

Mennonite Disaster Service, Region 3 Conference Report

Mennonite Disaster Service is a volunteer network of Anabaptist churches that responds in Christian love to those affected by disasters in Canada and the United States. While the main focus is on cleanup, repair and rebuilding homes, this service touches lives and nurtures hope, faith and wholeness.

Mennonite Disaster Service continues to fill the traditional role of rebuilding for folks after natural disasters strike. Despite the shackles of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, MDS found ways to mobilize 6048 volunteers nationwide. We repaired 487 homes and built 79 new houses. We deployed to 91 locations to perform cleanup in the days immediately following storms.

MDS also recognizes the needs created by Humanitarian Disaster. “Restoring Hope” is the slogan on our MDS t-shirts. We continue to seek a deeper understanding of what “Restoring Hope” looks like in real life, when responding to humanitarian disasters. Here are several examples.

In Arkansas, MDS has a Search and Rescue team that brings peace to families of hikers and canoers that get lost or capsized in the Ozark forestland.

In Minnesota, MDS volunteers responded to the aftermath of the riots following the death of George Floyd by assisting first generation immigrant store owners with cleanup, painting, and repairs.

In Colorado, MDS volunteers are working on forest fire mitigation by clearing beetle killed trees. They are doing site preparation, mitigation, and wood chipping in response to the forest fires of 2020 in northern Colorado. Revegetating is a crucial foundation for rebuilding.

In Kansas, the Summer Youth Program built tiny houses to be transported to San Antonio Texas that will be used to house legal asylum seekers who have recently immigrated and are awaiting further processing by Immigration and Naturalization Services. Similarly, in Texas, MDS volunteers will be building homes to offer shelter to asylum seekers at the border in McAllen.

We are deeply grateful for the support of our constituency, including the South Central Conference. We appreciate and covet your prayers, your financial support, and most importantly your volunteer hours. We invite you all to plan time this year to be the Hands and Feet of Jesus to a hurting world.

Further information about the work of Mennonite Disaster Service, and opportunities to get involved can be found at MDS.org

Tim Schrag
MDS Region 3 Board Chair
309-533-0820
Region3@mds.org