

# RESPONDING – REBUILDING - RESTORING

... In Christian Love



## MDS ONTARIO SPRING NEWSLETTER

On Volunteers under direction of Harvey Martin building in Constance Bay Jan 2018

### A Volunteer's Perspective by Osiah Horst (CCP for Markham Waterloo Mennonite Church, Cobden ON)

Here in the Beachburg Mennonite community, the question in the spring of 2017 was, "Where is Constance Bay?" Almost a year later, everyone here has been touched in some way by the events that took place there in April and May 2017, when the Ottawa River peaked at three and a half feet above normal, breaking the 100-year mark.

When asked if I could help in organizing the project for MDS, I found out there is only one correct question, "How and when can I help?" I wanted to say "Let me first go and..." but the need was now. I thought I was past the age to help with flood cleanup but needs assessment, paper work, co-ordinating volunteers, and cooking are less strenuous but needful tasks.

While doing needs assessment we heard "I just had heart surgery" but he appeared capable. "My husband mayn't go the stairs more than once a day" but he almost had to be restrained. "I sent my husband on an errand, I have to keep him away from work." Wherever we went, the one constant was the people were in good spirits and knew of others who fared worse than they did.

By September, cleanup and repairs were completed, leaving two houses that needed to be rebuilt. Len Russell, from the Flood Relief committee explained "These two most vulnerable families whose modest homes were destroyed by the flood are making mortgage and property tax payments on homes that cannot be lived in and paying rent for a place they can live in. Their situations are not sustainable."

When MDS asked if our Mennonite community could commit to building these two houses, we knew there is only one answer. When we understand the alternative for these families, and that we can



Owner Kara & daughters Kiersten & Kaylee receiving quilt at home dedication

change what was a hopeless situation, we can't say no. Five months later, the houses are almost finished. "We did it!" but who is "We?" Heather Lucente Flood Relief project overseer, Nick Hamm MDS who kept us moving, the local and not so local contractors, and the volunteers who travelled from all parts of Ontario were an integral part of the team effort that made this possible. **Together we make a difference!**



Osiah & Lovina Horst



SPRING 2018

# MDS Canada - New Name, New Home - Ross Penner, Director of Canadian Operations



In many ways MDS volunteers and staff are constantly on the move – responding to disasters and seeking to follow Jesus to those who have been left without secure shelter after disasters. The first part of this year we hosted MDS volunteers and leadership across two countries, to Winkler for the All Unit Meeting. It was a rich time of sharing stories around the theme “Entrusted with Talents”. Since that time we have been busy making plans to move the Winnipeg Office. We’ve been short on space for a while now and we are very excited to move onto the campus of Canadian Mennonite University, into the second floor of the Mennonite Church Canada/Manitoba building. Renovations are currently under way and we expect to be moved by the end of May. On top of that, we are getting ready to move MDS equipment to Williams Lake, BC to begin rebuilding after last summer’s fires. You can register online to volunteer or call MDS Canada for leadership volunteering and MDS US for weekly volunteers. We’d love to see you there!



The challenges of building in winter ...

## New House Builds in Constance Bay

Dec 2017 to Apr 2018 **Thank you** to the over 120 dedicated MDS volunteers who helped build the 2 homes in Constance Bay (Ottawa) over the winter.



Owner Jeff with MDS Earl Martin



Project Director, Harvey Martin presenting MDS Plaque “In Christian Love” to Jeff & Christine



## Incoming & Outgoing MDS ON Vice Chairs

Meet MDS ON’s new Vice Chair, Earl Martin (left) from Elmira. Besides his proven leadership skills, Earl comes with a strong building background. Out going Vice, Henry Weber will stay active with the Unit. Henry is a key volunteer recruiter and looks after our tool trailers.

## 2018 CCP Workshop - this Fall in the Waterloo area

... details to follow

**“Learning how to be part of MDS ON’s Early Response Team”**

## **THANK YOU TO OUR ON VOLUNTEERS - To VOLUNTEER on other MDS Projects**

**Call: (800) 241-8111 for Short Term or (866) 261-1274 for Long Term**

**[www.mds.mennonite.net](http://www.mds.mennonite.net)**

### **Your MDS ON Unit Executive – if you need help investigating or for more info contact:**

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**Send your feedback to Nick Hamm – [hammnicholas.mds@outlook.com](mailto:hammnicholas.mds@outlook.com)**