



# Brethren Disaster Ministries **BRIDGES**

Rebuilding Homes • Nurturing Children • Responding Globally

Vol. 24, Summer 2023

## INSIDE

DDC/DPL Leadership Seminar .....2

Rebuilding Updates .....3

2023 Disaster Response Auctions .....3

Local Volunteers Serve in  
Washington State .....4

Rebuilding Homes in Eastern  
Kentucky.....4

CDS Updates .....5

Carolyn Neher to Lead Children's  
Disaster Services .....5

Humanitarian Assistance in the  
DR Congo and Rwanda.....6

Accompanying EYN on the Road to  
a Joyous Centennial Celebration ....7

Haiti Response Update.....7

Blood Drives .....8

Ukraine in Crisis .....8

## Supporting Tornado Survivors in Kentucky

The BDM Rebuilding Program has been partnering with Habitat for Humanity of the Pennyryle Region (Habitat) in Dawson Springs (Hopkins County), Ky., since January 2023. Habitat has been both a rebuilding partner, providing cases for the qualified families who are having new homes built, and a housing partner, with BDM volunteer housing located at their warehouse and office facility in nearby Madisonville, Ky.

Dawson Springs saw 75 percent of the town wiped out after an EF4 tornado came through on the night of Dec. 10-11, 2021. Over 650 of the 1,200 housing units in the town were lost and 15 residents died. Many of the destroyed housing units had been occupied by renters who were then displaced from the community.

To date, BDM volunteers have worked on 12 new homes with Habitat, often working on some portion of up to ten houses in one week. Here is a sampling of some of the displaced renters that BDM is serving:

- A single male in his 50s was forced to move to a mobile home with no furnace and deteriorating floors after his rental home was destroyed. His family is very supportive and gifted him with a piece of land in Dawson Springs on which the Habitat home he will now own will be built.
- A couple in their 20s with three children lost the home they were renting



Volunteers install siding on a new home in Dawson Springs, Ky.  
*Courtesy of Troy Barnhart*

and all of their belongings in the tornado. Since then they have been renting a home along with the husband's grandparents, who also lost their rental home in the storm. The young family has been able to purchase the land on which their rental home was located, and both they and the grandparents qualify to eventually get their own Habitat homes, which will be located next to each other.

- A single woman in her 40s was displaced from her apartment after the tornado but will become a first-time homeowner with the Habitat program.

In March 2023, BDM volunteer Enten Eller served on the Dawson Springs project and brought a drone equipped with a camera with him. Following the same path that others had filmed right

continued on page 2



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



Church of the Brethren



BDM volunteers in Dawson Springs, Ky., are working with Habitat to build new homes to replace houses destroyed during the December 2021 tornados.

Photo by Paula Connerley

after the storm, he was able to gather drone footage of the area 16 months later which recorded some of the progress that had been made, as well as some of the still empty lots. He created and produced a video for BDM which will soon be available at [www.brethren.org/bdm/dawson-spring-ky](http://www.brethren.org/bdm/dawson-spring-ky), along with other videos about the project and the 2021 storm damage.

This partnership to serve Dawson Springs is scheduled to continue at least through the end of 2023 as the primary location for BDM rebuilding work.

## DDC/DPL Leadership Seminar

By Mary Mueller, disaster project leader

How do you keep a great organization going? Through the grace of God! With lots of prayers! And with leadership that plans seminars to bring together the people that make up the organization so that they can talk and listen to one another as to what is working and what needs tweaking.

The recent BDM Leadership seminar held at Camp Blue Diamond (Petersburg, Pa.) in the Middle Pennsylvania District brought together BDM staff, district disaster coordinators (DDCs), and disaster project leaders (DPLs) to review and renew the Rebuilding Program. An additional goal was to learn more about BDM's other ministries—Children's Disaster Services (CDS) and Global Response—and how BDM Rebuilding leaders could spread the news about and make connections to support those ministries.

Centering our days around the scripture from 1Thessalonians 5:18, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances", our spirits were well-fed and renewed as we visited with each other and discussed new ways of performing our BDM responsibilities.

We rejoiced in generous servings of laughter as we told stories and hugged friends we hadn't seen in years. We



Participants of the recent DDC/DPL Leadership Seminar held at Camp Blue Diamond in the Middle Pennsylvania District.

Photo courtesy of BDM

encouraged one another to pray continually and to practice that habit not only while at this seminar, but forever. And we talked about giving thanks "in all" (not necessarily "for all") circumstances—two little words on paper but a big discipline in practice.

We heard about BDM's Global Response from Roy Winter and about CDS from guest speaker, and CDS volunteer/project manager, Martha Reish. From virtual guest speaker Raiza Spratt, of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Week of Compassion, we heard about Willing to Respond and Crisis Cleanup, two programs with which they are involved. We also learned how individual districts work at recruiting volunteers and responding to local needs, and what works best and what

doesn't work as coordinators and project leaders. The group was introduced to resources available to help us help others.

We were all affirmed during the appreciation banquet as thanks and stories of BDM's impact were brought, virtually or in person, by several guest speakers representing BDM/CDS and district leaders, a former BVSer, and a Program Rebuilding partner.

A Church of the Brethren celebration wouldn't be complete without ice cream, so following the banquet we were treated to an ice cream bar, hosted and served by members of the Middle Pennsylvania District. YUMMY and THANK YOU! And we couldn't be at camp without a campfire, camp songs, and s'mores—a special thank you to Deb and Dale Ziegler for the fun night!

# Rebuilding Updates

## Project 2 Location

BDM has identified the location for a second project site in the fall of 2023. This will apply to groups that are scheduled for the ten weeks of Project 2 from Sept. 10 through the week before Thanksgiving. After communications with multiple communities, the place best prepared for a full BDM site is in Breathitt County, Ky., in the eastern part of the state.

Between July 25 and July 30, 2022, several thunderstorms brought heavy rain, deadly flash flooding, and devastating river flooding to eastern Kentucky and surrounding areas. In some locations, rainfall exceeded four inches an hour and totaled over 10 inches in two days across the mountainous area causing widespread destruction that claimed the lives of 39 residents. In the 13 counties that received a federal disaster declaration, more than 13,000 families applied for Individual Assistance from FEMA, including thousands in Breathitt County. Over 600 helicopter rescues and uncounted swift water rescues were completed after residents were trapped by the quickly rising flood water.

Qualified cases have been identified by partners with the local Long Term Recovery Team and the Eastern Kentucky Disaster Response Ministry

of the United Methodist Conference. Housing will be located at the Hampton United Methodist Church at 17 Peggs Fork Rd., Campton, KY 41301. BDM recently provided leaders and weekly volunteers for these partners for two weeks in April 2023 with housing located at the same facility. (see the Eastern Kentucky article on page 3.) For more details and videos about this event, visit the BDM website at [www.brethren.org/bdm/rebuild/projects](http://www.brethren.org/bdm/rebuild/projects).

## Paradise, Calif.

During the week of Feb. 26-March 4, 2023, the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) provided seven volunteers to work on four homes in Paradise, Calif. They worked in partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service which has been working in the area for years, providing leadership and volunteers. This area was devastated by the Camp Fire in 2018, considered California's deadliest and most destructive fire, in which 88 people



Volunteers built a ramp for a house that was raised above flood level following tidal flooding in Maryland. Other volunteers worked on the inside of the house.

Photo by Judy Braune

died. The PSWD team completed various rebuilding tasks but they were also impacted by a serious snowstorm. Proving that flexibility is required on any job site, their tasks included shoveling over a foot of snow so that sub-contractors could get into a home. They also had to cut short their week of work.

## Somerset County, Md.

A team of twelve volunteers from the Frederick and Ephrata Churches of the Brethren served in Crisfield, Md., May 7-13 with Mennonite Disaster Service, with support from the Mid-Atlantic District and BDM. They continued work on new homes that are being elevated following the 2021 Tidal Flooding in the area. These homes often require ramps to be added for their homeowners to access the house due to health reasons.

## 2023 Disaster Response Auctions

Brethren Disaster Ministries benefits greatly from the proceeds of several annual disaster relief auctions and other fundraisers. We are very grateful for the time, hard work, dedication, and creativity this represents—almost entirely by volunteer effort.

There is one more annual auction occurring this year:

**Sept. 22 & 23: Brethren Disaster Relief Auction (BDRA;** Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts)—Lebanon Valley Expo Center, Lebanon, Pa.; See [www.brethrenauction.org](http://www.brethrenauction.org); [www.facebook.com/BrethrenDisasterRelief](https://www.facebook.com/BrethrenDisasterRelief); or call 717-823-2745.

We hope that everyone in the area will take the time to come out to the BDRA!

Thank you to those who supported the **Mid-Atlantic Disaster Response Auction** and the **Shenandoah District Disaster Ministries Auction & Sale** in May. Both were well attended—AND a lot of fun!

## Would you like to receive BRIDGES by email?

Brethren Disaster Ministries is now offering our Bridges newsletter electronically. If you would like to receive Bridges by email, you may contact us at [bdm@brethren.org](mailto:bdm@brethren.org) or give us a call at 800-451-4407. Bridges is also available online at [www.brethren.org/bdm/updates](http://www.brethren.org/bdm/updates).

# Local Volunteers Serve in Washington State

By Forrest (Frosty) Wilkinson, district disaster co-coordinator, Pacific Northwest District

In August and September of 2020, wildfires sparked by lightning burned thousands of acres in scattered areas of Okanogan County, in north central Washington state. At the time, the county was still recovering from the Carlton Complex Fires in 2014, which destroyed over 350 homes, and another huge set of fires in 2015. More fires burned in 2021. Okanogan is a rural county, with apple orchards, cattle ranches, mountains, and forests. The county residents have relatively lower than average incomes. There are two congregations of the Church of the Brethren in the county, Whitestone and Ellisforde, near Tonasket, Wash.

The Pacific Northwest (PNW) District has sent teams of volunteers to help rebuild several times in the county. The week of April 2-8, 2023, was enjoyed by five district volunteers who helped to complete new construction to replace homes destroyed by wildfires. The group joined together with the Washington Unit of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), under the direction of the

Okanogan Long Term Recovery Group. One of the homes, on the Colville Confederated Tribes Reservation, was the same one that a group of eight PNW volunteers had worked on in October 2022. Tasks included painting, siding, deck flooring, caulking, and shelving and bi-fold doors for closets.

The April group ate and stayed together with the Mennonites and they enjoyed getting to know each other. One evening after supper, several volunteers gathered around the piano and shared some hymns familiar to both Anabaptist traditions.

Three homes that were worked on were dedicated on April 28 and 29, 2023.



Volunteers from the Pacific Northwest District, and others, stand in front of one of the homes they worked on during their local response in Okanogan County, Wash. Photo courtesy of Frosty Wilkinson

# Rebuilding Homes in Eastern Kentucky

By Cliff and Arlene Kindy, disaster project leaders

In April 2023, newly greened steep forested hills sprinkled with white flowering dogwood welcomed thirty BDM Rebuilding volunteers for a short-term Eastern Kentucky response to rebuild homes in Breathitt County. Nine months earlier, in July 2022, fourteen to sixteen inches of rain fell in Eastern Kentucky in five days, destroying or damaging up to 10,000 homes in those same steep valleys.

One homeowner who welcomed the volunteer builders to his home was George. He still remembers the Pony Express mule that delivered mail and spring chicks to his home. But he also remembers the rapid rise of water in 2022 that drove him to wake his daughter and grandson to flee the rising flood. Then George rushed to his new neighbors' farm where he helped to free the chickens and other animals

caught in the drowning waters. Then back to his house to check out the situation until his neighbors came to compel him to leave his porch. The only way out by this point was his kayak.

BDM had a crew at George's house for two weeks. By 10:00 am most mornings the distracting aromas wafting from his kitchen caught the workers' attention and built appetites for the sumptuous spread that welcomed them to the shaded picnic table at noon. Feeding volunteers is not something expected of homeowners, but it was what George wanted to do. Simultaneously he was intimately engaged in the jacking of floor joists, the setting of railroad ties, the fastening of deck boards, and the roofing of the new porches.

The highly acclaimed electrician crew doubled as seamstresses to hem

the quilt that served as the home blessing gift to George on the final day. Many more Georges and houses long for the attention of BDM.



BDM volunteers begin to build a new deck to replace the one washed away in the 2022 storm. The homeowner used a kayak like the one in the foreground to escape the rising flood waters. Photo courtesy of BDM

# CDS Updates

## Spring Deployments

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) responded to a March 2023 apartment fire in Monroeville, Pa., that affected 65 residents. Two local CDS volunteers provided childcare at a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) organized by the Allegheny County (Pa.) Department of Human Services. They served the needs of five children during the afternoon deployment.

In April 2023, CDS was requested by Red Cross to serve in MARCs in Missouri and Arkansas following destructive tornadoes.

An EF-2 tornado struck Marble Hill, Mo., on April 5 killing five people, injuring five others, and destroying or damaging 87 structures. Church of the Brethren Missouri/Arkansas district disaster coordinator Gary Gahm was instrumental in advocating for Red Cross to request CDS to set up a childcare center on April 12-13 at the MARC organized to provide services for the tornado survivors. Three CDS volunteers had 14 child contacts at the MARC over two days.

CDS project manager Donna Savage sent this reflection about the experience in Missouri:



CDS Volunteers (l to r) Wanda King, Donna Savage, and Toni Custer served at a MARC in Marble Hill, Mo.  
Photo courtesy Toni Custer

*Our small but mighty team of three volunteers traveled to southeast Missouri. We provided activities for children 18 months to 12 years of age. Upon returning home I read an article in the St. Louis Post Dispatch about one of the families we served. They had not had time to move to safety from their mobile home before the hurricane struck. The mobile home was lifted from its foundation and blown 100 ft into a group of trees. The family was rescued. What a privilege it is to be able to be of service to these people affected by Mother Nature.*

The other April CDS deployment was in response to an EF-3 tornado that touched down southwest of Little Rock, Ark., on March 31, staying on the ground for 34 miles and causing a

wide path of destruction. CDS volunteers were called to provide childcare for five days, serving in four different MARC sites throughout the region, in Little Rock, Jackson, and in two locations in Wynne. Except for two consecutive days in Little Rock, the volunteers needed to take down, move, and reset childcare stations each day. Eighty children were served during the deployment.

## CDS Training

In the Spring of 2023, CDS training workshops were held in Bradford, Ohio; Newark, Del.; La Verne, Calif.; and Portland, Ore. A total of 47 participants attended. The trainings were very well received and a large majority of the participants are pursuing certification to become CDS volunteers. Positive comments were received from attendees, including that CDS trainers provided "24 hours of excellent information".

CDS is developing training workshops for the Fall 2023 season, with the hope of scheduling at least four in different locations in the U.S. Currently one workshop is set for October at the Skyridge Church of the Brethren in Kalamazoo, Mich. Please contact CDS (410-635-8735 or [cds@brethren.org](mailto:cds@brethren.org)) if you are interested in sponsoring a workshop in your area.

## Carolyn Neher to Lead Children's Disaster Services

Carolyn Neher began June 5 as associate director of Children's Disaster Services (CDS), a program of Brethren Disaster Ministries. A CDS volunteer since 2014, she has been deployed to six disasters and has taken advanced training to be a project manager, volunteer trainer, and a critical response childcare volunteer.



from National Louis University. She has more than thirty years of experience in early childhood education and recently worked as a paraprofessional supporting children with autism in the school setting.

A member of York Center Church of the Brethren, Carolyn and her family live in Lombard, Ill. She enjoys cycling and making chocolates during the cooler seasons.

Please join us in welcoming Carolyn to her new position with CDS!

Carolyn holds a BA in psychology from McPherson College and a Master of Education degree in Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy

### Correct Information?

If you have had changes to your phone number, mailing or email address, please let us know:  
[BDM@brethren.org](mailto:BDM@brethren.org) or 800-451-4407

# Humanitarian Assistance in the DR Congo and Rwanda

In the spring of 2022 violence once again erupted between a large well-armed rebel group, the M23, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo/DRC) military, displacing 1.1 million people in North Kivu province. About half of the displaced households (about 500,000 people) fled to the greater Goma area and have built temporary shelters with tarps and trash, with many living in highly precarious conditions needing better shelter, food, water, sanitation, and healthcare.

Since May 2022, through four Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants totaling \$93,000, a joint response by the Church of the Brethren in the DRC and BDM has provided emergency food, tarps, household items, and other supplies for some of the most vulnerable displaced people sheltering in informal IDP camps around Goma. The most recent grant of \$37,500 in May 2023 is providing tarps, rope, blankets, food, cookware, and household supplies to 450 families.

Some of the displaced Congolese also fled to Rwanda, where the Rwanda Church of the Brethren has supported families, who are being hosted by church members, with distributions of food and soap. A

\$5,000 EDF grant supported this humanitarian aid.

In Rwanda, poor harvests combined with economic challenges, resulting partly from repercussions from the Russia-Ukraine war and partly from near total reduction of commerce and jobs across the restricted border with DRC because of the violence, has contributed to the increase in highly vulnerable children, many of whom spend most of their time in the streets of Rwanda begging for money and food, suffering from malnutrition. Two EDF grants totaling \$10,300 have supported a special feeding program of the Church of the Brethren in Rwanda to provide meals once a week for more than 100 children for twelve months beginning in September 2022.

The situation in the region became more challenging in May 2023 when heavy rains in both countries added to the humanitarian needs. Torrential rains struck Rwanda on May 2, causing floods, landslides, and extensive damage to homes, farms, livestock, and infrastructure. An initial emergency EDF grant of \$5,000 provided safe drinking water, food, and household items. A second grant of \$18,500 in



Survivors of Rwandan flooding receive mattresses and bedcovers from Church of the Brethren leaders.

Photo courtesy Church of the Brethren in Rwanda

late May is helping to rebuild 10 homes and provide 20 families with seed potatoes for planting, and 50 sheep and 200 chickens to help 50 families recover from the floods.

The May rains continued into the DR Congo causing floods, landslides, and damage to homes in the South Kivu province. The floods have killed more than 438 people with more than 2,500 people still missing as of May 23. Congolese Church of the Brethren leader Ron Lubungo shared that congregations in Uvira, Lusenda, Mboko, and Mukolwe were impacted and need assistance. An emergency \$5,000 EDF grant is providing some relief while church leaders develop recovery plans. Additional grants are expected in the early summer of 2023 to support this response.



BDM continues to support recovery programs in Honduras from November 2020's Hurricanes Eta and Iota, both powerful Category 4 storms. A new \$50,000 grant, which is being matched by another donor, is supporting 100 families with small animal projects (chickens, pigs, or bees) to provide hurricane survivors with a food source and potential income. This continues the partnership with Proyecto Aldea Global (PAG, Project Global Village) through a recovery that has included early relief, repair of water systems, home building, and livelihoods projects.

Photo by Jeff Boshart



affected area as they assist survivors. One church leader summed up the situation quite tragically this way: "Earlier in the war (Syrian Civil War), there was bombing everywhere, but we could put food on the table. Before the earthquakes, it was somehow safer, but people were already starving. These earthquakes are a huge catastrophe, and the last thing we needed! We just ask for God's Mercy!" Emergency grants totaling \$50,000 have supported relief efforts in both Syria and Turkey. Additional grants are under review to support long-term recovery.

Photo courtesy of MERATH

# Accompanying EYN on the Road to a Joyous Centennial Celebration

In 2023, Ekklesiyar Yan'uwā a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) celebrated its centennial—100 years after the founding of the Church of the Brethren Mission in 1923 by Stover Kulp and Albert Helser. (Find a history of the church in Nigeria at [www.brethren.org/global/nigeria/history](http://www.brethren.org/global/nigeria/history)). Eleven zonal celebrations allowed all the districts to participate, culminating in a large celebration at EYN headquarters in Kwarhi on March 16, with Church of the Brethren moderator Tim McElwee preaching for the gathered crowd, representing the US Church. A delegation from the US joined the crowd of about 8,000–9,000 participants in Kwarhi and also participated in the farewell celebration at the National Christian Center in the capitol city of Abuja on March 19.

The strength of EYN today is partially due to the ongoing support of the US Church through the Nigeria Crisis Response (NCR). The president of EYN, Rev. Joel Billi, shared the following sentiments in a presentation to the 2022 CoB annual conference:

*“[The] Church of the Brethren has been standing by us and rekindled our hope ... If not for the [CoB’s] intervention, [EYN] probably would have been scattered into different denominations.... because of such a positive gesture from CoB, it boosted the morale of EYN leadership.... if CoB will stand by our side ... why can’t we kick in and give our best in terms of keeping our members and feeding them with spiritual food. And this trauma healing has gone a long way in the lives of our members. People who are hopeless, in the course of this trauma healing, have been revived. People who looked for an option to seek revenge—the idea of taking vengeance was washed from their mind.”*

Even as EYN celebrates its centennial, the reality is that the persecution and traumatization of its members and

other Christians continues in Nigeria, especially in the northeast states where EYN has the most congregations. Since 2014, BDM and EYN have worked closely together through the NCR to support displaced families, help rebuild lives, and keep the Nigerian Church strong. The ongoing effort to provide seeds,

fertilizer, emergency food, livelihood programs, new water wells, and more, continues to be vitally important.



The EYN Women's Choir sings praises during the final EYN centennial celebration in Abuja, Nigeria in March 2023.

Photo by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

## Haiti Response Update

In August 2021, an earthquake struck southern Haiti, killing 2,201 people and adding to the growing crisis in the country. As has been reported over the past two years, Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants are supporting a joint BDM/Eglises des Freres d' Haiti (Church of the Brethren in Haiti) response in Saut Mathurine to rebuild homes destroyed by the quake.

Haiti Earthquake Response coordinator, Ilexene Alphonse, who also pastors the Miami Haitian Church of the Brethren, traveled to Saut Mathurine in February 2023 to check on the project's progress and to provide encouragement. He found that because the Brethren serve people without regard to their church affiliation (or lack thereof) they are “respected in the community and beyond” and the church is growing.

Ilexene shared in his trip report that his “heart has been broken” by the current political situation and gang-related violence (as reported in the Winter 2023 Bridges), the “fear in the people's eyes”, and the hunger and anger. He said, “I cry often for the people of Haiti . . . [but] BDM in partnership with National Committee of the Church of the Brethren in Haiti are making a great difference in the lives of many people. Everyone

continues to show their gratitude and sent greetings to all the US Brethren.”

Ilexene visited the current 21 housing jobsites in Saut Mathurine, remarking that progress was ongoing but was a little slower than expected due to difficulty obtaining materials. Since that time, however, he shared the good news that the first 10 houses are now completed except for painting, while the next 11 homes are all roughed in and roofed but still need finish work and doors.

Ilexene also reported on an emergency food distribution supported by an EDF grant in response to the multiple crises in Haiti which have crippled the country, making it difficult for families to find work, food, and the personal safety needed to survive. At the end of 2022, rice, beans, and cooking oil were purchased locally and distributed to 807 of the most at-risk families within the 30 Haitian churches and preaching points. Ilexene shared that he was told that the relief “was heaven sent”. The pastors all shared their gratitude on behalf of their congregations.

These accomplishments are amazing and only possible through God's grace, considering the challenges in the country. The people of Haiti, the church, and church leaders need our ongoing prayers and support during this very difficult period in the country's history.



# BRIDGES

**Brethren Disaster Ministries**  
601 Main Street, P.O. Box 188  
New Windsor, MD 21776

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Westminster, MD  
Permit # 15

## Blood Drives

The **Annual Conference Blood Drive** will be located at the back of the Exhibit Hall at the convention center in Cincinnati. Donors receive a free “Love thy Neighbor” t-shirt! Hours are Wednesday, July 5 from 11:00 am to 4:45 pm and Thursday, July 6 from 8:00 am to 1:45 pm. Schedule your appointment now for a time that is most convenient for you at [hoxworth.org/groups/brethren](http://hoxworth.org/groups/brethren). Appointments will also be available at the conference.

If you won't be in person at the Annual Conference you can still join the Blood Drive efforts through the **Virtual Blood Drive**. Just make an appointment for a local blood drive between June 1 and July 31 and then let BDM know when you have donated blood ([bdm@brethren.org](mailto:bdm@brethren.org) or 800-451-4407 x1). You can pledge to donate at [www.brethren.org/virtualblooddrive2023](http://www.brethren.org/virtualblooddrive2023) and challenge others to pledge or contact BDM with your pledge and/or your confirmation that you have donated. Take a photo and send it to us to encourage others to donate. The in-person and virtual totals will be added to celebrate the number of pints donated and the number of lives saved!

## Ukraine in Crisis

Working with four partners, a total of \$390,000 in Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants have supported the ongoing emergency relief of families displaced by the war between Russian and Ukraine that started in February 2022.

A May 2023 EDF grant of \$75,000 to Church World Service is providing relief for Ukrainian refugees sheltering in Moldova.

Working with the Orthodox Churches in Ukraine, a May 2023 EDF grant of \$120,000 to International Orthodox Christian Charities is supporting emergency shelters, economic

empowerment of Ukrainian women, and the distribution of supplies to families displaced inside Ukraine.



*This Ukrainian mother and child received assistance at a Church World Service supported resource center in Moldova.*

*Photo courtesy CWS*

Bridges is published three times a year by the  
**Brethren Disaster Ministries of the Church of the Brethren**  
Executive Director for Service Ministries: Roy Winter | Editor: Sharon Franzén  
Director of Material Resources: Loretta Wolf | Design: Debbie Noffsinger