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The Power of Putting Things Right

So let heaven rejoice, let earth be jubilant, and pass the word among the nations, “God reigns!” He’s on his way to set things right!

—1 Chronicles 16:31-33,
The Message

This Christmas season consider the *World Renew Gift Catalog* as a way to get your family involved in giving that has “the power to put things right.” Your gift to World Renew helps people who live in poverty recover from a disaster, break down the barriers that keep them poor, and build hope for a better future! Let your kids or grandkids pick out a gift, or involve your church or school in setting up a Giving Tree using World Renew ornaments and a poster.

The *2014-2015 World Renew Gift Catalog* includes three powerful

opportunities to support disaster survivors in North America: spiritual care kits, small tools, and cleanup and debris removal. See page 17 of the catalog to select these great items that support World Renew DRS. The catalog also includes other meaningful gifts for people in need, including clean water, infant and maternal health, literacy, seeds and tools, business training, and dozens of other powerful gifts.

See worldrenewgifts.net to discover and order all of these **FREE** materials—sample announcements, children’s sermons, printable tree ornaments, e-cards, and more!



Ron Willett, the new director of World Renew Disaster Response Services.

World Renew Disaster Response Services' Mission is:

To show God's love and bring hope to disaster-impacted communities in North America by restoring the homes and lives of those who are most vulnerable,

To help communities build their capacity to prepare for and recover from disasters, and,

To provide opportunities for Christians to honor the Lord by using their time, talents, and financial resources in service to others.

Letter From the New Director

Greetings in the mighty name of Jesus Christ!

The other day I looked up from the supper table and commented to my wife Diane, “You know, I have been working at World Renew DRS for five months now!” Yes, it’s been five months, and I feel so blessed by each and every one of you. The joy and dedication that you, our DRS volunteers, give has been a blessing. Your work at disaster sites has such an impact on not only the cleanup and reconstruction work but also the spiritual and emotional well-being of those who are affected by a disaster. Each night I pray and thank God for the love that each of you bring with you.

In those short five months, I have seen DRS volunteers help people devastated by the mud slide in Washington; flooding in Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota; tornadoes in Nebraska; flooding in Florida, Mississippi, and Arkansas; tornadoes in North Carolina and Grand Rapids, Michigan; flooding in Detroit and Burlington, Ontario; and an earthquake in California. We have responded with early response coordinators, many rapid response teams, unmet needs-assessment teams, ongoing long-term reconstruction crews, and group missions trips. Each time, DRS volunteers have responded with concern, prayer, financial gifts, and their presence on-site in local communities.

I have had the privilege of visiting our long-term reconstruction sites in High River, Alberta, and Ocean County, New Jersey. What a joy it has been for me to join the teams each day, before they set out to work, as they sing “This is the day; this is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it and be glad in it.” The expertise and Christian love our teams bring each day reflect God’s peace and joy here on earth!

As many of you know, I served for thirty-five years as an executive with the Boy Scouts of America. And I believe the motto of the Boy Scouts—Be Prepared—also works for the volunteers of DRS. When disasters hit our communities, it is the wonderful volunteers of DRS who are always “**prepared**” and ready to pack up to go and help.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you as you show God’s love and peace to people in communities where we are called to serve.

Joyfully in Christ for God is good,

Ron Willett, Director
World Renew Disaster Response Services

Bright as a Box of Crayons



Anne, Joanne, Jenny, and Bonnie (l-r).



World Renew DRS opened a reconstruction site in LaPlace, Louisiana, last September in response to Hurricane Isaac in 2012. One hundred and seventy-two volunteers donated over 27,270 hours to help 23 home owners repair their homes before the site closed in April of this year.

One of those homeowners is Willie McGee. World Renew DRS volunteers Joanne Oosthoek, Bonnie Diekema, Ann Evans, and Jenny Glasbergen share some thoughts about Willie and their joy in working with him:

Q: Where was Willie when Hurricane Isaac struck?

A: Willie was hoping to ride out Hurricane Isaac in his home until his mother persuaded him otherwise. He took his dog, Marco, and drove to nearby Kenner, Louisiana. Willie believed his house would not flood because it never had before in the ten years he owned it.

Q: What happened after the disaster?

A: Willie was devastated. He quickly became depressed because his cerebral palsy made it difficult for him to walk, and he was unable to clean up anything or salvage his

possessions from the three feet of water that flowed into his home. Later he also lost his job, which added to his frustrations.

Q: Did Willie experience any unexpected blessings after the disaster?

A: Yes, while he was living with his mother, since his home was unsafe to live in, he was contacted by the local recovery group who assessed his needs for getting rebuilding assistance. And, after a year and a half and much questioning about the repairs needed on his home, Willie received the first World Renew DRS reconstruction team. He also unexpectedly received a job offer. Things were looking up for him.

Q: What work did you do on his home?

A: We were able to install or repair drywall, ceramic flooring, kitchen cupboards, new doors and trim, paint the walls, and make electric upgrades or replacements. He chose paint colors that were bright and flooring that would be best for special footwear he requires.

Q: What do these repairs mean for him?

A: His restored home meant continued independence for Willie. His sense of purpose, dignity, and zest for life has returned! His faith in others lending a helping hand has brought him great hope and health. He gives God praise for the DRS work teams that have restored his home and says God has answered his questions in very specific ways.

Q: Tell us about the colors Willie chose for his home.

A: Willie picked out very bright colors for his walls. We had a few reservations about his choices at first, but then we recognized the reason behind them: bright colors lift his spirits. After working with him for just a short while, we could say that those colors do reflect Willie! One of his friends suggested that he get a box of crayons because it would match the colors of his home. We have been blessed to help and get to know Willie as we worked on his home.

If you have a homeowner story you'd like to share, contact Kellie at kscholma@worldrenew.net or call 800-848-5818.

Changed?

Each group mission trip member is asked, “Do you think you have changed as a result of volunteering with World Renew DRS?” This is how several high school students recently responded.

- “Yes, I have become much more patient and considerate of others.”
- “Yes, I found that I love serving, and I want to volunteer again soon.”
- “Yes, I feel more confident that I can try new things.”

He Helped Us see that Good Things can Come from a Storm

“The sirens had stopped, and Anthony was outside on the patio watching the approaching tornado, thinking that it was going to miss his house. Then all of a sudden the wind shifted, and he hurried down to the basement,” said Lois Schoonveld, the leader of a group mission trip from Christ Community Reformed Church (RCA) in Lemont, Illinois.

The group, made up of volunteers from age 14 to 82, spent a week helping Anthony and other survivors of the November 2013 tornado in Washington, Illinois.

After the tornado passed, Anthony realized that the walls of his house were damaged, and many windows were broken. Then rain poured in and ruined the basement. The home was unlivable.

Soon after Anthony moved in with his father, they found out that his father was suffering from a serious illness and by April he passed away.

“Even through that heartache, Anthony recognized that God spared his life during the tornado and gave him the special gift of time with his father, to help him until his last days,” Schoonveld said.



Members of Bethel CRC in Lansing, Illinois, work in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Seven months after the tornado, the team of 14 people from Christ Community RCA helped Anthony put his home back in order.

“Anthony was so pleased that a church group would come and help him with this task,” says Schoonveld. “He felt blessed by God and wasn’t afraid to say so.”

Cascade Fellowship Serves in Florida

“We were so happy to serve Betty when we worked on her home,” said Lisa Groeneveld, a volunteer group

leader from Cascade Fellowship in Grand Rapids, Michigan. “Betty’s family was a close-knit group that was struggling to make ends meet. Her house flooded and the roof collapsed in a storm. Because the damage was not addressed properly, there was a lot of mold. As a result, all of the drywall in the home had to be removed. Our team installed and mudded new drywall, painted, and did the trim work. Betty said we were an answer to prayer and a blessing. We were happy to be of service.”

Groeneveld and the group from Cascade Fellowship served two families from Vernon, Florida, this year whose homes suffered wind and flood damage in July 2013.

“While we were in Vernon, we helped a man named Charlie who was unable to use either the kitchen or the bathroom in his home because of flood damage. Charlie had been helping others in his neighborhood repair their damaged properties, but he wasn’t able to fix his home on his own. So with World Renew DRS, Cascade Fellowship volunteers removed and reinstalled the flooring, stained the cabinets and put in baseboards, mudded, sanded, and installed a shower and toilet at Charlie’s house. He told us that we helped renew his faith in God and in people. ‘There *are* good people out there,’ he said. Since then, Charlie has continued to help others in need.”

Join DRS on a Winter or Spring Mission Trip with Your Church or School

Encourage your church or school to take a mission trip with World Renew DRS this year. Visit worldrenew.net/drs for potential locations and read the *Planning a Short-term Missions Trip* document under the *Resources* tab.

Across North America, DRS Volunteers Respond

Reconstruction Sites

Project Managers Rich and Phyl Grevnstuk continue to receive work from our partners at our **Ocean County, New Jersey**, site. They assure us there will be plenty of work for a couple of years. Reconstruction teams that are based in Ocean County travel to Atlantic City and other communities along the coast to repair homes that were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. Two-week volunteers provided labor on the site over the summer, and in September the schedule returned to a three-week volunteer rotation.

Volunteers at our other year-round site in **High River, Alberta**, are enjoying new living quarters. World Renew DRS workers are now being housed south of the city in an eight-bedroom ranch and a trailer with six single bedrooms. Volunteers in High River were on two-week assignments through the summer and Project Managers Henry and Linda Visscher transitioned the site to a three-week rotation in September.

New Sites for 2015

World Renew DRS is pursuing several options for additional reconstruction sites that are located primarily in the southern U.S. Please pray that God is glorified in our efforts, that we will discern His plans for us, and that we will be where He wants us in 2015.

Unmet Needs Assessments

We continue to receive requests for unmet needs assessments for smaller but still devastating storms that happened this spring and summer throughout the U.S. and

Canada. Needs assessment volunteers responded on the following sites in August.

Denny and Judy Stoel led a team in Louisville, **Mississippi**.

Rich and Pat Grasman led a team in the backyard of DRS in Wyoming and Kentwood, **Michigan**.

Walt and Carol Ackerman led a team (and a big bear) in Larimer County, **Colorado**.

In September, volunteers responded on these sites:

Garry and Lynne Den Besten led a team in Escambia County, **Florida**.

Jerry and Nancy Brouwer led a team in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, **Florida**

Herm and Joan Fransen led a team in Faulkner County, **Arkansas**.



We want to thank our regional project managers (RPMs) for their continued work with long-term recovery groups as they attend meetings, facilitate trainings, assist other RPMs—and all of the additional responsibilities that fall into their role.



Building Estimator

Del and Arlene Schrottenboer spent a couple of weeks in and around the Canton, **South Dakota**, area in September to respond to spring flooding there.

Group Mission Trips

In the 2013-2014 fiscal year, World Renew DRS sent 113 one-week groups, comprised of 1,334 volunteers who donated 87,062 hours of their time to help people in need in 23 communities across North America.



DRS Sunday
March 1, 2015

Mark your
calendars and put in a
plug at your church:
DRS Sunday 2015 is on
March 1. New materials will
be available this fall.

A Busy 2014



2014 is, so far, an eventful year for natural disasters around the world. World Renew is responding to spring and summer storms across North America, helping families recover from tornadoes and floods. Cleanup is an important step—a first step in the recovery process. With more than forty years of experience, World Renew DRS provides services to communities through all stages of recovery, including

- cleaning up homes and property initially.
- identifying those who are vulnerable so that their needs are met with justice and equity.
- building the capacity of the local community to begin to meet its own needs and then thrive.
- repairing and rebuilding homes months and years after a disaster strikes.

Here is a monthly summary of World Renew DRS responses to date in 2014.

MARCH

Residents in Oso, **Washington**, experienced a massive mudslide, and World Renew's experienced regional manager for that area has been supporting families who were affected.

APRIL

Widespread tornadoes and storms tore through the United States, from **Nebraska to North Carolina, Mississippi, Arkansas to Florida, and more**. World Renew DRS sent rapid response cleanup teams to areas of **West Michigan** to help families muck out flooded homes.

Flooding in Iowa.

JUNE

A rapid response team, joined by local volunteers, responded to flooding in **Iowa** and **Minnesota** by mucking out flooded homes and providing mold remediation services. World Renew DRS has also been active in tornado-affected **Nebraska** and flooded areas of **Florida**. Flooding and a tornado also affected portions of **South Dakota**. World Renew DRS construction estimators surveyed damaged homes and provided residents who qualify for help with estimates for reconstruction costs.

JULY

In response to a July tornado, early response coordinators, rapid response teams, and an unmet needs assessment team were active in **West Michigan**.

There was flooding in Tweed, **Ontario**, in July, and World Renew DRS is making plans to rebuild the home of a family in need that was affected by the disaster.

Can you find the "Green Shirt" in this picture?





A volunteer tears out drywall in a flooded home.

AUGUST

World Renew DRS is responding to the Burlington, **Ontario**, and Detroit, **Michigan**, floods. Volunteers helped with clean up shortly after the events.

Please encourage your church to take an offering for *Spring/Summer Storms 2014* to help ensure that we can continue to serve disaster survivors throughout the recovery process, even months and years down the road, as long as there is a need.

Invite a Friend

If you love to volunteer with World Renew, why not invite some friends to join you? Consider asking a neighbor, coworker, or someone from a different ethnicity or cultural background to go along the next time you volunteer.

Don't miss out on latest DRS activities! Sign up to receive the *World Renew eNews* each month at worldrenew.net. You'll receive alerts about updates and needs. You can also follow us online at [facebook.com/WorldRenewDRS](https://www.facebook.com/WorldRenewDRS).

Do You Know World Renew Around the World?



Ebola Outbreak

The chances that you have heard about the recent ebola outbreak in West Africa are pretty certain. Did you know that the organization you volunteer with is responding to this health crisis? The only way to stop ebola is to prevent its transmission or to diagnose and treat the symptoms early.

World Renew's local partner in Sierra Leone, CCSL, is raising awareness about ebola in "hot spots" around the country. CCSL

is educating communities about: how ebola is spread; recognizing the symptoms; what to do if you have the symptoms; preventing transmission; and the role of the whole community in dealing with ebola. The information is being translated into local languages in the affected areas. CCSL is working closely with Christian and Muslim leaders and setting up a taskforce for ebola response in each community to educate residents and monitor suspected cases.

Gaza, Iraq, the Ukraine

World Renew is also responding to the turmoil in Gaza, Iraq, and the Ukraine. Millions of people have been displaced and lives have been destroyed by the conflicts and persecution. Your prayers and support are urgently needed. Find out more and get involved at worldrenew.net.

Include World Renew DRS in Your Estate Plan

You have demonstrated your support for World Renew's ministry through your faithful prayers, volunteer service, and monetary gifts during your lifetime. A legacy gift to World Renew DRS in your will or estate plan demonstrates your passion for World Renew's ministry even after your death. Those who indicate a gift to World Renew in their estate plan can join World Renew's Joseph Stewards group and receive exclusive information about this ministry throughout the year.

To assist you with planning, World Renew is a member of Christian Stewardship Services (Canada) and the Barnabas Foundation (US). These organizations can provide you with free, confidential advice about estate gifts, charitable gift annuities, gifts of stock, RRSPs, and more. For more information, visit worldrenew.net/josephstewards. Or contact Bob Laarman (US) at 616-224-0779 or 800-552-7972, ext. 2155 or Judy Eising (Canada) at 800-730-3490.



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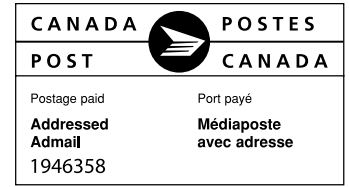
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