

HURRICANE HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA

6 MONTH UPDATE

Rebuilding houses and hope



Linda stood on her front porch crying tears of joy as she saw her new home being built.

“The floor doesn’t move anymore!” she said.

Linda, a single mom in Puerto Rico, was raising her five kids by herself and worked hard to save enough money to buy a piece of land with a small, two-bedroom home. When Hurricane Maria hit, the family’s house was destroyed. Linda was left feeling lost and hopeless, and because she was now homeless, she became in danger of losing custody of her kids.

“Thankfully, an organization with whom World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) is working, Adventist Agency for Development and Resource Assistance (ADRA), got in touch with her to ask about her needs. Soon, a team of volunteers from ADRA and World Renew DRS were able to rebuild a three-bedroom for Linda’s family where she can once again live with hope and raise her children in their new home.”

Hurricanes Irma and Maria tore through Puerto Rico in September 2017, interrupting lives and destroying homes across the island. “Thanks to the generous outpouring of financial donations to World Renew, we will be able to help hurricane survivors in Puerto Rico for quite some time,” said Bob Laarman, World Renew DRS director.

World Renew is thankful to be welcomed to the city of Mayaguez by ADRA to work together to rebuild homes for hurricane survivors like Linda.

“Ministry in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria and Irma involves special challenges and opportunities. We are excited to have quality local partners with which to work,” Laarman said. “Those who volunteer with DRS on the island will have interesting experiences and learn a lot.”

What has been and what will be happening?

In the first six months after the hurricanes, your donations to World Renew have already

- Provided home repair services in eight communities in Texas and Puerto Rico
- Connected 480 individuals and families with local support to help them in their recovery in Florida and Texas through unmet needs assessments.
- Helped 26 families clean-out their damaged homes.
- Set strong foundations throughout Florida, Texas, and Puerto Rico to provide long-term recovery services for hurricane survivors and their communities.
- Provided financial grants to local recovery groups

Recovery will take months for some survivors. For others, it will be years. Because of the magnitude of the destruction, combined with how widespread a geographic area the hurricanes hit, World Renew anticipates being involved in recovery efforts for three years or more throughout Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

The generous donations given after the storms will provide support and needs assessments for local recovery groups as they assist the survivors in their communities meeting their own identified needs whether they be personal, construction, and/or household needs. The need for help with home repairs will be ongoing for the next several years and World Renew and its volunteers will be there for as long as possible to help survivors who would not otherwise be able to fix their home.

Puerto Rico



Hurricane Maria completely destroyed Angel's home in Puerto Rico. Due to limitations, he has been unable to rebuild his home. By God's grace, World Renew and ADRA were blessed to celebrate a Last Nail Ceremony at the completion of Angel's newly built home in January 2018.

A Last Nail Ceremony includes music, a litany of words, and a prayer. During the celebration, the owner of the home is given a small nail and a hammer and encouraged to drive in the last nail. A symbolic wreath is placed as a token of remembrance and thanksgiving.

"If my mother could have seen this, she would never have imagined we would have had such a nice home," said Angel. "Thank you."

Staff and regional managers have made two trips to Puerto Rico to coordinate recovery efforts with local organizations. There are many ongoing details to arrange such as housing, transportation, meals, construction specifications, coordinating work projects, managing the language barrier, and more.

Texas



Julia's* home hasn't been touched since Hurricane Harvey. She said it is too difficult physically and emotionally to try to go through everything.

Her house was too badly damaged to be repaired and is scheduled to be demolished. Julia, her husband, and his disabled brother rode out the storm in their home, which had both wind damage and a storm surge, leaving them in waist-deep water. After the hurricane, all of their belongings were jumbled up and mixed in with sludge from the storm.

This is not an uncommon situation. From September – December 2017, World Renew volunteers gave almost 3,000 hours of help to clean-up heavily flooded homes in Port Arthur.

Twenty-two trained World Renew volunteers carried out unmet needs assessments, which help identify vulnerable survivors by systematically surveying disaster-affected communities, in two locations of Brazoria County in January 2018. This was the first of numerous anticipated needs assessments in Texas.

World Renew is currently coordinating home repair mission trips for over 60 different churches and schools to Texas specifically.

*not her real name

Florida



Amelia* lives in Immokalee, Florida, and her home suffered significant damage from Hurricane Irma in September 2017. Five months after the hurricane, she is living with moldy walls and bedding, rotting flooring, holes in her roof, and extensive property destruction, but she is only asking for one thing.

"I just need a new roof," she said.

The rainy season, May through October, is coming and she doesn't want her family living with rain water pouring into their home.

Amelia filled out a needs assessment survey with a volunteer from World Renew DRS in January.

Through the World Renew DRS needs assessment, she was able to connect to the Immokalee organization heading up hurricane recovery, walking along survivors who are unable to make repairs and recover on their own. Amelia will be able to get her new roof and find resources to help her meet her other needs.

Regional managers have spent many hours meeting with communities to determine when and where World Renew could be of service. Churches and schools are also eager to help repair homes in Florida. At least 15 groups are making plans with World Renew to serve across Irma impacted areas.

*not her real name

Financial Update (as of February 28, 2018)

US (US currency)

Hurricane Harvey 2017

\$2,663,784.94

Hurricane Irma 2017

\$698,876.87

Hurricane Irma 2017

North America

\$444,011.00

Hurricane Irma 2017

International

\$36,447.99

Hurricanes 2017

Puerto Rico/US Virgin Islands

\$813,236.20

Canada (Canadian currency)

Hurricane Harvey 2017

\$156,800.92

Hurricane Irma 2017

\$14,290.73

Hurricane Irma 2017

North America

\$8,073.83

Hurricane Irma 2017

International

\$56,698.08

Hurricanes 2017

Puerto Rico/US Virgin Islands

\$31,486.95