

RESPONDING - REBUILDING - RESTORING

... in Christian Love



Listowel Mennonite volunteers in Pass Christian.

Ontario Volunteers

The following are just some of the groups who volunteered for MDS since our last newsletter. If you or your group volunteered please contact one of our ON BD members with the details.

- Aylmer EMMC (Aylmer) Cameron LA ; January 2011.
- Bethel Mennonite Church: (Kitchener) New Iberia LA, Feb 28-March 5, 2011
- Conrad Grebel University College students; Pass Christian, Feb 21-25
- Listowel Mennonite (Listowel) Pass Christian, March 7-11.
- Markham-Waterloo Mennonite conference (Kitchener-Waterloo) Lyles TN Feb 21-25.
- Mt Salem EMC (Aylmer) Diamond LA, Feb 21-25.
- Steinmann Mennonite (Baden) to Lyle Tennessee March 10-17

If you or a group from your congregation wonders about the richness of a volunteer experience you may want to contact someone from the above list to learn more about volunteering.

"We spent the majority of the time hanging & mudding drywall. Earlier in the week we installed some insulation, and a few of the guys worked on putting together a garden shed. I personally was challenged to see the world from a new, bigger perspective. God is so big and amazing, and He loves all people in all their diversity. It's amazing to be a small part of something so big."

~ Mapleview Mennonite (Kitchener)
New Iberia; Feb 21-25.

Information Meetings for Church Contact Persons (CCP): there have been 3 information meetings held in Ontario over the last six months.

December 20, 2010 at Old Colony Mennonite Church

CCPs John Banman, John Klassen & board members Henry Penner, Cornelius Reimer put on a local information evening at Old Colony Mennonite Church (Tillsonburg) for a group of 22 from Aylmer, Walsingham & Tillsonburg interested in going to an MDS project.

November 27, 2010 in Leamington.

At a meeting arranged by Jason Ecker and John Braun, the response to the Leamington tornado was discussed. Stephen and Mae Joudry, representing Samaritan's Purse, who partnered with MDS in the response, attended as well as a representative from the municipality. All the partners present contributed to the discussion.

February 15, 2011 in St. Catharines.

At a meeting arranged by the MDS Niagara District, Nick Hamm shared information how MDS is organized in Canada and the USA. Glenn and Esther Buck shared a description of the devastation in Newfoundland and how MDS has been involved to date.

Coming Events

MDS ON is pleased to announce that Kevin King, Executive Director for MDS, will attend the ON BD meeting in Kitchener, Sat. May 14, 2011 and will be the guest speaker at the **Niagara district MDS fundraiser**, St. Catharines United Mennonite Church. Call Rudy Thiessen at 905-562-4324 for more details.



**Mennonite
Disaster
Service**

SPRING 2011

Pastors to Projects by Karen Sheil, Pastor of Rainham Mennonite Church

Pastors to Projects is an MDS initiative which provides opportunities for pastors to gain first-hand knowledge about MDS. I had been interested in MDS for some time and wondered if members of our congregation would like to get involved. But before I suggested it to the church I wanted to know more, so in the fall of 2009 I went to New Orleans with help from the Pastors to Projects.

Experiences with MDS are as varied as the people who volunteer. My own experience was like attending camp for grown-ups. Our days were organized around working on various houses but woven into all that work were opportunities to learn about God and have fun. I was moved by the stories of home owners, their experience of disaster and recovery and their gratitude for the work of MDS. I discussed evangelism with one Amish volunteer and pastoral election practises with another. As I am a female pastor, they were quite curious about my story as well. One long-term volunteer shared about the process of selling his business in order to retire sooner and spend more time volunteering. All these stories had one thing in common. They spoke of God at work and we found ourselves continually acknowledging God's activity.

And we had fun. While our focus was getting the work done we also shared a great deal of laughter on site. In the evening we played various games. I learned how to play "German rules" UNO, and if you've never seen a dozen adults, some old enough to be grandparents, play 'round-the-world ping pong you've missed out. We were even entertained by funny folk songs one night.

I came home refreshed and re-energized, ready and excited to get back to my usual pastoral duties. While my congregation has yet to travel with MDS they have increased their interest and involvement. In fall 2010 I returned with their encouragement. They also sent a donation to MDS and offered to help with my transportation costs. I look forward to many future trips to "camp".

Newfoundland Bound!

At the Region 5 board meeting held 9 Feb 2011 it was decided to proceed with a project to assist the people affected by Hurricane Igor (21 Sept. '10). The project will officially open on May 1, 2011 with three new houses to be built in Trinity Bay North which is situated just south of Bonavista. MDS Region 5 continues to monitor the situation in New Brunswick to determine if a project is required to assist people whose homes were destroyed by flooding earlier this year. For more details see the MDS website mds.mennonite.net/regions-units/region-v/ or call Sarah Yoder (1-800-241-8111) if interested in volunteering.

We ask for your prayers as MDS responds to the needs in Atlantic Canada. If you would like to support this response financially, please send your donations marked "Atlantic Canada Response" to: Mennonite Disaster Service, 6A -1325 Markham Rd., Winnipeg, MB R3T4J6 or online at www.mds.mennonite.net



The local fish plant may not open again; this has put almost 200 people in a vulnerable position.

Travel Reimbursement

MDS Region 5 is in the process of amending its travel reimbursement policy in response to shortfalls in funding experienced in the past year. This change is not being taken lightly but is deemed necessary to match expenses with income. Refer to the Region 5 website for interim changes being applied to the NL response. Additional changes are expected for the fall 2011 or sooner.

MDS Ontario Board News

Nick Hamm of Vineland, ON has agreed to serve as Chair of Region 5 (Canada) and to act as Reg. 5 Director; he will be stepping into the very large shoes left by Ron and Elaine Enns of Manitoba. Nick has accumulated an extensive background in MDS since joining the Ontario Board in 2006. In addition to directing MDS projects in the USA, his expertise in building has been extensively utilized in the design of hurricane resistant homes for the Gulf Coast and for improved building standards of MDS houses throughout North America. Nick has served as Ontario's vice chair and, with Orlan Martin, represented Ontario in Region 5 board meetings. Nick's attention to detail has enabled the ON Bd to develop improved participation rates and communication patterns throughout Ontario. We wish Nick well in this very important position but readily admit he will be sorely missed from the Ontario executive.



Nick Hamm

Glenn Buck, current MDS ON Secretary will take on the role of MDS ON Chair, and Orlan Martin will move into the position of Vice Chair.

MDS ON BD is pleased to announce that Bd member Karen Martin (Elmira) will continue in her position on the ON board even though she has resigned from the Bi-National Board of Delegates and her position as secretary for MDS Region 5. Karen had held these positions for the past 7 yrs.

Jason (MDS ON BD member) and Lindsey Ecker (Leamington) proudly announce the birth of their son, Sawyer Jacob William Ecker, born Dec. 29, 2010. Jason will replace Glenn Buck as Secretary for MDS ON.

MDS ON regrets to announce the passing former ON Bd member Richard (Dick) Radstake. Dick influenced many in his home congregation in Listowel to become involved in MDS. He had served the ON BD for six years in addition to volunteering for many projects across North America.