

2017 HURRICANES

THREE YEARS LATER



Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Before Hurricane Harvey, Ms. B and her mother lived together in a two-bedroom apartment in Texas. Ms. B has a disability, and, following the hurricane, she returned from evacuation to find her previously functional and safe apartment completely devastated. The roof was virtually blown off. All the furniture, appliances and clothing she owned were destroyed. The apartment was uninhabitable, but with limited housing options she was forced to live in it. While still trying to recover from Hurricane Harvey, Ms. B's mother passed away two months later. Eventually, the city condemned the apartment building, leaving Ms. B homeless. Because she wasn't able to secure permanent housing, she stayed in a borrowed tent on some family property and couch surfed with friends. Later, with the remaining funds from her mother's burial policy, she purchased a shed with no electricity or running water. "At least I have a roof over my head," she remembered thinking.

Things began to change when she met Dolores, her case manager from Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response (LSSDR), a ministry of Upbring. Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response support LSSDR's long-term recovery coordination work. Dolores helped Ms. B develop a recovery plan and start to rebuild her life, helping her apply for assistance from the American Red Cross. Ms. B received support to purchase a generator, a large water-storage tank and labor to clear weeds and debris from her property. She spent most of her time on the porch because being outside was cooler than being inside. As Dolores began to work with her to address the many issues of building out the unit into a livable space, summer came, and the heat, combined with Ms. B's medical conditions, was too much to bear. LSSDR provided her temporary housing at a hotel while her home was being worked on. Partnering with other local relief agencies, LSSDR was able to secure building materials and appliances and connected Ms. B with volunteers to help with construction. In March 2020, Ms. B moved in. After more than two and a half years of challenges in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, she finally has a place to call home.



Ms. B (right) with her case manager, Dolores, in front of Ms. B's completed home. Your gifts helped her and other survivors who lost their homes to Hurricane Harvey.



Ms. B's home before work began.



Kitchen build-out.



Completed restroom. Before meeting her case manager, Ms. B was living without electricity or running water.

Thank you

In 2017, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria swept through the United States and the Caribbean, causing widespread damage and interrupting the lives of millions. You and other supporters of Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) reacted to these events with incredible generosity, giving nearly **\$15 million** to hurricane response efforts and showing your dedication to helping our neighbors.



Thanks to you, survivors of hurricanes in Texas, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Cuba and the U.S. Virgin Islands have been connected with life-changing support — from emergency relief supplies to emotional and spiritual care to the repairing and rebuilding of their homes. With a significant number of survivors evacuated from the Caribbean, we have also supported relief and recovery assistance to Puerto Rican evacuees in Pennsylvania. The damage caused by the 2017 hurricanes was so extensive that long-term recovery operations are still active and could continue for another year or longer. LDR is known for staying until long after the headlines change. Thanks to your support, LDR continues to accompany hurricane survivors through the arduous long-term recovery process until communities are able to recover.

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Lutheran Disaster Response works in partnership with congregations, synods, Lutheran social ministry organizations and other partners in the United States and around the world. With their deep knowledge of local needs and how to address them, these partners help us work in ways that are relevant and effective for each community. Through these partnerships, we accompany survivors from the time a disaster strikes until communities are rebuilt.

This work is made possible by the Lutheran Disaster Response network. We are particularly grateful to:

- The Caribbean Synod
- Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries
- In Spiritus (formerly Lutheran Services of Georgia)
- Liberty Lutheran/Lutheran Congregational Services
- Lutheran Services Florida
- Upbring/Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response
- Lutheran Social Services of Puerto Rico
- Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands
- Lutheran World Federation
- Lutheran World Relief

We are also grateful to collaborate with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

SHELTER

After the 2017 hurricanes, millions of people were left with damage to their homes from wind and rain. Lutheran Disaster Response has supported volunteer programs to assist in repairing and rebuilding homes in Texas, Georgia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

IN PUERTO RICO, Lutheran Social Services–Puerto Rico hosts construction volunteers from the U.S. mainland at Lutheran Camp Eduardo Roig in Dorado. LDR supports this work and also provided a solar generator so the camp could have electricity.

IN TEXAS, survivors received help with their home construction and such needs as furniture and appliances. Priority was given to communities in vulnerable situations that were least likely to receive help, such as Burmese and Cambodian communities. Because recovery systems aren't aligned to adequately serve these communities, which often encounter language barriers and may lack trust in those outside their own communities, the communities are often left without options. Local partners identified those challenges and worked to resolve them.

IN PUERTO RICO, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it almost impossible to continue recruiting volunteers from the U.S. mainland to assist in rebuilding. Plans are underway to continue rebuilding with the help of contractors. And in Texas, volunteer groups have been discontinued. While the pandemic has slowed recovery, your support helps the work continue in new ways, thanks to the ingenuity of our partners.



EMERGENCY RELIEF

Immediately after the hurricanes, Lutheran Disaster Response facilitated the delivery of critical supplies during a time when infrastructure was not functioning, including baby formula, batteries, bottled water, car power inverters, diapers, flashlights, generators, satellite phones, solar lamps, solar-powered cellphone chargers, toothpaste and other hygiene items, pots, pans and other cookware, blankets and sleeping pads.

DISASTER CASE MANAGEMENT

Finding assistance after a disaster can be challenging. Lutheran Disaster Response often supports the work of disaster case managers, trained disaster recovery specialists who work one-on-one with survivors to help them map out their assets and navigate the various government and nonprofit resources available. Where gaps exist and no other support is available (often for things such as appliances), LDR can support those specific needs. This is just one way LDR ensures that its work is effective in accompanying survivors without duplicating efforts within the larger ecosystem of disaster-response organizations.

Many LDR affiliates have implemented significant disaster case management programs for survivors in impacted communities in response to the 2017 hurricanes, including Lutheran Social Services of Puerto Rico, Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response (LSSDR, a ministry of Upbring), Inspiritus and Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands (LSSVI). Support from LDR enabled LSSVI to hire three congregation-based disaster case managers to help congregation and community members navigate the recovery process.



A client of Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response, a ministry of Upbring, meets with her disaster case manager, who helped her apply for assistance to receive a new home for herself and her two children, who are 11 and 5.



EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL CARE

Following the 2017 hurricanes, Lutheran Disaster Response began working with local social ministry organizations, synods, congregations and other partners to address the emotional and spiritual needs of communities that had been impacted.

In Puerto Rico, hurricane survivors are being supported with pastoral counseling and emotional and spiritual care by a Lutheran pastor who is also a licensed social worker. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands played a significant role in administering the FEMA-funded crisis counseling program for survivors. In Texas, LDR sponsored a respite retreat for synod and congregational leaders. And in Florida, Lutheran Services Florida implemented a FEMA-funded crisis counseling program for 20 counties.

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Because of the generosity of donors such as you, Lutheran Disaster Response is able to make long-term commitments to help communities recover from disasters. Based on the severity of the damages and the large number of impacted areas, LDR is committed to supporting recovery efforts that help survivors rebuild their lives.

WAYS TO GIVE TO SUPPORT THIS ONGOING RESPONSE AND OTHERS LIKE IT:

ONLINE

ELCA.org/disaster

BY MAIL

Make a check out to Lutheran Disaster Response and send to:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCA Gift Processing Center
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

BY PHONE

Call 800-638-3522 to make a donation with a credit card. Operators are ready to assist you Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Central time.



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