



Inside this issue:

Director's Letter **2**

Across North America,
Volunteers Respond **3**

Secret Weapon **5**

Highlights **5**

From Devastation to
Re-dedication **6**

Sea to Sea Reaches the
Atlantic **6**

Giving Opportunities **7**

In the Office **7**

“I Couldn't have Done it Without You”

Major LaMont, born in 1944, has spent most of his life in Schoharie County, New York. His home sits on land that was gifted to him by his grandparents and was built in the 1950s by his father out of materials salvaged from a church in West Fulton, New York.

Major remembers helping his father straighten nails to reuse in building the house when he was a little boy. Since then, the home has withstood basement flooding from storms in 1955 and 1996, but flooding from Hurricane Irene in 2011 completely filled the six-foot basement and nearly four feet of the first floor. Major was at home during Hurricane Irene and became trapped in water that rushed into his basement.

Thankfully, Major was able to kick out a window and shimmy through



LaMont's basement was flooded in both the 1955 and 1996 floods, but the flooding from 2011 completely filled his home's basement and 44 inches of the first floor.

the opening into his yard. With water filling the basement and first floor of the house, Major grabbed some food, his TV, his cat “Baby,” and spent a day on the second floor.

continued on page 3



**Bill Adams,
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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the 40-year history of DRS, our volunteers have become somewhat accustomed to working on sites in southern states in the US in the winter: it's great way to combine a winter vacation in a warm climate with a mission trip to help those in need (with a good portion of your expenses paid by DRS). Not bad! But recently, the weather seems to have gotten out of kilter. While Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Isaac hit down south in 2012, many of our recent disasters have basically been up north.

Most of you remember when Super-storm Sandy hit in October 2013. The hurricane ravaged much of the northeastern United States, and Sandy occurred about a year after Hurricane Irene flooded the same area. It also seems that villages along the Yukon River in Alaska have had more than their share of flooding in recent years as well. We sent teams to Tanana, Alaska, in 2009 and to Crooked Creek in 2011.

In addition, southern Alberta experienced the worst flood in history this past summer. We might be tempted to attribute these frequent, worsening disasters to global warming--but it really starts to get serious when our volunteer scheduling is affected! What are we going to do?

Will our volunteers be willing to sign up for northern assignments in the winter?

What a great opportunity for a reminder about why we do what we do. In our lives in North America, we are often blessed to be able to serve in God's kingdom while at the same time truly enjoying ourselves. In a world of suffering, it is unfortunately pretty easy for us to start to take our blessings for granted and forget why God has us where he does.

I remember hearing a sermon about retirement by John Piper. He cautioned listeners to be prayerful when planning their retirement years. Our years of work are really just preparation for what He has planned for us to do in our golden years. For many of us, our "encore careers" include working with DRS to bring help to disaster survivors who have suffered trauma and loss. Thank you for your part in that!

As you think about your vacation and work plans for the year ahead, please remember why we do what we do when Becky calls and asks if you can go to Ocean County, New Jersey, or to High River, Alberta, this winter or maybe even next summer. It could be that you need to plan your vacation during 2014 a little differently than you have in the past to fulfill God's calling in your life. As we often say in DRS, the pay isn't good but the fringe benefits are out of this world! Thank you!

In His Service,

Bill Adams, Director
World Renew Disaster Response Services

Across North America, DRS Volunteers Respond

It was a busy summer at DRS! We have assigned volunteers from southern Texas to Alaska, from Alberta to Ontario, and many places in between.

Reconstruction Sites

There was constant activity at our reconstruction site in **Schoharie, New York**, over the summer. Project Managers Doug and Pat Guikema are starting to make plans to close this site on November 12.

Project Managers Rich and Phyl Grevnstuk are working on getting our new **Ocean County, New Jersey**, site ready for a September 14 start date. Ocean County was one of many areas heavily damaged during Hurricane Sandy. Because of the amount of destruction, we anticipate working there for the next two or three years. Volunteers will be housed at Ocean Community Church (RCA) in Manahawkin, which is already active in the community. We are looking forward to developing this partnership further.

Henry and Linda Visscher have been involved with our response to flooding in **High River, Alberta**. The Visschers are making plans to open a new DRS reconstruction site in the late fall or winter after record-breaking flooding in June. In addition to offering opportunities for regular DRS volunteers, we expect to attract church groups to this site as well.

At our other new site in **La Place, Louisiana** (pronounced “La Plaas”), Project Managers Don and Gert Vos have been working with the long-term recovery group, visiting the site and getting it ready to open on September 21. La Place was damaged during Hurricane Isaac in August 2012, causing up to four feet of flooding in area homes. We are excited to return to our “home

in Kenner at the United Methodist Church.” Although we will be living in Kenner, the majority of our work will be in La Place.

Hyde County, North Carolina will reopen on September 21 with Project Managers Rick and Bonnie Wiersma, who will also begin to make plans to close this site on December 14.

Needs Assessments

Need Assessments (N.A.) over the last few months include:

New Jersey

- Hudson County, led by Ben and Char Dykema.
- Ocean County, led by Herm and Joan Fransen.
- Middlesex County, led by Denny and Judy Stoel.
- Union County, led by Mark and Carol Martin.
- Salem and surrounding counties, led by Jerry and Nancy Brouwer

New York

- Staten Island, led by Walt and Carol Ackerman.

Texas

- Eagle Pass, led by Bruce and Christine de Boer.

Alberta

- High River, led by Yogi and Liya Haasdyk.



We want to thank all of our N.A. Managers for their willingness and flexibility. You often go into the “unknown” and still accomplish what we set out to do in long-term recovery groups.

Building Estimating

In August, Peter and Ann Gootjes spent time in Fort Yukon, Alaska, estimating repairs after some flooding this past spring. Dale and Joyce Rhodea completed estimating in La Place, Louisiana, where we are setting up a new reconstruction site.

continued on page 4 ➤

➤ continued from page 1

After the storm, Major found that his home was completely devastated by the flood water. In the following weeks, volunteers came to help him gut and muck out his property. But because of the extent of the damage, Major had to live elsewhere for a year until Schoharie Area Long-Term (SALT) Recovery, with labor from the DRS Green Shirts, helped Major get resettled into his home. The renovations included installing new kitchen cabinets, putting in new flooring on the first floor, and many other repair projects.

“You guys did a great job.... I couldn’t have done it without you.” Major said.



Ongoing

The rest of our Regional Project Managers who are not directly related to a particular site have also been busy with their responsibilities.

Fred and Mary Visser spent many hours on the East Coast working with long-term recovery groups, looking at possible housing for future New Jersey sites.

Jay De Boer continues to monitor several villages in Alaska with major damage from flooding this summer.

Tony and Jennie De Weerd have been working with city officials in Bracebridge, Ontario, to build a new home for a family whose house was destroyed in spring flooding.

Len and Carrie Blauwkamp traveled to Texas to work out the details for a Needs Assessment in Eagle Pass.

Don and Ardy Pranger stay in communication with several communities in Oklahoma that are recovering from tornadoes that occurred this past spring. They will also participate in an upcoming Church World Service long-term recovery seminar.

Ed and Helen Mulder are involved in several communities in Indiana and Illinois on an ongoing basis where recovery is underway from spring flooding. They are also participating

in long-term recovery seminars sponsored by Church World Service.

Doug and Pat Guikema continue to work with counties in Connecticut that were affected by Super-storm Sandy.

Rick and Bonnie Wiersma, along with Eric and Nancy Johnson, will participate in a number of Church World Service long-term recovery seminars in West Virginia.

Rich and Pat Grasman stay in touch with several communities in Wisconsin and Minnesota that were recently flooded.

Garry and Lynne Den Besten continue to work with communities on the East Coast that were affected by Hurricane Sandy. They have completed many Needs Assessments and continue to receive additional requests for assistance.

Group Mission Trips

This summer, many volunteers with bright green shirts were visible in communities throughout Alberta, Colorado, Kentucky, Indiana, Louisiana, Florida, Missouri, New York, Montana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and North Dakota. The volunteers came from the following locations around North America.

- Lake View Camp – Pella, Iowa
- Heritage CRC – Byron Center, Michigan
- Terra Ceia CRC – Pantego, North Carolina
- Congregational Church – Ada, Michigan
- First CRC – Allendale, Michigan
- Cedar Hill Community Church (RCA) – Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Mayfair CRC – Grand Rapids, Michigan
- In His Footsteps Ministries – Jonesboro, Arkansas

- Calvin CRC – Sheboygan, Wisconsin
- Bethel CRC – Princeton, Minnesota
- Westwood CRC – Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Racine CRC – Racine, Wisconsin
- Immanuel CRC – Ripon, California
- First CRC – Grand Haven, Michigan
- Rockford Reformed Church – Rockford, Michigan
- Sunrise Ministries – Hudsonville, Michigan
- Covenant CRC – North Haledon, New Jersey
- Hope Fellowship CRC – Courtice, Ontario
- Pillar Church – Holland, Michigan
- First CRC – Byron Center, Michigan
- Pinecrest Community Church – Parker, Colorado
- South Grandville CRC – Grandville, Michigan
- Faith Reformed Church – Wyoming, Michigan
- Bethany UCC – Freeport, Illinois
- Spring Valley Community Church – Allendale, Michigan
- Trinity CRC – Broomall, PA
- Hope for Life Community Church – Watertown, South Dakota
- Doug VanderMeulen Family – East Martin, Michigan
- Weinert Family – Colorado
- Pleasant Street CRC – Whitinsville, Massachusetts
- Community CRC – Baldwinsville, New York
- Grace Community Chapel – New Brunswick, New Jersey

Secret Weapon

by Dennis Huenink, First Christian Reformed Church of Oostburg, Wisconsin



World Renew paired our team from First Christian Reformed Church of Oostburg, Wisconsin, to work with their established partner, Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri, to help rebuild the community of Joplin, Missouri, after horrendous damage caused by an EF5 tornado that struck in May 2011. Our first assignment was to complete a two-year-long project at the home of Ken and Frannie Dames.

Our eight member team was welcomed into the Dames' home where we found them living in just three rooms because the other rooms were filled with boxes of their belongings, tools, leftover building supplies, and lots of sawdust. *All* of the windows were covered with heavy brown paper. Ken was recovering from back surgery and his wife receives weekly visits from a nursing service to help with her medications.

One of our team members, a first-time service project volunteer, didn't think she had anything to offer homeowners because of her own health problems. But Judy was our team's "secret weapon." She immediately sat down with Ken and Frannie and *listened* to their stories from the tornado as well as some of their health and family concerns. She was just the compassionate ear they needed, and she put them at ease with the eight strangers who had invaded their home.

While listening and folding laundry, Judy learned about the couple's special requests and concerns, which she then conveyed to our team who did their best to follow through. Ken and Frannie were delighted that we truly listened *and* did what they asked.

This project was supposed to involve finishing a few windows with inside wooden trim and casements and tacking down some troublesome linoleum. However over the next two days, our team encased the windows, installed a light fixture, installed outlet and switch plate covers, cleaned up storage boxes, organized the kitchen, prepared some meals for the freezer, did the laundry, purchased five rooms of curtain rods and window coverings, bed pillows, and an area rug for the cement floor, and hung a door.

By the second day we were there, the Dames felt comfortable enough with us in their home that they both took a nap while their eight new friends worked around them! Later in the week, we all stopped in to say good-bye, exchange phone numbers, and present the couple with framed photos of all of us. Frannie jokingly threatened to let the air out of our tires so we couldn't leave! Together we shared a prayer and asked a blessing on their "new" home.

We thank God for the opportunity to be His hands in serving Ken and Frannie.

DRS Highlights

Current Volunteer Needs

Find the monthly Opportunity Link at worldrenew.net/drs or have it delivered to your email inbox once a month. Email drs@worldrenew.net to sign up.

World Renew DRS Awarded Grant from the Red Cross

We praise the Lord for being one of eight organizations to receive a combined total of \$10 million in grants from the American Red Cross for Superstorm Sandy response. World Renew is receiving \$257,500 to fund volunteer assessment activities in long-term recovery areas. These Unmet Needs Assessments will help identify the most vulnerable people who are still in need of assistance in New York, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Save the Date: March 2, 2014 is World Renew DRS Sunday

Celebrate the Lord's faithfulness in the midst of disasters by participating in DRS Sunday with your church on March 2, 2014. Schedule an offering and show the new DVD (yet to be released). Materials including a poster, bulletin insert, and DVD will be available to pre-order in December.

March 2 doesn't work for your church? Don't let that stop you! March 2 is the suggested Sunday offering date for US Christian Reformed Churches, but you are welcome to use these materials and take a collection any day of the year.

From Devastation to Re-dedication

When late April storms caused rivers and streams to start rising across West Michigan, the members of Ideal Park Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in Wyoming, Michigan, thought they were prepared for the worst. Having had some water in their lower level previously, they were equipped with a sump pump, supplementary pumps, and a generator in case the power went off.

But they did not anticipate that local authorities would cut off the power to their community, and the police enforced a ban on using generators to run the pumps because of the risk of electrical shock. Church members watched helplessly as Buck Creek, just 500 feet west of the church property, rose around the building and dumped about 18 inches of dirty water into lower level.

As the flooding increased, Ideal Park church leaders appealed to World Renew for assistance. World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) volunteers were on the scene the same day, equipped with a large gas-powered pump. Within hours, most



of the water was pumped out—but the damage was already done.

In the following weeks Rapid Response crews, assisted by volunteers from Ideal Park CRC and other local churches, pulled out soggy carpet and furniture, stripped wet drywall and insulation, and cleaned and treated the entire lower level for mold.

Soon after, DRS estimator Ken Westveer provided a complete list of the materials that would be needed to rebuild. Reconstruction teams were put together that included local DRS volunteers and groups from several churches. Over several weeks in June and July, they replaced insulation and drywall, put in new

flooring, and helped install new doors and trim.

The once-discouraged leaders from Ideal Park CRC had only hoped that they would be able to resume their normal activities with the new school year in September. They were thrilled that before the end of July, there were just a few finishing touches for church members to complete.

As an “aging” church, Ideal Park has new energy and vision along with their freshened facility and newly-installed pastor. They celebrated with a re-dedication service on September 22 and personally invited each green-shirt volunteer who helped with the project.

Sea to Sea Reached the Atlantic

Tires met the end of the road for the 2013 Sea to Sea Bike Tour riders on Saturday, August 24. More than 100 riders dipped their tires into the Atlantic Ocean in Staten Island, New York.

World Renew DRS receives 10% of the funds raised from Sea to Sea donations.

June 24, Newport Beach, California



August 24, Staten Island, New York



➤ **The DRS team volunteering at the Schoharie, New York, reconstruction site traveled towards Albany, New York, to show support for fellow DRS-ers on the ride.**

➤ **Marc Faasse, one of the DRS volunteers on the tour. Marc biked from sea to sea.**



Giving Opportunities

World Renew DRS has many ongoing response projects and your donations are most appreciated!

Listed below are current projects for which donations are needed. When sending your financial gift, please remember to make out your check to **World Renew DRS** and indicate on the memo line which project you would like to support.

US: World Renew, 1700 28th St, Grand Rapids MI 49508.

Canada: World Renew, 3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070 STN LCD1, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8.

Online at worldrenew.net/donate or by calling 800-552-7972.

Does your employer match donations? Some employers offer matching grants to employee-supported non-profit organizations. Ask your employer if they will consider matching gifts to World Renew DRS.

Southern Alberta Flooding

World Renew is responding to the unparalleled flooding in southern Alberta that forced 100,000 people from their homes. Needs Assessments will be conducted and a long-term reconstruction site will be in operation for at least two years.

Tornadoes 2013

This past spring, terrible storms struck Moore, Oklahoma, destroying at least two schools, a hospital, and many other buildings. World Renew expects to stand by disaster survivors for the long-term, assessing needs and repairing or rebuilding homes for the elderly, disabled, and those who lack insurance or the ability to do repairs on their own.

World Renew DRS Where Most Needed

Although DRS may respond, not all disasters grab the attention of the media. While some of these disasters are “smaller” in scope, they are devastating and traumatic to the people that they affect. To help those others may forget, please designate your World Renew DRS gift “Where Needed Most.”

Visit worldrenew.net/drs for ongoing projects in need of donations.

In the Office

Kellie Scholma — Communications Coordinator



Kellie has taken a new position with DRS. As Communications Coordinator, her primary responsibilities are collecting stories and photos, social media, new fundraising opportunities, and much more. If you have photos or stories to share about your volunteer experience, how you have seen God at work through DRS, an inspirational homeowner, or other DRS activities, please connect with Kellie.

Pauline Mitchell — Program Coordinator



Taking over for Kellie, Pauline is the Program Coordinator for the groups program and equipment. She will be working with Art Opperwall to organize group mission trips, and maintain the equipment and fleet of vehicles. Pauline's area of expertise is in sales and marketing as well as purchasing and business development. Welcome, Pauline!

Mike Gorchynski — Construction Supervisor



We welcome Mike to the DRS team as Construction Coordinator for southern Alberta. Mike has a construction background and, until recently, served as the Construction Coordinator for the Walker County Long-Term Recovery Group in Alabama. He has great experience and will be a big help in getting the LTRG started in High River, Alberta. Mike, his wife, Sharon, and their two children live in Manitoba. Welcome, Mike!



**DISASTER
RESPONSE
SERVICES**

400 - 76th Street SW, Suite 17
Byron Center, MI 49315

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 149
GRAND RAPIDS,
MICHIGAN

Contact Information

World Renew DRS Staff

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

Director:
Bill Adams
badams@worldrenew.net

Program Information:
Joyce Boerman
jboerman@worldrenew.net

Communications:
Kellie Scholma
kscholma@worldrenew.net

Individual Volunteers:
Becky Purdom
bpurdom@worldrenew.net

Shirley Ritsema
sritsema@worldrenew.net

Volunteer Groups:
Art Opperwall
aopperwall@worldrenew.net

Pauline Mitchell
pmitchell@worldrenew.net

DRS Systems:
Sue Kuipers
skuipers@worldrenew.net

Administrative Assistant:
Luanne Mellema
lmellema@worldrenew.net

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email please notify Kellie Scholma at kscholma@worldrenew.net.