



Spotlight

Spring 2023



**World
Renew**

LIVING JUSTICE • LOVING MERCY • SERVING CHRIST

**DISASTER
RESPONSE
SERVICES**

Letter from our Director

At World Renew Disaster Response Services we often say that at the community level, DRS rebuilds homes and restores hope. Visiting reconstruction sites reinvigorates this hope within me as well. I recently spent time with volunteers and recovery organization leaders in Orange, Texas, and Boutte, Louisiana. It is encouraging to see the results of their work and hear stories about the homes affected by hurricanes being rebuilt.

In Byron Center, Michigan, staff are privileged to be a part of supporting the success of all DRS volunteers to accomplish something much bigger than ourselves. Whether you are rebuilding a house, interviewing for an unmet needs assessment, working in our warehouse, providing accounting support, or other volunteer work — our staff thank you. We love sharing the stories of how God is working through you to change lives.



Bob Laarman

Bob Laarman
Director
Disaster Response Services



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Each time World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) enters a community to set up a reconstruction site, we know we're entering a place of hurt and despair. While a town receives lots of attention from the media and the government in the days after being hit by a natural disaster, years later, unsolved problems and overlooked crises pile up without quick solutions. Monetary assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is quickly exhausted. Long-Term Recovery Groups can take months or years to form and support homeowners. People hurt; communities suffer.

In Orange, Texas, this is the story with not one natural disaster, but five. Hurricanes Harvey, Laura, Delta, Tropical Storm Imelda and Winter Storm Uri each brought their own troubles to homeowners in Orange, one after another. Collectively, 100-plus inches of rain poured into people's homes, damaging possessions and furniture. Thousands of homes lost power, high winds resulted in damaged roofs and structural damage, and people's lives were lost over the span of five years. With each storm, hope seemed exponentially depleted for the community.

For example, when Hurricane Laura hit Orange in 2020, many troubles altered Michelle's life. With raging winds and heavy rain, the hurricane uprooted a tree which fell on the side of her house and her chimney. Four feet of water dropped into the house, damaging Michelle's and her husband's personal belongings

and furniture. Because Michelle's husband is disabled and blind, she sifted through the aftermath of the hurricane and began to repair their home on her own while also caring for her husband.

When DRS volunteers received an assignment to work on Michelle's home through Orange County Disaster Rebuild, Michelle felt blessed. They replaced insulation and siding on her home, making it dry and safe once again. They worked hard to replace broken windows, re-level the ceiling, complete drywalling and painting, and fix the chimney.

Michelle's experience is just one of many. When Hurricane Harvey hit, Joann was caring for her brother who was battling a heart condition. Having made it through hurricanes before, they thought they could take cover in their home when authorities encouraged their community to leave. But Hurricane Harvey

was the worst hurricane to hit Texas, and the fire department evacuated them by boat.

When they returned, Joann felt overwhelmed. The hurricane's strength created leveling issues throughout the home, mold damaged the flooring and the walls, and Joann lost almost all her possessions and furniture. Joann was overwhelmed by the extent of the damage, but remained hopeful that somehow they would be able to make the necessary repairs. Five years later, Joann finally saw why she held on to hope when DRS volunteers partnered with Orange County Disaster Rebuild to repair her home. They laid new flooring, installed new drywall and painted the walls, built Joann a new vanity, and leveled the patio.

As the reconstruction site in Orange, Texas, closes this spring, DRS can see another community that has been met with God's hope and love because of disaster response ministry. Through nails hammered and floor panels laid, 36 other homeowners like Michelle and Joann were filled with hope — thanks to your hard work and generosity. As DRS looks to set up new reconstruction sites from more recent disasters, we know God will continue to bring renewal to survivors and resilient communities through your participation in this ministry.

2023 WORLD RENEW DRS WORK SITES



Around the World

In Turkana County, Kenya, over 2.1 million people are currently experiencing high levels of food insecurity in the face of recent droughts. To make matters worse, the droughts have been compounded by continued market disruptions from COVID-19 and locust invasions that have destroyed crops. In response, World Renew Kenya is providing emergency food assistance to 1,200 of the most at-risk families who have lost crops and livestock in the drought. Each family receives rations of maize, beans, oil, and salt.



LONG-TERM SITES

Boutte, Louisiana

Hurricane Ida (2021)

Whatcom County, Washington

Flooding (2021)



GROUP SITES

Southwest Florida

Hurricane Ian (2022)

Detroit, Michigan

Flooding (2014, 2021)

Madisonville, Kentucky

Tornadoes (2021)

New Bern, North Carolina

Hurricane Florence (2018)

Whatcom County, Washington

Flooding (2021)

IN MEMORY

If you know of a DRS volunteer who recently passed into Glory and is not listed here, please let us know by calling 800-848-5818 or email us at drs@worldrenew.net.

2022

JANUARY

Dorothy Nienhuis, MI
Martin Van Dyke, CO
Wilda Miedema, MI
Peter Tilstra, ON
Bert Van Kruistum, ON

FEBRUARY

Lawrence Veldheer, MI
John Schaap, MI
Bernard Baker, MN
Peter Deweerd, ON

MARCH

Marcia De Jong, IA
Elsie Meekhof, MI
William Roon, MI
Peter Jansen, ON

APRIL

Jan Haveman, MI
Mary Addink, IA
Lester Kragt, MI
Joyce Boerman, MI
Melvin Miedema, MI
Charles Dykema, MI
John Devries, ON

MAY

Cynthia Visser, IL
Petronella Westerhoff, ON

JUNE

Barbara Jager, MI
Joy Ferwerda, CT
Alvin Huizenga, MI
Evelyn Westmaas, MI
Jerald Nyhof, MI
Margaret Eshuis, ON

JULY

Elizabeth Olthoff, MI
Wilhemina Hagt, ON

AUGUST

Charles Dykstra, MI
Keith Olthof, CA
John De Vries, MI
Harry Van Belle, AB
Mae Prins, AB

SEPTEMBER

Willard Berkenpas, MI
Klaas Brink, AB
Jacob DeWeerd, BC

OCTOBER

Bernice Hubers, IN
Marilyn Derks, MI
Harry Faber, MI
Mary Byl, MI

NOVEMBER

Marcella Veldstra, CA
Clarence Van Dyke, TX
Joan Mulder, SD
Clara Berg, ON
Dorothy Kwantes, MI
Helen Meulink, MI

DECEMBER

Merle Tackema, NJ
Faye Van Kampen, MI
William Olthoff, MI
Ruth Meyer, MI
Henry Lanning, MI
Evert Emmelkamp, AB
Catherine Tolkamp, BC

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

In Esau McCaulley's January Series lecture, "*What is African American Biblical Interpretation and Why Does the Whole Church Need it*", the Wheaton College professor details how African American's experience with the gospel through slavery, segregation, and more shaped an interpretation of scripture filled with hope. When evangelists came to blacks with a message focused on saving someone's soul, not their entire selves, they formed their own churches to worship God faithfully, with freedom to worship and entrust God with their whole selves. African Americans have also "learned to do theology without power," since black theology arose from a setting in which "people grew in faith while not in positions of power, breeding humility in the face of the all-powerful God." Additionally, black churches have "learned how to deal with the disappointments with other Christians," since slave masters themselves often were believers." To learn more about McCaulley's and others lectures, go to calvin.edu/january-series.