



# Brethren Disaster Ministries **BRIDGES**

*Rebuilding Homes • Nurturing Children • Responding Globally*

Vol. 19, Winter 2018

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For more information on Brethren Disaster Ministries  
1-800-451-4407  
www.brethren.org/bdm



Church of the Brethren

## Another record year for Children's Disaster Services

by Kathy Fry-Miller

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) had an exceptionally full year again in 2017 with a record number of 16 domestic disaster responses, including two critical responses—the mass casualty shooting in October in Las Vegas, Nev., and the Amtrak derailment in Tacoma, Wash., in December. CDS had been able to build up our volunteer base and leadership support over the past few years with support from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Methodist Committee on Relief. This gave us the capacity to respond to these events, particularly when the responses required volunteers for 11 disasters in a six month period, and sometimes three responses at a time.

CDS was able to respond to every request it received from FEMA and Red Cross, as well as some local emergency management agencies. Just when we thought all our volunteers that could go out had already gone, we would get emails coming in from volunteers saying they cleared their schedule and could now respond or they were rested and could go out again. We even had a team approved, ready and willing to travel to California for the wildfire response on Christmas Day. As it turned out, they were not needed at that time. Mary DeWitt-Dia, Community Partnerships senior associate with Red Cross, wrote, "American Red Cross is very grateful for the support CDS has provided this year. This year truly challenged all of us who are in the disaster business. CDS brought compassion and expertise to the disaster operations and the families affected and I know that everyone was very thankful that you were there."

Several volunteers served on more than one response in 2017. One repeat responder, Pat Krabacher, shared, "In both California and Texas we saw amazing generosity poured out all around us with ordinary Americans doing something to help. We were loved by people who served us and provided food, a place to lay our heads, and security guys who sat up all night out in the cold while we slept. As we were loved, so we too were changed by that love."

Both CDS associate director Kathy Fry-Miller and program assistant Sherry Chastain were also able to respond with teams in the fall. Red Cross asked the Hurricane Irma teams to pre-position themselves in three different evacuation centers. Kathy shared from that experience, "Here we were the night of

*continued on page 2*



Children forced to flee their homes by wildfires enjoy reading books and relaxing in a donated rocker in a shelter in Ventura, Calif. Photo by John Elms



Families evacuating from Puerto Rico to Philadelphia, Pa., after Hurricane Maria, were directed to Disaster Assistance Service Centers where CDS volunteers cared for the children while parents applied for assistance.

Photo by Mary Geisler



Children being cared for by CDS volunteers in Ventura, Calif., during the wildfires, visit emergency vehicles outside of their shelter and interact with first responders (below).

Photos by Judy Lewis

## CDS 2017 Response Statistics

Location	Disaster type	Vol.*	Work days	Hours served	Value of service**	Children served
Albany, Ga.	tornado	4	16	128	\$3,089.92	36
Oroville, Calif.	dam breach	8	32	256	\$6,179.84	106
Perryville, Mo.	tornado	5	5	40	\$965.60	7
Oak Grove, Mo.	tornado	4	10	80	\$1,931.20	24
Neosho, Mo.	flooding	8	55	440	\$10,621.60	161
Utica, N.Y.	flooding	3	6	48	\$1,158.72	7
Mariposa, Calif.	wildfire	4	16	128	\$3,089.92	50
Kansas City, Mo.	flooding	4	8	64	\$1,544.96	22
Texas	Hurricane Harvey (Red Cross)	40	247	1,976	\$47,700.64	531
Texas	Hurricane Harvey (FEMA)	16	102	816	\$19,698.24	269
Florida	Hurricane Irma	18	134	1,072	\$25,878.08	666
Las Vegas, Nev.	mass shooting	17	140	1,120	\$27,036.80	122
Sonoma, Calif.	wildfire	19	114	912	\$22,015.68	327
Ventura, Calif.	wildfire	12	109	872	\$21,050.08	185
Philadelphia, Pa.	evacuation center	4	20	160	\$3,862.40	13
Tacoma, Wash.	train derailment	3	6	48	\$1,158.72	1
<b>Totals</b>		<b>169</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>8,160</b>	<b>\$196,982.40</b>	<b>2,527</b>

\* Includes repeat volunteers.

\*\* Estimated Value of Volunteer Service is \$24.14/hr for 2016 per IndependentSector.org



## Record year

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the storm in an elementary school gym, sleeping on a mat on the floor with 500 other people. We definitely had a sense of all 500 of us being in this together. Once the sustained winds got up past 45mph, nobody was allowed to go anywhere. We looked outside off and on throughout the night as winds blew debris horizontally across the reinforced glass doors. By the next morning, as the winds calmed down, people began to leave. We said good-bye to one of the last families, whose two little girls had been playing with us for hours. The father said, 'When you came in and started playing with our children, all the parents in this whole place just calmed right down. We knew everything was going to be OK.'

# CDS Spring 2018 workshop dates and locations

We are inspired by the high demand for, and interest in hosting workshops, as well as the enthusiasm of those attending and wanting to attend workshops. Some participants fly across several states to get to a training. What awesome volunteers and potential volunteers we have! This spring there are four regular workshops scheduled, as well as two Child Life specific workshops. While the spring workshops are filling fast, fall workshops will be posted soon. Registration information for workshops can be found at <http://www.brethren.org/cds/training/dates.html>.

## Shreveport, La.

**March 23 - 24, 2018**

Shriners Hospital for Children  
3100 Samford Avenue  
Shreveport, LA 71047  
Local Contact: Tommie Hazen  
Office: 318-222-5704  
Cell: 318-780-8351  
Email: [thazen@shrinenet.org](mailto:thazen@shrinenet.org)

## Trotwood, Ohio

**April 20 - 21, 2018**

Trotwood Church of the Brethren  
208 E. Main Street  
Trotwood, OH 45426  
Local Contact: Laura Phillips  
Home: 937-837-3389  
Cell: 937-371-1668  
E-mail: [LPGardenlady@aol.com](mailto:LPGardenlady@aol.com)

## CDS/Child Life workshops:

*These are specialized trainings for Child Life Professionals. Child life specialists and child life students are invited to register and attend. For more information, please visit <http://cldisasterrelief.org/childrens-disaster-services-training>.*

## Syracuse, New York

**March 3, 2018**

Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital  
One Children's Circle  
Syracuse, NY 13210

## Washington, DC

**May 3, 2018**

Red Cross Square  
Board of Governors Hall  
430 17th Street  
Washington, DC 20006

## LaVerne, Calif.

**April 14 - 15, 2018**

LaVerne Church of the Brethren  
2425 E. Street  
LaVerne, CA 91750  
Local Contact: Kathy Benson  
Telephone: 909-593-4868  
Cell: 909-837-7103

## Chicago, Ill.

**May 11-12, 2018**

DePaul University Counseling Program  
St. Josaphat School  
2245 N. Southport Ave  
Chicago, IL 60614  
Local contact: Melissa Ockerman  
Office: 614-226-9664  
Email: [melissa.ockerman@depaul.edu](mailto:melissa.ockerman@depaul.edu)

## Children's Disaster Services 2017 Workshops

Date	Location	Type of training	Participants	Trainers*	Volunteer trainer hours	Value of service**
Feb. 3-4	Independence, Mo.	Level 1	25	2	80	\$1,931.20
Feb 25-26	La Verne, Calif.	Level 1	11	2	120	\$2,896.80
April 3-4	Gotha, Fla.	Project Manager	16	3	40	\$965.60
April 5-6	Gotha, Fla.	Training of Trainers	13	3	40	\$965.60
March 25	Dallas/Ft. Worth, Tx.	Child Life Specialist	31	2	30	\$724.20
April 28-29	McPherson, Kan.	Level 1	16	2	80	\$1,931.20
Sept. 16	New York, N.Y.	Child Life Specialist	55	3	60	\$1,448.40
Sept. 22-23	Bridgewater, Va.	Level 1	30	3	120	\$2,896.80
Sept. 29-30	Jacksonville, Fla.	Level 1	5	3	80	\$1,931.20
Nov. 10-11	Northville, Mich.	Level 1	45	2	staff	n/a
Nov. 17-18	Bethel, Pa.	Level 1	22	2	40	\$965.60
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10 locations</b>	<b>11 trainings</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>\$16,656.60</b>

\* Includes repeat trainers; Some trainers were paid staff members and not included in volunteer hours

\*\*Estimated Value of Volunteer Service is \$24.14/hr for 2016, according to IndependentSector.org

# Hurricane Maria Response and Recovery in Puerto Rico

by Roy Winter

On Sept. 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria cut through Puerto Rico as a devastating category 4 storm, causing extensive damage to the island's power grid, cellular communication, water supply, agriculture, and homes. All the people in the Church of the Brethren's Puerto Rico district have been impacted by the hurricane and its aftermath, and they continue the journey to recovery.

On Feb. 3, 2018, I attended the Puerto Rico district conference with the theme of "Resplandece", meaning "Shine Again". More than four months since the devastating storm, we sat in the sanctuary of Castañer Church of the Brethren, with dueling generators (Castañer hospital on one side, church generator on the other) growling in the background. Stories of survival were heard around the edges of the conference. All seven of the Puerto Rico congregations, along with their pastors and members, are struggling through the long recovery from Hurricane Maria. Everyone has been without power, phone communication and running water for all or part of these months. The situation is improving, but the return of power is slow and repairs to damaged homes is even slower.

The Brethren response in Puerto Rico will be a unique and much larger

scale response than is typical for BDM, considering the scale of need, the distance to and isolation of a Caribbean island, and the long wait until home repairs and reconstruction can begin. For a typical project, BDM provides construction and volunteer management in partnership with other organizations who are responsible for different aspects of long-term recovery. However, while discussing the recovery at the district conference, we all felt called to respond boldly and not to wait for other groups to step forward with other services. The plan is that BDM and the PR district will coordinate and partner together, working within the church, rather than through outside partnerships, to develop a long-term recovery process for the Brethren families and church communities. This will include planning and implementation as well as fundraising for building materials.

The PR response has already been unusual, beginning with sending a 20-foot container of supplies which has now been delivered and distributed. Given the need for an immediate response, cash grants were given to the district for emergency relief programs in each church, feeding programs and support of members with damaged homes. Neither of these

*Puerto Rico district executive, José Otero (l), board chair, Rafael Ramos (r) and a recipient examine canned chicken (provided by the Southern PA and Mid-Atlantic districts) and water filter kits from the BDM shipment.*

*Photo by José Otero*



*Items shipped through BDM to Puerto Rico are unloaded at the Bayamón church by district executive, José Otero (center) and board chair, Rafael Ramos (l). The items were divided and delivered to the seven congregations in the district. Photo by José Otero*

activities would occur in a typical COB U.S. response.

In the next month, a recovery committee will be appointed by the district to develop response goals, guidelines and project funding parameters. This committee will oversee and monitor a response coordinator, case managers, construction leadership and volunteer managers who will lead the response effort. BDM staff and volunteers are helping to train and support these positions, interjecting long-term volunteers as needed.

The next year will be a time of learning, challenges and recovery. We know it will be difficult and with your support and God's guidance we will "Resplandece".



## Correction: BVS volunteers, Erv and Joan Huston



*BVS volunteers, Erv and Joan Huston, currently assigned to work with Brethren Disaster Ministries, were incorrectly*

*identified in the Bridges Fall 2017 issue as members of the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren. They are actually members of the Mount Wilson Church of the Brethren, in Lebanon, Pa.*

# Rebuild Program Updates

## Eureka, Mo.

BDM is finishing up the Rebuild site in Eureka, Mo. The project, which opened in July 2017, has worked on cases from The Salvation Army of homes damaged in the December 2015 flooding. Although the federal funding for the staff working on those 2015 cases ended on January 31, 2018, BDM has continued to finish up the work on the homes that were not completed by that date. Additional cases received from the Eureka Disaster Relief Committee will enable volunteers to continue serving homeowners through the closing of the project at the end of March 2018.

## Marion, S.C.

Work continues in Marion County, S.C., on recovery from Hurricane Matthew in November 2016. BDM partners include the Marion County Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG), Palmetto Disaster Recovery (providing disaster case management) and the Town of Nichols Steering Committee. Volunteer and leadership housing remains at the St. John AME Church in Marion, S.C. BDM is also exploring the possibility of assisting with some cases in an area near to Marion, just over the border in North Carolina, which were affected by the same storm.

## Possible new project site

Currently, the most likely location for the Eureka, Mo., site to move to is



Daytona, Fla.: A team of BDM volunteers work to repair a roof damaged during Hurricane Matthew. Photo by Andrew Stonesifer

North Carolina to assist with Hurricane Matthew recovery in that state. The hurricane caused an estimated \$4.8 billion in damage to 50 North Carolina counties, affecting 98,000 homes and nearly 20,000 businesses.

Discussions are continuing with potential partners to confirm and finalize the best location for BDM, based on the number of open and funded cases and on available housing options. Another site visit will occur in the middle of February.

## BDM short-term responses

**Daytona, Fla. (Hurricane Matthew):** A group of nine volunteers, led by disaster project leader Paul Boldosser, represented BDM in Daytona the week of Dec. 10-16, 2017. The group removed and replaced the roof from a home that was damaged during Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and which went through Hurricane Maria, in the fall of 2017, with only a tarp for protection in some places. Boldosser shared that when they stood on the roof they saw many other homes with blue tarps that had suffered the same fate and had not been repaired prior to the most recent hurricane.

**Houston, Texas (Hurricane Harvey):** During the week of Oct. 22-28, 2017, BDM volunteers Paul and Shirley Boldosser and Curtis Rink helped muck and gut homes damaged by Hurricane Harvey in Texas. They worked in partnership with volunteers from International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) and NECHAMA (Jewish Disaster Response). The volunteers cleared debris and damage from an average of one home each day, including the home of a woman on dialysis. Due to the distance and the large number of other Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) already serving across the state, it is unlikely that Texas will be considered as a potential BDM



Volunteers repair a roof in a trailer park in Eureka, Mo. Families whose own trailers have been continually damaged in repeated flooding are being moved from the floodplain to repaired homes in this new location. Photo by Jenn Dorsch-Messler

project site. However, anyone interested in serving in Texas should contact the BDM office for information on BDM partners who are looking for volunteers.

## Local responses

In addition to BDM project sites and short-term responses, some BDM volunteers are involved in local responses in their own communities. Although not supported financially by BDM, we delight in hearing about such activities and knowing that Brethren volunteers are always at the ready to assist people in need.

One such response, organized by Southeastern district disaster coordinator John Mueller in Lorida, Fla., in January 2018, worked with Lorida Church of the Brethren and the Palm Estates 55+ Retirement Park, both of which sustained damage during Hurricane Irma. BDM volunteers, some of whom traveled from as far away as Michigan and others who are seasonal residents in Palm Estates, were joined by volunteers from other denominations. They worked on a seven structures, installed a total of 17,000 sq. ft. of metal roofing, and repaired or replaced aluminum soffit and fascia, downspouts and gutters. Volunteer numbers ranged from 21 to 32 per day in the first week and from eight to twelve per day in the second week. Residents of Palm Estates stepped up to help feed and house the volunteers and also included them in social activities. It was a very productive and united week.

# Hurricane Response in the U.S. Virgin Islands

After the many hurricanes during the fall of 2017, Harvey, Maria, Irma and Jose became infamous household names. But have you heard of “Irmaria”? That is what residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) use to refer to their experience of being hit first by Hurricane Irma and then, two weeks later, by Hurricane Maria. They are facing a long road ahead and determining what recovery from “Irmaria” will look like, with over 38,112 applications for FEMA assistance, representing more than one third the population.

BDM’s initial response in the USVI has been through the Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (DRSI), a partnership with the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church [Disciples of Christ]. At the

invitation of community leaders, long-term recovery group formation advisor Rachel Larratt deployed to St. Thomas shortly after Hurricane Maria, with supporting visits to other islands. She worked directly with affected communities, and collaborated with FEMA, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and other non-governmental partners, to help facilitate development of a locally managed Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG). Organized and run by local leaders, the LTRG is now ready to move forward with the next steps in the long recovery ahead. In January 2018, Larratt was joined by DRSI team member Tim Sheaffer and two United Church of Christ volunteers. The team will continue to support

local recovery efforts, including volunteer responses in 2018, and will continue to collaborate with FEMA in evaluating the state of the recovery on the islands, which will inform future planning.

With the media focusing much of its attention on Puerto Rico and Texas since the 2017 hurricanes, the destruction sustained in the USVI and the overwhelming recovery needs there are less well known. This lack of public awareness, combined with the fact that most voluntary organizations are currently focusing their resources in other areas and are stretched to capacity, will most likely result in a smaller response in these islands. Bearing this in mind, BDM plans to continue its response there in 2018.

The Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) will support BDM’s efforts in USVI and will also be used to leverage and secure additional grants and funding to expand the response. DRSI staff will support the St. Thomas Recovery Team for at least six months and may stay longer if additional funding is secured. The LTRG is setting up a volunteer rebuild program, with dates still to be determined, to provide opportunities for volunteers and construction leadership from BDM and other VOADs. This recovery will be an extensive collaboration by multiple organizations, with BDM being a primary supporter. Anyone interested in learning about opportunities to serve in the USVI should contact Terry Goodger at [tgoodger@brethren.org](mailto:tgoodger@brethren.org) or 410-635-8730.



This view of many blue tarped roofs in December 2017 on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, shows the widespread damage caused by Hurricanes Maria and Irma.

Photo by Jenn Dorsch-Messler



## April 6-8, 2018

### Frederick Church of the Brethren, Frederick, MD

**Behold! A gathering of people too numerous to count, from all across this earth, praising God in all sorts of languages and uniting to follow Jesus Christ, the Lord of Love.**

(inspired by Revelation 7:9)

**Mission Alive serves as an opportunity to:**

- Rejoice in the growing presence of the Church of the Brethren across the globe
- Explore what it truly means to be a global church and how each district, congregation, and individual can take part
- Commit to investing in this vision

For information and to register, go to [www.brethren.org/missionalive2018](http://www.brethren.org/missionalive2018) or contact Kendra Harbeck (847-429-4388 or [kharbeck@brethren.org](mailto:kharbeck@brethren.org)). CEU Credits available.

# Volunteering at any age can be life-changing

While people may assume that the typical BDM rebuild volunteer is an older adult, perhaps even a retiree, the fact is that volunteers range in age from mid-teens to nonagenarians. Each volunteer is welcome and has an important role to play.

When long-time BDM volunteer Ernie Rice (Mid-Atlantic district) found out that his group of volunteers would be working in South Carolina with a young adult group from his district, he wasn't sure what to expect. By the end of the week, he was full of praise for the experience and for the value of an intergenerational work crew. "A most rewarding and important encounter," Rice wrote, "was the interaction between the younger adults, ages 23 to 36, and the older adults, ages 50-84. The interaction and respect shown in fellowship and on the job site was truly biblical love."

Carol Goss, a 64-year-old woman from Virgina district, spoke glowingly of her experience in Columbia, S.C. where she learned how to lay and nail shingles.

An eighty-year-old woman who served in Colorado worried that she might not be useful, but she soon found plenty of work to do. "I, too, was part of the dance," she remarked. Her lesson learned was that "you're never too old to serve."

High school senior Erin Gingerich,



High School senior Erin Gingerich enjoyed her work on the Marion, S.C., rebuild project site.  
Photo by Kim Gingerich

Long-time volunteer Ernie Rice has observed that "when you witness the joyful smile on the face of the exhausted volunteer you recognize that he or she is a fulfilled person."  
Photo by Ernie Rice

from Pennsylvania, volunteered at the BDM project in Marion, S.C., in January 2018. When reflecting on her week, she wrote, "I enjoyed helping out with BDM. The people we helped were very appreciative of what we were doing, but that's not the main reason. It's the fact that this organization exists, to help where there is none, and to give back to people who lost most, if not all, of what they owned. Yes, sanding, dry-walling and cleaning can be dirty and tiring tasks, but despite this, I felt I was impacting someone else's life by simply doing what Christ would do. I'm glad I had the opportunity to help

and be a part of this organization." Erin is already looking forward to her next rebuild experience.

"Without a doubt, each time I have gone on disaster trips, I learned something new about myself spiritually and emotionally," reported Glenn McCrickard, a 53-year-old pastor (Westminster COB) from the Mid-Atlantic district.

Volunteers at all stages of life bring unique gifts and skills to share with fellow workers and with homeowners. And no matter the age, they usually find out that they take away as much from the experience as they have brought to it.

## Brethren Disaster Ministries 2017 Rebuild Responses

Project location	Disaster type	Volunteers*	Workdays	Hours served	Value of service**	Families served
<b>Rebuild Projects</b>						
Columbia, S.C.	storm/flood	449	4,205	33,640	\$812,069.60	27
Clay County, W.Va.	flood	80	412	3,296	\$79,565.44	4
Eureka, Mo.	storm/flood	242	1,736	13,888	\$335,256.32	24
Marion County, S.C.	Hurricane Matthew	160	3,671	29,368	\$708,943.52	9
<b>5 Short-term responses ***</b>	hurricane/flood/ tornado	45	233	1,870	\$45,141.80	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>976</b>	<b>10,257</b>	<b>82,062</b>	<b>\$1,980,976.68</b>	<b>83</b>

\* Includes repeat volunteers

\*\* Estimated Value of Volunteer Service is \$24.14/hr for 2016 per IndependentSector.org

\*\*\* Short-term responses in Florida, Illinois, Missouri, Texas and West Virginia

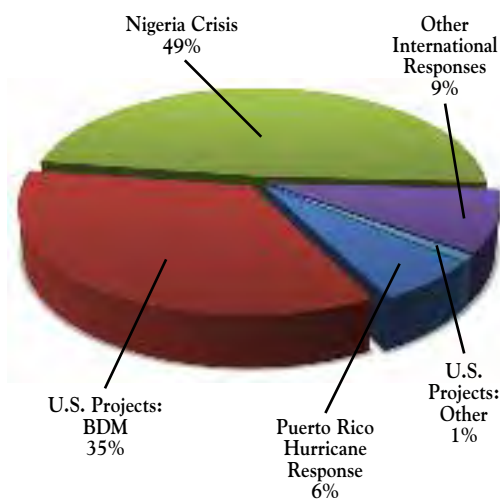
## Brethren Disaster Ministries 2017 Project Expenses

Status		Amount
	<b>U.S. Projects</b>	
Active	BDM—Marion County, S.C., Hurricane Matthew response	\$36,773
Active	BDM—Eureka, Mo., flood recovery	\$42,620
Active	BDM and Puerto Rico District—2017 Caribbean Hurricanes Response	\$69,935
Active	BDM—2017 Fall disaster response	\$963
Active	BDM—Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (DRSI)	\$60,392
Completed	CWS—Hurricane Harvey response	\$10,000
Completed	CDS—Hurricane Harvey Response	\$4,417
Completed	BDM—Columbia, S.C., flood response	\$206,971
Completed	CDS—Missouri flooding response	\$2,927
Completed	BDM—2016 West Virginia flooding	\$23,038
Completed	CDS—Albany, Ga., tornado response	\$1,977
	<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>\$460,013</b>
	<b>International Projects</b>	
Active	BDM—EYN response to violence in Nigeria	\$529,091
Active	BDM/Haitian Church of the Brethren Hurricane Matthew response	\$40,000
Active	GMS—South Sudan war, food shortages & response vehicle	\$11,714
Completed	CWS—Drought in Kenya	\$25,000
Completed	Shalom Ministry for Reconciliation—displaced families in the DR Congo	\$25,000
	<b>International total</b>	<b>\$630,805</b>
<b>TOTAL BDM PROJECT EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$1,090,818</b>

## Brethren Disaster Ministries 2017 Project Funding

<b>Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) Total</b>	<b>\$2,315,759</b>
Nigeria Crisis Fund <i>(included in EDF Total)</i>	\$425,169
2017 Hurricanes & Puerto Rico Hurricane Responses <i>(included in EDF Total)</i>	\$589,243
Program Grants <i>(included in EDF Total)</i> :	
Week of Compassion—Disciples of Christ grant for Nigeria Crisis Response	\$30,000
United Way of the Midlands for South Carolina project building materials	\$88,801
*Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (DRSI) Partner Funding	\$19,000
<i>*DRSI is a joint program of BDM, United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)</i>	

## BDM 2017 Project Expenses





# Hope is alive in Eureka, Mo.

by Sammy Deacon with Denise Kasten, Eureka Disaster Relief Committee  
& St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Just as the residents of Eureka were starting to make progress in rebuilding from December 2015's Winter Storm Goliath, the community was struck by another record breaking flood in April 2017. Much of the rebuild work that had taken place was again under water. It was becoming clear that, due to the change in local flood patterns, those that live along the river might need to relocate.

Because of this, the Eureka Disaster Relief Committee (EDRC) came up with an alternative plan. They found a mobile home community that is not in the flood zone and have been purchasing and refurbishing trailers. With the leadership of a mission team from St. Mark's Lutheran Church and the cooperation of the park owner/manager, there is a renewed effort to rebuild and relocate individuals and families that have been affected by repeated flooding. Chris Hosley and Denise Kasten of St. Mark's have helped to lead the charge forward to recovery, rebuilding and hope. It has been our privilege for BDM to work alongside them in the rebuild process in Missouri.

Although we have been involved in

other projects in the area, the mobile home park is special in the hope that is reflected there. So many physical changes and improvements have taken place in the park but the most noticeable change is the emotional and spiritual growth that is evident among the residents. It symbolizes a new beginning for so many.

One of those residents recently underwent chemotherapy and surgery for cancer. He is suffering from the side effects of the chemo and the healing process after a colostomy. Though he is grateful to have a safe, "new" home to recover and rest in, he is more encouraged by the regular visits of his new neighbors, members of the EDRC and volunteers who occasionally stop to visit.

Another amazing story of hope and survival involves a couple who have three children under the age of five. They had previously lived in a mobile home that flooded twice and was finally demolished. They were living with the husband's parents temporarily, with no resources to rent or purchase their own home. Because of the work of BDM volunteers and local organizations, this family was able to



The doormat of a young family's new home in Eureka, Mo., expresses the hopes and prayers of the volunteers who served them and the local community who will continue to support them.  
Photo by Sammy Deacon

move into a beautiful home. They are also receiving guidance on money management and meet with mentors twice a month who provide accountability and advice. The real joy in the recovery process here is in the relationships that have been built with the flood survivors and the bonds of Christian love that are evident.

It has been a memorable experience to be used by God in bringing hope to those in need of a home, but even more incredible to share the hope of an eternal home in heaven, with a God who loves them and knows their every need. None of this would be possible without the faithful and devoted volunteers who sacrifice their time and energy to help people they have never met, but who they grow to love in only one short week in Eureka, Mo.

# Nigeria: relief and recovery in 2017

By Sharon Franzén and Roxane Hill, Nigeria Crisis Response coordinator

The Church of the Brethren in the U.S. has been supporting and encouraging Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the

Brethren in Nigeria) as they faced death, abduction, destruction and displacement due to violence in Northeast Nigeria by Boko Haram, one of the world's deadliest terrorist groups. The U.S. Brethren have

responded to the needs identified by EYN for emergency assistance and, as the situation improved, for recovery and rebuilding.

The vehicle for COB emergency and recovery support, in partnership with EYN, is the Nigeria Crisis Response, which began in 2014. By the end of 2017, nearly \$5 million had been expended for programs through EYN and five Nigerian non-governmental organizations, beginning with emergency support and, as areas became more secure, expanding to help families rebuild their homes and lives, and recover their self-sufficiency. Violence has



A field of soybeans in Nigeria near harvest. The Soybean Value Chain Initiative, supported by the Nigeria Crisis Response, has already reached over 100,000 farmers with information about this crop which improves both household nutrition and income.

Photo courtesy of Global Food Initiative

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# Nigeria workcamps: building churches and relationships

By Sharon Franzén

**“Your joys are our joys and your sorrows are our sorrows.”**

*Luci Landes, Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry board member, bringing greetings from the U.S. Church to the Church at Michika, Nigeria, during a January 2018 church rebuilding workcamp*

The Church Rebuilding Fund for Nigeria, funded through special donations and separate from the Nigeria Crisis Response, supports rebuilding of church buildings and sponsors workcamps for U.S. and Nigerian volunteers. Since 2016, seven workcamps involving 42 U.S. volunteers have provided opportunities for Brethren to work and worship together, and to support one another.

The most recent workcamp, in January 2018, involved six U.S. volunteers, including BDM office

manager Sharon Franzén and Mission and Ministry board member (and CDS volunteer) Luci Landes. With close to 300 volunteers participating on many days, from pre-teens to the elderly, the workcampers made significant progress on the initial stages of a new church building in Michika, on the same ground where the original church had been completely destroyed. The Nigerian Brethren were effusive in their appreciation for the love and encouragement of the U.S. volunteers. When they left Michika, the congregation presented the volunteers with a beautifully crafted and decorated traditional quiver, asking them to carry it to the headquarters of the U.S. church as a sign of their joy and deep gratitude for the love and support the U.S. Brethren have shared with EYN and its members.



*January 2018 Nigeria workcamp: Sharon Franzén and Bassa Koji Wakura often shared stories and laughter as they rested from their labors. Franzén recalled, “One day Bassa, who was taught by Church of the Brethren missionaries, proudly showed me his obviously well-loved music notebook from 1960 and together we sang songs like ‘Go tell it on the mountain’ and ‘This little light of mine’. I was struck by the common threads connecting us and it excites me every time I think of it.”*

*Photo courtesy of Sharon Franzén*

These volunteers were more than just individuals, they were living examples of an enduring relationship that has been strengthened, rather than diminished, by the challenges of recent years.

## Nigeria: relief and recovery in 2017

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continued in a few areas requiring some ongoing emergency assistance programs. Throughout the crisis response, peace building and trauma healing for adults and children have been emphasized as important building blocks to renewal and restoration of individuals and communities.

Nigeria Crisis Response progress in 2017 has included:

- Food distributions: 24 distributions, each involving 75 to 250 families
- Medical response: 16 medical responses to groups of 400 to 950 people at a time; medical support for recently released Chibok schoolgirl
- Agriculture
  - Supplies: 3,600 families received seeds, and 1,800 families received fertilizer
  - Agricultural training: Farming God’s Way (Kenya), and ECHO (Nigeria)

- Soybean project: 50-plus communities involved; joint project of EYN/Soybean Innovation Lab (Illinois)/Global Food Initiative (Church of the Brethren)
- Two tractors purchased and operating in the Kwarhi and Abuja areas
- Education & care: 1,664 orphans and vulnerable children assisted through independent learning centers, school fees, and full-time care
- Small business support: 472 women helped with businesses and empowered to care for themselves, through seminars, literacy programs, and cash start-ups
- Peace building & trauma healing
  - Ten workshops, including training of Listening Companions at the local level
  - Nine participants in training in Rwanda

- Rebuilding: new roofing for 100 homes destroyed by Boko Haram
- Water supply: 10 new sources, including two with solar pumps
- Building projects: Kwarhi Medical Clinic, new offices for EYN, roofing for classroom at Kulp Bible College
- EYN solar powered internet café started
- Assistance for families following an attack by Fulani herdsmen
- Books: container of educational books from U.S. arrived and distribution began
- Real-time evaluation conducted of EYN disaster work; Tripartite (EYN/COB/Mission 21) meeting held
- Advocacy and peace building work continued through COB Office of Public Witness



The Nigeria Crisis Response supports the most vulnerable EYN families as they return to their damaged homes. The house on the left received a new roof after the family repaired the structure. Damage to the house next to it is an example of the long journey to recovery that families in Northeast Nigeria still face.

Photo by Sharon Franzén



Hurricane Matthew recovery continues in Haiti with home reconstruction. Working in partnership with the Haitian COB, BDM is supporting the repair or rebuilding of 40 homes damaged by the 2016 hurricane. In this photo preparations are underway to build a house for a family currently living in makeshift housing.

Photo by Bernard Gacheling

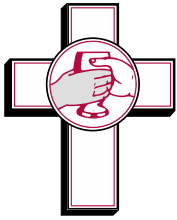


Years of violence between government troops and militias (who protest the “corrupt” government by raiding villages for food and supplies) are an ongoing situation which leaves thousands of Congolese homeless and hungry. Partnering with the Congolese Church of the Brethren, Emergency Disaster Fund grants have provided emergency food and supplies for these displaced families.

Photo by Ron Lubungo

Global Mission and Service staff member, Athanasus Ungang, is excited to receive the new vehicle for the Brethren Peace Center in Torit South Sudan. Funds from BDM helped purchase the vehicle that will support mission work as well as relief and development programs helping people affected by the ongoing civil war. BDM funds also helped to repair the Center after it was looted in July 2017.

Photo courtesy Athanasus Ungang



# BRIDGES

**Brethren Disaster Ministries**

601 Main Street, P.O. Box 188  
New Windsor, MD 21776

Address Service Requested

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Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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Westminster, MD  
Permit # 15

## CDS volunteer notes

**All volunteers!** Please update your email address with us if you change the email that you use most frequently and be sure we have other updated info as well, such as if you move. We will continue to keep a running list of availability dates and will go to that list first when a disaster strikes. We would appreciate hearing from you about your spring and summer availability. We realize that this can change, but this gives us a list to start from. We will also send bulk emails by state or FEMA regions, and then expand our request area as needed. Please send your info to [cgs@brethren.org](mailto:cds@brethren.org).

**Local connections count!** Pat Bub has been attending Pennsylvania state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) meetings. Through that connection, CDS was asked to provide childcare for an assistance center in Philadelphia for



*FEMA Region 10 gathered partners together for a meeting on children and disaster. Two CDS volunteers, Allene Osborn and Kunteang Som, attended on behalf of CDS and Child Life Disaster Relief.*

*Photo courtesy of FEMA Region 10*

families evacuating from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Thank you, Pat, for helping to make serving these children and families possible!

**Sherry Chastain, CDS program assistant,** continues to work diligently on certification, recertification, background checks, and sending out badges. In our most

recent grant report to UMCOR, we reported that in the period of April through September, 58 participants completed the training requirements for certification. CDS certified 25 new volunteers and 33 renewing volunteers, for a certification/training rate of 100 percent, which is well over our goal of 70 percent!