



## Church of the Brethren

March 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The earthquake in Turkey and Syria, war and violence from Ukraine to Africa, and a US school shooting are some of the things that have challenged BDM to respond creatively and prayerfully to deep hardships and loss in 2022 and the beginning of 2023. Whether responding to a natural disaster, violence, or other crisis, BDM staff and volunteers journeyed with survivors and families toward recovery and hope, often transforming lives, in places like Waverly, Tenn.; Uvalde, Texas; Dawson Springs, Ky.; and North Fort Meyers, Fla.

Encouragement for this ministry is found throughout the sacred scripture, such as Galatians 6:9a, 10a: “Let us not lose heart in doing good, . . . while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people”. It is also found in our partners such as Pamlico County (N.C.) Disaster Recovery Coalition, which shared: “[Not] only have you (BDM) helped to repair hurricane damaged homes, but you have also helped to restore and mend broken hearts. The light you have shown, and the relationships you have built with survivors and their families, will long have an impact on them and their generations.”

Children’s Disaster Services (CDS) volunteers responded this past year with deep compassion to the school shooting in Uvalde (Texas), floods, wildfires, and hurricanes. In Uvalde, specially trained volunteers (Critical Response Childcare teams) supported children and families of the 19 children killed by a lone shooter. These volunteers had 385 contacts with children as they helped them process the trauma and build resiliency in the face of this tragedy.

After Hurricane Ian made landfall in late September 2022, causing catastrophic damage along southwest Florida, CDS volunteers were initially housed by rebuilding volunteers with homes in the area. CDS teams served for six weeks in Florida shelters, with over 400 child contacts. During 2022, a total of 86 CDS volunteers served 1,065 children on eight responses. CDS also held three volunteer training workshops resulting in 40 newly trained volunteers, bringing the total CDS volunteer base to 576 by year’s end.

In March 2022, the BDM rebuilding program network of volunteers finished four years of repairing and rebuilding homes in the Carolinas following Hurricanes Matthew (2016) and Florence (2018). The program transitioned to Waverly, Tenn., for the remainder of the year, in response to devastating August 2021 flooding, when over 17 inches of rain fell in 24 hours. In October, a three week short-term response supported new home construction in Dawson Springs, Ky., where tornadoes destroyed around 650 homes in December 2021. Volunteer leadership on the projects was provided by 47 disaster project leaders from across the country who served to welcome and support 572 volunteers. The rebuilding program site moved to Dawson Springs, Ky., in January 2023 to continue the tornado recovery with local partners.

A local hybrid response to the October 2021 tidal flooding in Maryland’s Somerset and Dorchester counties was led by members of the Mid-Atlantic District, with support from BDM staff, vehicles, and equipment. In 2022, two homes were repaired by 35 volunteers through a grant award from

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Lowes Home Improvement and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). This funding included \$30,000 in Lowes Gift Cards to purchase construction materials for the homes and \$4,200 to support volunteer housing and meals. This work will be completed in 2023.

In early February 2023, the world watched the rescue of survivors of the Turkey-Syria earthquake that has taken more than 50,000 lives. BDM responded quickly with Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF) grants to partners working in both countries. The quake adds to the list of global catastrophes, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, resulting in a war that has displaced more than 12 million Ukrainians and, reportedly, caused nearly 7,000 Ukrainian deaths by the end of 2022. BDM responded to this crisis with EDF grants (totaling \$215,000 in 2022) in collaboration with five key partners. Additional grants are expected early in 2023.

The BDM global response includes dual programs in Haiti that continue the 2021 earthquake response, with \$166,969 in funds, while also addressing the acute overlapping crisis caused by the total collapse of the Haitian government. With severe hunger on the rise, a special program is helping to provide food to vulnerable families in the communities around the Haitian Brethren churches through a \$39,000 grant. Smaller EDF grants supported global Churches of the Brethren in Uganda (\$27,500) and Venezuela (\$10,000) with flood recovery programs, as well as the South Sudan Mission (\$11,000).

The Nigeria Crisis Response, a continued response to terrorism since 2014, provided support to four camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), food distributions, medical assistance, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, seeds and fertilizer, new wells for drinking water, and home repairs for the most vulnerable. Additional EDF grants included support for vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese in Lebanon, continued hurricane and flood recovery in Honduras, and support for programming of the Rwandan Church of the Brethren.

The total BDM programmatic expenses in 2022 were \$1,676,048. This includes the expenses from EDF allocations that support specific programs such as \$274,393 for U.S. responses (Rebuilding, CDS, etc.); \$190,076 for the Nigeria Crisis Response; \$281,469 for other Global CoB partners; and \$364,909 for all other global responses.

This ministry is only possible because the whole church is working together. Individual members and supporters, volunteers, churches, districts, and the auctions are part of the body of Christ coming together to pray, serve, give hope, and help families heal. Through all this we pray that more people come to God and know God's amazing love.

Thank you for your support and encouragement. You are an integral part of the body bearing witness to God's love for all who are lost and need Christ.



Roy Winter, Executive Director for Service Ministries

*On behalf of BDM staff: Jenn Dorsch-Messler, Sharon Franzén, Kim Gingerich, and Michael Scalzi*

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