should register [online](#).

Samaritan's Purse's Disaster Relief Units, including one based in Ontario and another in New Brunswick, are trucks and 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.

Samaritan's Purse spent two months in Fort McMurray last summer, deploying 175 volunteers to sift through ashes of burned homes, and moving to the curb for pick-up hundreds of fridges and freezers full of dangerous, rotten food from undamaged homes that had been without electricity for up to a month.

In recent years, the non-profit organization has assisted victims of a wide variety of natural disasters including the flooding in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, southern Alberta, and Nova Scotia. While now helping B.C.'s wildfire victims, Samaritan's Purse is also assisting with flood clean-up in B.C.'s Okanagan.

Its "sister" organization, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada, often works alongside by providing trained volunteer chaplains to comfort and pray with disaster victims. Billy Graham Rapid Response Team chaplains will accompany Samaritan's Purse volunteers in helping wildfire victims in Thompson-Nicola, and the chaplains are providing support to the Okanagan Indian Band's flood victims.

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

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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