

Samaritan's Purse sends staff to help with COVID-19 emergency in Thunder Bay

Christian relief agency assisting overwhelmed northern Ontario homeless shelters

CALGARY, AB – March 4, 2021 — Samaritan's Purse Canada has sent team members to the northern Ontario city of Thunder Bay to help homeless shelters cope with caring for potential COVID-19 patients.

The Thunder Bay region has the highest COVID-19 rate in Ontario. About half the current cases are amongst the city's homeless shelters. This has overwhelmed shelters, who have moved almost 100 people into two hotels which are serving as isolation units.

In response to a request from the municipal government for assistance, Samaritan's Purse has sent 15 emergency response staff to the city to help however they are needed.

"Thunder Bay's shelters are in a crisis situation as they struggle to serve the city's vulnerable population with a staff that's approaching burnout," said Brent Davis, Samaritan's Purse's Canadian ministry projects director. "We are honoured to serve in whatever way they need so they can serve the city's homeless people."

Samaritan's Purse staffers are following all COVID-19 safety protocols as they provide emergency stop-gap support. That support could include cleaning rooms, transporting food, caring for the needs of residents, and more. It will not include healthcare delivery or security.

This is the second Samaritan's Purse response in Thunder Bay. In 2012, the organization sent one of its specially equipped Disaster Relief Unit tractor trailers to the city and mobilized local volunteers to clean up homes flooded by heavy rain and a breakdown in the city's sewage pumping station.

In recent years, Samaritan's Purse has assisted victims of a wide variety of Canadian and international disasters including flooding in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, plus tornadoes in Ontario, and forest fires in British Columbia and Alberta.

Samaritan's Purse's "sister" organization, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada, often helps by providing crisis-trained chaplains to comfort and pray with hurting people. Two volunteer Billy Graham Rapid Response Team chaplains are in Thunder Bay.

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.

Media Inquiries:

Frank King, news media relations manager, Samaritan's Purse Canada
403-990-0161 (mobile) fking@samaritan.ca