



Strangers no more

"Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." *Romans 12:12-13 NRSV*



Ponce, Puerto Rico



Cottondale, Florida



Rockport, Texas



Williams Lake, British Columbia

2018 AT A GLANCE

5,445 volunteers
from churches across Canada and
the U.S. gave their time, skills and
compassion to build

75 new homes,
complete

278 repairs,
finish

301 clean ups,
and build

14 new bridges
for households who experienced a
disaster. This volunteer labour is a
value* of over

\$9 million USD.

LOOKING BACK ON 2018, we see a year of disasters, large and small. The California wildfires, and hurricanes Michael and Florence, affected hundreds of thousands of people. So-called "smaller" disasters — such as the tornadoes that struck the Ottawa area of Ontario — also left people with pressing needs and lasting trauma.

There are many statistics associated with disasters: wind speed, acres burned, homes lost, numbers of people evacuated, and we share some of those statistics in this Annual Report. However, we look at 2018 through an MDS lens; one that is both statistical and emotional/spiritual.

The reality is, there will always be another disaster. Let us ask together, honestly: Can we do more? Based on the seeds of compassion you planted in 2018, I believe the answer is a resounding "yes!"

"We tell a lot of people thank you, but it's definitely not enough. ...We just made friends for life." —Anna & Jerry Rucker



Clendenin, West Virginia



Hattiesburg, Mississippi

In 2018

MDS volunteers served more than

46,000 days

helping nearly

700 households

recover from disasters

There were so many moments in 2018 when I was amazed by you, our MDS family. First, you served as volunteers or helped support volunteers as they cleaned up, repaired or rebuilt homes, and were present with disaster survivors. This may have involved traveling to Canada or from Canada to the U.S. You raised nearly \$250,000 in less than 24 hours during a telethon. You constructed a home in the parking lot of the MDS headquarters, then trucked it to Texas for a hurricane survivor.

Our theme for the 2019 All-Unit Meeting in Tucson, Arizona in February is based on Romans 12:12-13, which calls us to "extend hospitality to strangers", which you have also expressed in so many ways.

When the winds of one of the strongest typhoons ever to hit land blew through Saipan, I was amazed — but not altogether surprised — to watch our MDS-built houses stand firm. Yes, there will always be another disaster. But we will stand firm, and we can do more.

— Kevin King, Executive Director

For the full 2018 MDS Annual Report, please see the winter issue of *Behind the Hammer* or visit our website at <https://mds.mennonite.net/annual-reports/>



Vici, Oklahoma

Step up and join the team in 2019



**Mennonite
Disaster
Service**

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