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If you have a story or poem
about your volunteer experience
that you'd like to share, please
send it in to our office!

A Home Restored, Lives Redeemed

Dorothy Rice, a 74-year-old widow who uses a wheelchair, was homeless after a flood of the Moira River in Tweed, Ontario, made her house unlivable in April 2014.

“Dorothy’s house was badly damaged by the flood,” said World Renew Regional Managers Tony and Jennie DeWeerd. “It was the most serious situation we encountered in the Moira River response. Dorothy clearly needed a new, accessible home.”

Just six months later, Dorothy’s house was repaired thanks to volunteer labor and donated supplies from nearby Christian Reformed congregations, neighbors, friends, World Renew DRS volunteers, and others. Dorothy received the keys to her restored house and was able to celebrate Christmas 2014 in her new home.

The DeWeerds decided to check in on Dorothy this spring to see how she was doing.

“When we called Dorothy in March to see how she fared over the winter,” Tony said, “her daughter Karen answered the phone. She told us that her mother was not doing well. Dorothy was diagnosed with cancer in January and then had a round of radiation therapy that was not effective.

“The news was shocking and greatly saddened us,” Tony said. “We reached out to the pastor of Tweed Presbyterian Church, Steve Brown, to find out more about how Dorothy was doing. We met Rev. Brown while we were working on Dorothy’s home, and he spoke ‘the blessing of the house’ there in December 2014. We asked Rev. Brown to visit Dorothy

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Ron Willett, 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 Director

Greetings in the mighty name of Jesus Christ!

In early May I attended a conference on the shores of Lake Michigan with World Renew team leaders from around the world. We were drafting the *2015-2018 Strategic Plan for World Renew*. A great amount of energy and time is given to World Renew's organizational direction, goals, and priorities during the planning process: it was a wonderful time of spiritual development, friendship, and of course -- work. I am amazed by the strong faith and many sacrifices my colleagues make as they work for God in the countries where they live. It was spiritually uplifting to me to hear about their efforts. I hope you will join me in continuing to pray for their health, safety, and the work they do.

In April, we concluded a two-and-a-half day conference for our regional project managers, on-site managers, and construction supervisors. More than 110 volunteers, staff, and special guests joined for fellowship, learning, and training.

We gave an update on our partnership with the Reformed Church in America (RCA) at the conference. This spring, the RCA contacted their churches and members in a variety of ways to let them know that World Renew DRS is the domestic disaster response agency for the RCA and how churches and members can become part of it. Please continue to pray for this partnership.

We had a meaningful discussion about the future of volunteerism as it relates to World Renew DRS. We focused on best practices, generational dynamics, and how to position the organization to respond to disaster survivors in the next five to ten years. Attracting new volunteers is a high priority for our ministry right now as we have a great need for volunteers in High River, Alberta, and Ocean County, New Jersey.

We received tremendous feedback from everyone who attended the conference, and we will use your input in our action plan over the next three years. My sincere **thank you!** to all who attended and contributed. I appreciate all that you do!

Since last fall, World Renew DRS staff and volunteers have conducted informational workshops in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Iowa as a way to increase our volunteer pool. More than 100 people have attended the workshops so far, including a wonderful representation from both CRC and RCA churches. The next workshop is tentatively scheduled in Lynden, Washington, on October 10, 2015, and we hope to hold several more events across Canada and the U.S. in the future.

In an effort to continue to identify new volunteers, World Renew DRS's theme for 2015 is "EACH ONE, REACH ONE!" We encourage you to introduce your friends and family to this ministry of mercy. Will **YOU** ask one of your friends to sign up and go with you the next time you volunteer on a DRS site? I hope that you will talk with just one person who will also be "the hands and feet of Jesus" to those in need.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you as you display God's love and peace among those He calls us to serve.

Joyfully in Christ, for God is good!

Ron Willett, Director
World Renew Disaster Response Services

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after we left Tweed, and he ministered to her faithfully.

“When it became apparent that she would not recover from the cancer, he visited every day to read the Bible to her,” Tony said.

The DeWeerds learned from Rev. Brown that Dorothy gave her life to the Lord, publically professed her faith, and became a member of Rev. Brown’s church in mid-March 2015. Through the witness of World Renew volunteers from Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Dorothy’s son Barry was also attending church at Tweed Presbyterian.

Dorothy passed away on March 30, 2015, and a celebration of her life was held at her home in May.

“World Renew DRS makes a difference in the lives of many people who are struggling to recover from a disaster,” the DeWeerds said. “While we repair homes in Christ’s name as His ambassadors, God is working to repair lives. We are thankful that Dorothy and her family are experiencing God’s faithfulness and love for them in life-changing ways. We are looking forward to seeing Dorothy again someday because of Jesus who is the resurrection and the life.”

This is what the work of World Renew DRS volunteers is all about. The name of the Lord be praised!

Jane Can Finally Use Her Sink



“Jane went without a kitchen sink for a year,” said Linda Schroeder, a World Renew DRS volunteer in Pensacola, Florida. “Her home needed to be completely restored after a flood in 2014. That included drywall, flooring, a roof, and replacing some of the walls.”

Jane* and her children are more familiar with disasters than most people. They had already been through two major disasters when last year’s rain and subsequent flooding ruined their home. Jane was also struggling financially when the storms hit, so she wasn’t able to repair the damage caused by the flood.

World Renew DRS has made a commitment to help disaster survivors like Jane in the Pensacola, Florida, area. As a result, Linda Schroeder and many other volunteers like her have been working on flood-damaged homes there since January 2015 at a World Renew DRS managed reconstruction site. In partnership with *Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies* (BRACE), the local recovery group in Pensacola, DRS has identified many homeowners who are still in need of assistance to recover from stealth flooding in April 2014.

“Jane is a new Christian who has been encouraged by the help and care she received from DRS volunteers. She wants to do the same for others,” Schroeder said. “I really enjoyed getting to know her as she worked with us mudding, taping, and doing other work around her house.”

Today, Jane and her family are living in a fully restored home. She washes her dishes in her new kitchen sink. She keeps food in her new kitchen cupboards. She sits on her sofa and lies in her bed at night in peace. Because of the work of World Renew DRS volunteers, Jane’s new home is a place for her and her family to restore their minds, souls, and spirits.

**Name changed to protect privacy.*

In the previous edition of *Spotlight*, we included a unique appeal for financial support for our managed reconstruction site Pensacola, Florida. Thank you to everyone who gave! We still have a great financial need there, and we are prayerfully continuing to seek funding so that we can work in Pensacola as long as there is need.

Across North America, DRS Volunteers Respond

Reconstruction

Project Managers Rich and Phyl Grevenstuk say that there is plenty of work for volunteer teams in Ocean County, New Jersey. The site will be open through the summer and into the fall. There will be a one-week break in July when Ocean Community Church, where our volunteers are staying, needs their building for Vacation Bible School.

There is also plenty of work to accomplish at the High River, Alberta, site before it closes late fall 2015. Project Managers Henry and Linda Visscher and Project Construction Managers Joel and Angie Ploegstra are overseeing this well-run site.

The Pensacola, Florida, site closed for the summer on May 14 and will reopen on September 19, 2015. Project Managers Don and Gert Vos have been overseeing this site. A tremendous amount of work has been accomplished there, and many homeowners still need our help.

As usual, the sites that remain open through the summer — New Jersey and Alberta — will switch from a 3-week volunteer schedule to a 2-week schedule. Volunteers can sign up for one week, two weeks, or more. See page 8 of this *Spotlight* for a special promotion for new volunteers for the summer of 2015 only. Encourage your friends and family to apply today!

The DRS work site in Washington, North Carolina, closed permanently on March 27. After about four months of reconstruction work, our volunteers completed the tasks that World Renew DRS committed to doing. DRS has enjoyed working with the Long-Term Recovery Group

(LTRG) in this area several times in the past. Project Managers Rick and Bonnie Wiersma note that the site was a success.

Unmet Needs Assessment

In May, we received a request from the Detroit, Michigan, area for an unmet needs assessment in response to massive flooding in 2014. Our regional managers are working to prepare for sending volunteers there to serve.



Volunteers are rebuilding homes at DRS-managed reconstruction sites in Alberta, New Jersey, and Florida.

Building Estimating

In March, Del and Arlene Schrotenboer completed building estimates for BRACE, the LTRG in Pensacola, Florida, with which DRS is partnering on our reconstruction site. The building estimates are used to supply work to our volunteer teams.

Regional Project Managers

We want to thank our Regional Project Managers (RPMs) for their ongoing work in their geographic area as they work with LTRGs and state-level Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs), attend meetings, participate in training, assist other RPMs, and accomplish their other responsibilities.

In Northern Illinois, Rich and Pat Grasman have been working with local LTRGs to respond to tornadoes that caused major losses in April 2015. Mark and Carol Martin have also been meeting with LTRGs in Moore, Oklahoma, after a tornado there on March 25.

There were many tornadoes and flooding events in April and May. From Texas to Oklahoma and elsewhere, DRS RPMs are in touch with the communities that were affected by these disasters.

Group Mission Trips

Church, school, and family groups from across North America have spent many hours helping DRS rebuild damaged homes over the last six months. These volunteers in bright green t-shirts were at work in New Jersey, Florida, Washington, and in between. They varied in age from young adults to 70-plus years old. The groups fixed roofs, installed kitchen cabinets, painted, put up trim, helped restore areas of Yosemite National Park, and more.

They would have done it Themselves if They could



A group of volunteers from Mountain View CRC in Lynden, Washington, spent a week in Colorado.

Tina would have done the work themselves if they could. We were glad that we could be part of making their home more accessible. Before we left, we had the opportunity to pray with Chris and Tina, and they expressed their thanks to God for the help they received.”

**Names changed to protect privacy.*

Chris and Tina* were at home when a tornado hit Brookport, Illinois, in November 2013. The couple quickly ran to safety, but their home was destroyed. They didn't realize at first that rebuilding their house would be just one of the obstacles they would have to overcome.

After the tornado hit, Chris and Tina lived in a small trailer for six months. They moved back into their home when only part of it was livable. Chris decided that the best way to repair the house was to learn about home reconstruction. He was working on rebuilding when he was involved in an accident that resulted in the loss of his arm. A short time later, he was diagnosed with a degenerative disease that doctors said would eventually claim the rest of his physical independence. The couple's challenges were piling up.

World Renew DRS has been sending volunteer teams to help with rebuilding efforts in Brookport, and a team from Orchard Hill Church in

Grand Rapids, Michigan, was blessed to help Chris and Tina.

“We were incredibly affected by our week with Chris and Tina,” said Laura Claus, one of the group's leaders. “They went through so much, but they didn't give up. They live each day with a sunny disposition. Our Orchard Hill Church family sends a team of adults on a one-week disaster response trip in North America each year. We do this because God first loved us. We are always humbled and blessed by the relationships we form and the work we get to do. We are blessed to be a part of what God is up to through the work of organizations like World Renew.”

While they were in Brookport, the Orchard Hill Church group built a wheelchair ramp for Chris who will likely lose his ability to walk on his own soon.

“Chris worked alongside us, doing whatever he could to help build the ramp,” Claus said. “Chris and

Groups of all kinds have opportunities to serve with World Renew DRS every week of the year. Here are a few examples from recent months.

- Churches and Classes sent out groups of volunteers for a week or more, not only rebuilding homes but also building relationships with each other and the communities where they worked.
- Calvin College students and alumni partnered with World Renew DRS for a spring break week of service in Longmont, Colorado.
- Volunteers from all over the U.S. and Canada converged on Rock Valley, Iowa, to do flood recovery under the guidance of World Renew DRS volunteers from the area.

World Renew Around the World

DRS is one part of World Renew's ministry with people who live in poverty and hunger around the world . . .

Improving the Health of Mothers and Children

Hundreds of thousands of women die during pregnancy and childbirth each year, and nearly nine million children die before they reach age five. Many of these deaths can be prevented through community-based health care, education, and nutrition programs.

World Renew's maternal and child health programs are an important part of the community development work in nearly every country where we work.

World Renew, together with our partner organizations,

- trains volunteer health workers in antenatal care, safe delivery, HIV prevention, clinic referrals, and postpartum and newborn care.
- trains community leaders to set up savings funds that can be used to help transport women with complicated deliveries to clinics, cover medical costs, and offset other crises.
- teaches health volunteers to counsel new mothers about nutrition, breastfeeding, hygiene, family planning, immunizations, disease prevention, and harmful traditional practices.
- works with health facilities to establish community participation in health service planning and empowers community groups to advocate for policies that benefit the poor. World Renew also

educates community members through public health fairs, skits, and "Celebration of Health" days. We monitor the health of newborns and young children through age five with monthly growth check-ups, provide nutrition counseling, and offer instruction in growing kitchen gardens and treating malnutrition.



- works with communities to improve the health of children and their mothers, which can have a profound impact on the future—both in the child's ability to grow, learn, and rise out of poverty as well as influencing a society's long-term health, stability, and prosperity.

To learn more and get involved, visit worldrenew.net/mother-child.



In Memory Of

We recognize the following volunteers who passed away in 2014 who were not noted in the January 2015 edition of the *Spotlight*.

Henry VanNoord
Maris VanderKooi
Johanna Gritter
Sharyl Wielard
Ted De Jong
Albert Dyks

If you know of a World Renew DRS volunteer who passed away in 2014 that is not on these lists, please let us know so we can recognize them in an upcoming issue of the *Spotlight*.

Are you new to World Renew DRS-managed reconstruction sites? See worldrenew.net/drs for answers to your FAQs and then contact us with any additional questions at 800-848-5818 or drs@worldrenew.net.

When Disaster Strikes



Volunteers help clear debris in Moore, Oklahoma, after it was hit by a tornado in March 2015.

This spring's storms have already taken lives and devastated communities—and hurricane season has just officially begun. You may wonder, “What does World Renew DRS do when disasters strike?”

World Renew DRS is active in a response from the early days after a disaster hits a community. In less than a day, staff and volunteers are on the phone with local officials, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other VOADs. Communication is a key activity at this stage of a response: it ensures that the assistance being planned and provided is appropriate and coordinated. World Renew DRS also sends early response coordinators to network with other organizations, provide spiritual care, and advise DRS about next steps. When needed, World Renew DRS sends rapid response crews to do cleanup and quick repairs.

How can You Help?

Some people can help as volunteers, and others can help by supporting the effort financially. Money that is donated to World Renew DRS after a disaster determines in large part what we can do to help a community with long-term recovery—and this is generally the greatest need. World Renew DRS often works in communities for years after news reporters and other organizations are gone, and many families that were affected by the disaster still haven't been able to repair their homes or return to them.

When World Renew DRS sends a rapid response team to a disaster area, we call on volunteers from a list of people who have agreed to be contacted for this work. If you'd like to volunteer to be called on for rapid response after a disaster, please email drs@worldrenew.net.

In the Words of a Green Shirt

“Nancy and I have been volunteering since 2006, and each year we give three weeks of our time to help others through World Renew DRS. Why? We found that the sightseeing, visiting historical sites, bike rides and walking the beach were all enjoyable activities, but they left us a bit empty and longing for more meaning. As one Christian song says, “I refuse to do nothing.” If, by my action, I can encourage someone in their faith or point someone to belief in Christ, then I have put my own faith to work the way that the Apostle James mentioned when he said, (in the Faasse translation), ‘How you gonna prove your faith if you don't show it by what you do!’”

— Marc Faasse, World Renew DRS volunteer



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Each One, Reach One!

We are looking for more volunteers, especially for our managed reconstruction sites! That's why we are asking that ***Each One, Reach One***. Before the end of 2015, will you invite someone new to join you on your next assignment?

This year, World Renew DRS is challenging our current volunteers with ***Each One, Reach One***, a friend-to-friend recruitment campaign to increase our ability to meet the needs of disaster survivors in the U.S. and Canada. Please invite someone new to fill out an application to volunteer with World Renew DRS when you take your next assignment—or bring them with you! You can share the application with others at worldrenew.net/DRSapp, or we can mail you applications to hand out in person. Becky in the office will take care of the rest!

Special Summer Promotion

New volunteers who serve their first assignment at a DRS-managed reconstruction site between June 1 and August 31, 2015, will be reimbursed transportation costs* to and from the site. Volunteer locations eligible for the reimbursement are High River, Alberta, and Ocean County, New Jersey.

If you are 18 years of age or older, please fill out an application at worldrenew.net/DRSapp today to take advantage of this special opportunity!

**Details available from the World Renew DRS office.*

If you would like to change how you receive this newsletter (email or postal mail), please let us know at the contact information below.



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SERVICES**

World Renew DRS
400-76th St SW
Suite 17
Byron Center, MI 49315

1.800.848.5818
616.965.2355
Fax 616.726.1141
drs@worldrenew.net

www.greenshirts.org