

HURRICANE HARVEY DEPLOYMENT

TEXAS BAPTIST MEN'S DISASTER TEAM

The team to Victoria, Texas arrived just after the passing of Harvey on September first, along with the Red Cross group. There are food service teams, eight chain saw teams, and many other operational teams deployed, all staying at Northside Baptist Church and First Baptist Church in Victoria. I was initially trained in operations where we receive work orders, over 600 by Wednesday, September 6th, with 280 completed after the first week. Then I worked a chainsaw crew, training later in the week on security patrol at night, and the shower/laundry trailer.

Prior to driving down, we sent an email to many Christian Brothers Automotive customers, our children, and many responded, donating over \$3,000 when I left for Victoria. I approached those victims whose houses/trailers were damaged and assisted them by filling in gaps for those items not covered by FEMA, The Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, Salvation Army, or other charities. Things like mildewed clothing for kids were covered with Walmart gift cards, food at Aldi and HEB grocers, and in one case car repairs for the lead logistics volunteer supervisor with TBM when it broke down.

The food unit is capable of providing thousands of meals each day, and the Red Cross provided 10 or more trucks to deliver the meals over the town of Victoria and surrounding area towns. Red Cross furnished the food, over 15 semi-trailers at last count. When Florida was threatened, and six drivers were re-assigned, the Mexico Red Cross flew in six replacements to DFW Wednesday night, and they drove all night to get to us by the next morning.

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Northside Baptist Church housed all 100 volunteers from all over the country, along with First Baptist Church, which lost their main sanctuary roof and other interior damages. FBC Victoria will need \$500,000 to fix their roof and interior, as the deductible alone is \$350,000.

I also met with Sportsmen's Church north of Victoria and toured their 75,000 sf warehouse, where they receive supplies from all over the country to assist volunteers.

I saw hundreds of volunteers helping local citizens, but the needs are SO great, it will take years to recover, and this has nothing to do with Houston. There was Debbie, whose trailer had a large oak tree fall on it, and her next-door neighbor, Cory, with 5 kids, who were affected too. Then Cyndi, a single mother of three, whose total household was soaked, all clothing lost, and Vanessa, a single mother of five living in Refugio, about 50 miles away, nearer the high waters, who lost everything. Billye Eilers, an 80s widow living out from Victoria, whose roof was ripped off and had no money to fix it. There was Oseas, pastor of the Multi-Ethnic Baptist Church, whose church building roof was damaged and needs \$5,000 to meet the insurance deductible. These are but a few of the thousands of families affected.

Each chainsaw team witnessed to the homeowners, praying with them, responding to the 600 work requests, even doing extras while removing trees, all the while having to watch for snakes driven to dry land by the flood waters, ticks, mosquitoes, and other irritants as they worked each day.

In the two weeks there, I tried to serve where needed, greeting everyone as I passed, took time to go to the chapel and pray for wisdom and discernment as I worked, and distributed the thousands

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of dollars you all provided. Becky and I will provide your tax deduction document in the next few weeks. Thank you for your generosity, prayers for my safety, and continued prayers for Houston, Victoria, and all the dozens of surrounding cities, and millions of people who are victims of these hurricanes. I was privileged to be a part of hundreds of volunteers and thousands of American, Canadian, and Mexican people showing God's Love.

Jim Foster

Yellow Hat Volunteer with Texas Men's Disaster Team

Christian Brothers Automotive Co-Owner with Becky