



Brethren Disaster Ministries **BRIDGES**

Rebuilding Homes • Nurturing Children • Responding Globally

Vol. 23, Summer 2022

INSIDE

| | |
|--|---|
| Southern California CDS Responds to Haitian Asylum Seekers | 2 |
| CDS Updates | 3 |
| Maria's Kit of Comfort Book Launch and Resources | 3 |
| Upcoming CDS Trainings | 3 |
| Rebuilding Updates | 4 |
| Stories from Survivors are More Than Just News..... | 5 |
| A Full Circle Story of Heifers | 5 |
| Global Updates..... | 6 |
| National Youth Conference 2022 Service Project | 6 |
| Annual Conference News | 7 |
| Disaster Response Auctions | 7 |
| Answered Prayers on God's Timeline | 8 |


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is a program of the
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**Children's
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is a program of
Brethren Disaster Ministries

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



Church of the Brethren

Ukraine in Crisis

by Roy Winter

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, beginning on Feb. 24, 2022, and the resulting refugee and humanitarian crisis, continue to lead the news headlines months later. According to the United Nations, this is the world's fastest displacement crisis since World War II, with more than 15.7 million people needing assistance, including more than 6.3 million Ukrainian refugees in neighboring countries and over 8 million more displaced inside Ukraine. With 102 schools in Ukraine destroyed and other schools closed, around 3.6 million children are missing their education. The extensive devastation of property and infrastructure, and the lives lost, both civilian and military, are difficult to quantify as the war continues. While the figures will change as this article goes to press, the extensive humanitarian need will clearly continue to challenge the world to keep responding.

The governments of many countries, large and small NGOs (non-government organizations), and the United Nations are leading a massive relief program. Even with this multi-billion dollar response, there are still many people who will not be reached by this aid. The Brethren Disaster Ministries response is focused on identifying and supporting vulnerable populations and locations getting less news coverage and relief aid which lack critical support for those in need. More than \$200,000 in Emergency Disaster Fund grants are currently supporting:

- **Ukrainian refugees sheltering in Moldova.** Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, has the highest population of Ukrainian refugees relative to its small population. Because it is not part of the European Union



Fleeing your home is particularly difficult for persons with disabilities. L'Arche Poland has offered a safe refuge for this man who fled from the Donbas region in Ukraine.

Photo courtesy of L'Arche

(EU), it does not have access to EU funding and is in clear need of additional assistance.

- **Food and supply distributions** through the Orthodox churches in Ukraine and the surrounding countries of Poland and Romania. Because 67 percent of the Ukrainian population are members of the Orthodox faith, these churches are more effective at reaching people in need than most other aid groups.
- **Protection, training, and safe transportation** to help address and prevent gender-based violence and the trafficking of women and children.
- **Virtual training for orphanage staff.** Funding supports a pilot program to train Ukrainian orphanage staff regarding children and trauma, including training on coping sessions for traumatized children.
- **Assistance for people with disabilities.** Special programming, transportation, medication, adaptive equipment, and staffing assists displaced Ukrainians with disabilities.

continued on page 2



CWS partner Diaconia converted a daycare center in Chişinău, Moldova into a refugee shelter where families can feel safe.

Photo courtesy of Diaconia



CWS purchased this forklift to increase the capacity of partner Diaconia, which uses it food bank in Chişinău, Moldova as a logistics and material hub for a number of organizations supporting Ukrainian refugees.

Photo courtesy of Church World Service

- **Support for shipping relief supplies** from the Brethren Service Center to the crisis zone.

This and other programming is accomplished through partnerships with Church World Service, International Orthodox Christian Charities, Child Life Disaster Relief, L'Arche International, and Lutheran World Relief. The Ukraine relief program is expected to continue for years with additional grants and support for the recovery of people after the war is over. For updated information on the BDM response, visit www.brethren.org/ukraine-crisis.

Global Impact

The war in Ukraine has far reaching and cascading impacts on the global economy, food supply, and energy, according to the United Nations report from April 13, 2022. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, calls it “a perfect storm that threatens to devastate the economies of developing countries”. He declared that “the most vulnerable people around the globe cannot become collateral damage”. Ukraine and Russia are major exporters of wheat, barley, and corn. Russia is the world's

top exporter of natural gas and a major exporter of oil and fertilizers. The disruption in these exports and markets compounds the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. More details about the global impact of war in Ukraine on food, energy and finance systems can be found at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-impact-war-ukraine-food-energy-and-finance-systems>.

Supporting Ongoing Responses and New Disasters

The crisis also impacts the awareness, news coverage, and giving for other disasters. While BDM responds to the needs in and around Ukraine, it

is also committed to staying focused on current global response programs and to being prepared for new crises in other parts of the world. In this Bridges you will see updates on the ministries in Haiti, Honduras, and Nigeria. BDM is also monitoring the terrible drought impacting Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. Reported as the worst drought in 40 years, more than 23 million people are already experiencing extreme hunger. Prior to the Russian invasion, Ukraine supplied 90 percent of the wheat to East Africa. The combination of the consequences of the war and the drought has significantly reduced the food supply and raised food prices, increasing the chances of famine in the region.

Southern California CDS Responds to Haitian Asylum Seekers

by Rosemarie Terbrusch, CDS volunteer

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) is collaborating with the Methodist Church/Safe Harbors program to provide services to Haitian asylum seekers. The Methodist/Safe Harbors program provides food and housing to families while CDS is providing a two-hour weekly program for the children. It all takes place on the campus of Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology. CDS volunteers have been fortunate to have a playroom and an outside play area where the children can explore. The children are thoroughly enjoying themselves and are already learning some English

words! CDS has been working with the children at this location since April 28.



Some of the Southern California CDS volunteers caring for the children of Haitian families seeking asylum in the US.

Photo by Rosemarie Terbrusch

Would you like to receive BRIDGES by email?

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

CDS Updates

Critical Response Childcare (CRC) Teams Deploys to Uvalde, Texas

An initial team of six CDS Critical Response Childcare (CRC) volunteers traveled to Uvalde, Texas on May 26 to set up a childcare center in the Family Assistance Center there. They deployed at the request of partner American Red Cross to provide specialized assistance to children and families impacted by the May 24 elementary school shooting that claimed the lives of 19 children and two teachers. CRC volunteers are experienced and specially trained for critical responses that involve a significant loss of life. The CDS volunteers serving in Uvalde were highly praised and appreciated by the affected families, the community, and their center colleagues.

The first CRC team saw over 200 child contacts during their two weeks and transitioned to a Resiliency Center, operated by The Ecumenical Center for Education, Counseling, Health. A second CRC team of four arrived on June 8 to continue the work with the children.

Upcoming CDS Trainings

CDS Summer training opportunity

Register today at www.brethren.org/cds!

July 31-August 1, 2022

(Sunday-Monday, following Western Plains district conference)

Location: McPherson Church of the Brethren, McPherson, Kansas

Fall Training locations and dates

Check out the CDS website July 15 for more information!



Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren hosted a CDS training workshop in May 2022.

Photo by Tiffany Heinz

Lititz CDS Level-One Training Workshop

CDS had one spring training location with the Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren hosting on May 13-14, 2022. Trainers Tiffany Heinz and Martha Reish reported that the training went very well with a total of 13 participants. Being flexible and adapting to challenges are two qualities all CDS volunteers must possess. This training offered participants a prime example

of how, even in a training, those qualities are important. When senior trainer Tiffany Heinz was delayed in traveling, Martha Reish and the training participants adapted the schedule until Tiffany arrived. In the end, the sense of community built within a training workshop is always remarkable and these participants are now ready to complete the certification process and put their new team skills to work on a CDS deployment.

Maria's Kit of Comfort Book Launch and Resources

A book launch for Maria's Kit of Comfort, published by Brethren Press (www.brethren.org/marias-kit-of-comfort), was held April 5, 2022, at the North Manchester (Ind.) Public Library. A total of 82 children and adults attended. The children were engaged in a variety of activities: making bean bags, decorating emoji cookies, and playing with materials in the Kit of Comfort. They were also treated to a reading of the story by authors Kathy Fry-Miller and David Doudt.

The authors have developed ministry and children's resources for Maria's story, which are now available on the book's Brethren Press webpage and on the CDS homepage

(www.brethren.org/cds). A two-page resource for children's ministry has examples of 5, 15, or 45-60 minute sessions that include story reading and activities for children's time in worship, children's chapel time, Sunday School, Bible School, or camp. There is also a separate two-page activity sheet for children that may be used in a variety of settings, such as home, library, school, camp, or childcare.



Children at the book launch of *Maria's Kit of Comfort* were treated to a reading by authors David Doudt (in chair) and Kathy Fry-Miller (next to David).

Photo by Paul Fry-Miller

Rebuilding Updates

Waverly, Tenn. Project

BDM opened a new rebuilding site in Humphreys County, Tenn., at the end of April 2022.

Volunteers and leadership coming to this site are scheduled to serve survivors of the deadly August 2021 flooding through the end of the year. Disaster Case Management in the area reported that there were still 600 families with some form of need that they could not meet on their own, including 250 homes that were destroyed. Volunteer housing is located in the town of Waverly (population 4,000) at the Waverly Cumberland Presbyterian Church. This facility is next door to the location where 20 white crosses mark the names of the residents that were lost in the flooding.



Volunteers hang drywall in a home in Waverly, Tenn.

Photo by Ed Hendrickson



This Tennessee house, damaged in the August 2021 flood, is being gutted on the inside to prepare for rebuilding.

Photo by Ed Hendrickson

Kentucky Short-Term Response

A short-term rebuilding BDM response is scheduled for October 2-22, 2022, in western Kentucky in response to the December 2021 tornadoes. Up to 15 volunteers each week will stay at the First Christian Church of Madisonville. Work will be done in the Bremen and Dawson Springs area on qualified cases identified by the Fuller Center Disaster ReBuilders, with which BDM has partnered in the past. Our partners are requiring that all volunteers must be 16 years or older. To apply, contact Kim Gingerich at kgingerich@brethren.org or 410-635-8730 by August 21.

National VOAD Conference Updates

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) held its first in-person Annual Conference in three years in Baltimore, Md., on May 2-5, 2022.

On Tuesday, May 2, at the Awards Dinner, the Innovative Program of the year Award went to the Tornado Survivor Pathways to Homeownership Program (Pathways) of the Miami Valley Long-Term Recovery Operations Group (MVLTROG), BDM's primary partner in the Dayton, Ohio tornado recovery. In addition, BDM long-term partner, Church World Service (CWS), was named as the National VOAD of the year. Jenn Dorsch-Messler, BDM director, was also recognized for her service on the National VOAD Board of Directors as she completed a four and a half year term of service.

During the conference, a workshop on the Pathways program was co-presented by Laura Mercer, retired Executive Director for MVLTROG, Darin Bontrager of Mennonite Disaster Services, and Jenn Dorsch-Messler from BDM.

Several BDM representatives volunteered at the conference to help with logistical support, including Mid-Atlantic district disaster coordinator Jeff McKee and former



Laura Mercer (center) accepts the Innovative Program of the Year award at the NVOAD Awards Dinner presented by NVOAD Past Board Chair Mike Manning (l) and President/CEO April Wood.

Photo by Paul Hunt



Jim Dorsch (far left), with other NVOAD Conference service project volunteers.

Photo courtesy of BDM

BDM staff member Terry Goodger. Disaster project leader Jim Dorsch led a service project to serve at a local homeless facility doing inventory and storage organization. At a second service project participants assembled over 450 hygiene kits that were delivered to the Church of the Brethren Material Resources warehouse at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., to be stored as a donation to CWS.

Lowes Grant Award

The BDM rebuilding program has been awarded a National VOAD/Lowes grant to support October 2021 tidal flood recovery in Maryland in Dorchester and Somerset Counties. The grant includes \$30,000 in gift cards to purchase construction materials at Lowes for making repairs to three homes. The award also includes cash funds to support volunteers to complete the work. BDM will be working with the Mid-Atlantic District to make plans for volunteers to serve in these communities in the coming months.

Stories from Survivors are More Than Just News

by Janice Kulp Long, household project leader

I knew little about Waverly, Tenn., when I agreed to travel there with Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM), only that there had been sudden and massive flooding in the town of 4,000 the previous August. The move team spent three long days unpacking the BDM trailers and vehicles to make order of the housing site that now hosts volunteers. But soon we were organized enough to welcome the first team of BDM volunteers. And soon enough I observed the chaos that the flooding left behind in the lives of

Waverly residents. Our team met a survivor whose home (built by her father in the early 1900s) was inundated with muddy waters that destroyed her belongings. We met two other survivors who had lived in a borrowed camper since their home was flooded. Yet another watched his vehicle swirling in the flood before washing away and then saw his neighbor's home wash down the road, with his neighbor still in it. As we heard story after story, I began to notice how Waverly residents not



The flood that hit Waverly, Tenn. in August 2021 lasted just twelve minutes but caused much destruction.
Photo courtesy of BDM

only gratefully received help to rebuild but also found ways to help others in the midst of their own needs. Waverly became more than a news story to me. It rooted deep in my heart and I am grateful to have shared in their recovery in small ways.

A Full Circle Story of Heifers

by Sharon Franzén

In July 1945, a load of heifers was brought to the Roger and Olive Roop farm in Union Bridge (Carroll County), Md., beginning a three year journey to collect and care for the animals that were destined for families in war-torn Europe through the Church of the Brethren Heifers for Relief, which later became the Heifer Project and is now Heifer International. During that time about 3,600 head of cattle were processed on the farm before being trucked to the port of Baltimore, Md., and then shipped to Germany and Poland.

The Roop's daughter Patricia (Roop Hollinger), who was eight when the animals first arrived on the family's farm, has many memories of that exciting time and the many people

who passed through, many of whom stayed on to help. Pat and her sister Shirley helped their mother feed them all. She also remembers the mixed reaction of people in the area to the new activity on the farm. Some were not happy with the efforts and removed the signs that directed people to the farm. Others pitched in to help, such as the veterinarian who provided his services for free and a local truck driver who transported the heifers from the railway siding to the farm at no charge.

When Pat heard that a beautiful quilt honoring the connection between Carroll County, the Church of the Brethren, and Heifer



A close up of the "Heifer" quilt before the auction.
Photo courtesy of BDM

by Jo Ann Landon, a member of the Westminster Church of the Brethren and the MAD administrative assistant. It was hand-quilted and bound by the Nimble Thimble group of the Union Bridge Church of the Brethren (yet another connection!).

After some vigorous back and forth bidding, Pat bought the quilt for \$6,400. When asked what she would do with it, she said with great emotion that it would be passed down for generations to come, along with the stories that celebrated what their family had done and the role they had played at the birth of Heifer International. Jo Ann Landon was delighted and said she feels "as if the quilt is home where it should be." The story of those first heifers had come full circle.



Bidding for the "Heifer" quilt at the Mid-Atlantic Disaster Response Auction, May 2022.
Photo courtesy of BDM

Global Updates

Haiti Earthquake Response—Homes for Haiti

The comprehensive response to the devastating 2021 earthquake in Haiti is now focusing on building 25 or more new homes for families in the Saut Matherine community. The Haiti Church of the Brethren continues rebuilding even as prices for construction materials increase and the violence and lack of security in Haiti escalate. Donations are needed to build more homes and support the \$300,000 budget of this joint project of BDM and the Haiti CoB. The need in Haiti right now is great.



A joint BDM/Haiti Church of the Brethren project is building safe, strong houses in Saut Mathurine for those who lost their homes in the August 2021 earthquake. Photo courtesy of Haiti Church of the Brethren



These new homes are similar to the homes built after Hurricane Matthew which withstood the 2021 earthquake in Saut Mathurine. Photo courtesy of Haiti Church of the Brethren

Honduras—Hurricanes Eta and Iota Recovery

The recovery program from November 2020's Hurricanes Eta and Iota, both powerful Category 4 storms, continues with an additional Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grant of \$50,000 to partner Proyecto Aldea Global (PAG, Project Global Village). Previous grants provided emergency relief, medical care, repairs to community fresh water systems, and home



The new EDF grant to PAG in Honduras supports livelihood projects such as this chicken project of Doña Hilda Zelaya. Photo courtesy of PAG

Nigeria

The long and tragic crisis in Nigeria continues as violence, kidnapping, and terrorism spreads further west and south. Walking with and supporting the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN) has helped many people, and the Church itself, survive. This spring grants from the Nigeria Crisis Fund provided seed and fertilizer for farming families trying to rebuild their lives. Food distributions, livelihood programming, new water wells, and more also continue. Please continue to pray for our Nigerian Brethren and to support the Nigeria Crisis Fund. (www.brethren.org/nigeriacrisisfund)



A handpump is installed on a borehole in Mussa Bri, Nigeria to provide fresh drinking water. Photo courtesy of EYN

National Youth Conference 2022 Service Project

Brethren Disaster Ministries has partnered with the Brethren Disaster Relief Auction (BDRA, Pa.) to offer a School Kit Service Project at the Church of the Brethren National Youth Conference this July 23-28, 2022, in Fort Collins, Colo. Currently, 380 registrants have already signed up to assemble over 3,000 School Kits over three days. The completed kits will be donated to Church World Service. Building on the conference's theme, **Foundational**, these kits provide basic educational tools for children around the world. Conference attendees are encouraged to bring donations of items for the kits. Anyone can sign up to donate individual items at www.slottr.com/sheets/18267897. The remainder of the items needed are being purchased with funds from BRDA and the Emergency Disaster Fund. BDM staff and volunteers are leading the coordination and facilitation of the project.



Bags of fertilizer are stored at the EYN church headquarters in Kwarhi before being delivered to farmers. Photo courtesy of EYN

Annual Conference News

Volunteer Meet & Greet

BDM will be holding an informal Meet & Greet gathering for BDM and CDS volunteers (and those who are curious about what we do) at the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Omaha, Neb., at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, July 12 in Room 208 at the CHI Convention Center. Come by to say hello, share stories, ask questions, and just enjoy each other's company. Light refreshments will be served, but feel free to bring your own beverage.

Annual Conference Blood Drive—In Omaha and in your own town!

We are celebrating the fact that we can once again hold the **Annual Conference Blood Drive** in person! The Blood Drive in Omaha will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 12 & 13 at the CHI Convention Center Exhibit Hall A. Conference attendees are encouraged to sign up online in order to book the donation time that is best for them. To reserve your spot, go to www.brethren.org/AC22BloodDrive and choose your preferred day and time. You can also sign up at the conference near the conference registration area or by contacting Brenda or Ed Palsgrove.

Please help during the blood drive! Volunteers are needed to help in the blood drive registration and snack/recovery areas for one to two hour slots or longer. Please contact Sharon (sfranken@brethren.org) before the conference or Brenda/Ed Palsgrove during the conference.

Not going to AC? Not a problem! We are holding a **Virtual Blood Drive** again this year for those who won't be in Omaha but want to join in the spirit of the conference Blood Drive by donating at a local location between now and July 31. Join us!!

To participate, go to www.brethren.org/virtualblooddrive2022 to pledge at our Virtual Blood Drive portal. Or, if you prefer, contact BDM directly at bdm@brethren.org or 800-451-4407 to let us know about your intention to give blood. If Red Cross serves your area, find a blood drive location at www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive. Please let us know when you

have completed your blood donation so we can keep a tally. If possible, send us a photo that we can share. We will announce the virtual drive totals along with the in-person totals.



Church of the Brethren Virtual Blood Drive

Disaster Response Auctions

The **Mid-Atlantic District** and the **Shenandoah District** held their respective annual auctions in May 2022, the proceeds of which support Brethren Disaster Ministries and their district disaster volunteers. BDM is so very grateful for the weeks and months of volunteer hours that go into these successful events involving auctions/sales of quilts, tools, plants, furniture, livestock, cars, and, of course, delicious sweet and savory foods. Children's Disaster Services (CDS) volunteers provided childcare at both auctions and the children seemed to really enjoy themselves.



CDS volunteer Gladys Remnant displayed a Kit of Comfort during the Shenandoah Brethren Disaster Ministries Auction. Photo courtesy of BDM



CDS childcare area at the Mid-Atlantic Disaster Response Auction. Photo courtesy of BDM

Don't forget that the **Brethren Disaster Relief Auction (BDRA)**, sponsored by the Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts) will be held Sept. 23 & 24 at the Lebanon Valley Expo Center, in Lebanon, Pa. Information is available at www.brethrenauction.org, www.facebook.com/BrethrenDisasterRelief, or 717-823-2745.



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Answered Prayers on God's Timeline

by Lynn Evans, BDM long-term disaster project leader



Volunteers at the "Prayer list house", one of the last homes worked on in the Coastal NC project.
Photo by Ed Hendrickson

On February 2, 2022, as our time in the Carolinas drew to a close, we had the chance to witness this truth: while God does not always answer prayers in the way or time that we expect, God does answer.

A small group of us gathered at a house blessing to celebrate the answer to a 20-year-old prayer. As we had renovated this house from top to bottom, one of the groups found a list of prayer requests from 2002 on the back of a closet door. Among other things, it included prayers for the homeowner's children to grow up loving the Lord and to get a good education. Number seven on the list was the request that the Lord fix up her home. Now twenty years later, and three years after extensive damage



Coastal NC project: The house is nearly ready to move into.

Photo courtesy of BDM

from Hurricane Florence, the homeowner's prayers were finally answered. There were new doors, windows, siding, and steps. We stepped through the door into a home that was no longer overwhelming with damage. It now reflected the quiet faith and dignity of the homeowner. It had become a truly lovely space. From what the homeowner's nephew shared, it appeared that her prayers for her family had also been answered. All of us felt humbled to be used as the hands and feet of Christ.