



behindthehammer

STORIES AND IDEAS ABOUT PEOPLE CONNECTING THROUGH MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE

You call this cold?

The winter lows in Virginia are enough to make Diana Doell smile. The volunteer from Manitoba is used to much colder temps.

Photo credit:
Wilbur Litwiller



Heading south during the chilly months of winter

The numbers are in and the results are difficult to argue. Forty-seven percent of last year's volunteers served with MDS during the first three months of the year.

A debate, however, continues to buzz around the question of why the first quarter draws nearly half the annual MDS activity.

The hard numbers are presented on page 5 of this issue of *Behind the Hammer* in a month by month look at when we serve with MDS.

Some are certain that the winter trend depicted by these numbers is a result of northern populations fleeing ice and snow in search of warmer temperatures.

Others believe that the winter season is simply the most practical time for tradespeople and farmers to pull away from their commitments at home.

The staggering drop in volunteers between March and April seems to coincide with the spring blossoms of the building trade and the

return of farmers to the field. May, the bridge between spring and summer, is one of the slowest months of the year for MDS activity.

By July, volunteer participation shows signs of a rebound fueled by the summer youth program. But the numbers drop again as the young ones return to school.

In October, while barns fill up with the harvest, the volunteers hurry back to the projects to help prepare for winter. But these autumn servants are quickly whisked away to close up the barns and prepare for the holidays at home. The projects close for two weeks in December and reopen after the first of the year.

Whether one believes that the spike in winter volunteer participation is due to a search for warmer temperatures, the availability of working folk, or a response to New Year's resolutions, the trend remains clear - MDS volunteers are most likely to serve during the chilly months of winter.

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Coordinator's Corner

by Kevin King
Executive Coordinator

Winter migration

Volunteers are able to choose the time of year when they wish to serve. A lot of us find it most convenient to volunteer during the winter months, when work is slow at home and service means heading south to spend a week or two in a warmer climate. Yes, winter is a good time to migrate.

But there are some among us who do not choose the course of our migration. The disaster survivor is unable to plan the time or place of a storm. They do not wish to be homeless. They do not care to spend weeks in transition. They do not want to migrate in search of a new home.

Prior to taking this job with MDS, I worked at Mennonite Central Committee with many such people who did not have a choice - people who were forced to migrate because of war, famine, and natural causes.

I recall an experience in Brazil with MCC when I gave assistance to a young couple with two children who were moving back to the rural hinterland because of the drought. All their possessions fit in the back of my small pickup.

There is another story of a lady in Mozambique who was found by MCCers after the flood. All she owned fit in a bucket - a pair of sandals and an empty Coke bottle for drinking water.

I grew up on a farm in Cochranville with six brothers. Our possessions were many and could not be contained by bucket or pickup truck. Yet my parents, David and Rhoda, modeled acts of Christian charity in their daily lives. When a farmer lost their barn to fire, we would take them a load of hay and a meal. We were taught to give to those in need.

As a small boy in 1965, I listened to the stories dad told after taking a bus load of volunteers to the Palm Sunday Tornado in Goshen, Indiana. I was fascinated that people would organize themselves in times of disaster, stop doing their own jobs, and go somewhere to help total strangers.

As I now choose my own migration from MCC to MDS, I am excited to continue facilitating the migration of "those giving assistance." I hold a deep respect for the volunteers, like my father, who leave the comfort and security of home to lend a hand of help, hope, and a listening ear.

Thanks Dad - you were that model of migration!

MDS and the Privacy Act



by Lois Nickel
Administrative Coordinator

As of January 1st the Canadian Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act went into effect to protect the personal information used by all commercial and non-profit organizations. The act's basic premise: When disclosing information of a personal nature which is not available in the public domain, the organization that receives this information must use it ONLY for the purposes intended, must store it securely, and must only allow access to those involved in carrying out the purposes for which it was given.

Ten principles are contained in the act:

Accountability - MDS must appoint someone to be accountable for compliance with the privacy law - MDS Administrative Coordinator

Identifying purposes - the purposes for collecting personal information must be identified by MDS at the time of collection

Consent - you have the right to withhold/withdraw consent to MDS having and using your personal information for the purposes identified

Limiting collection - MDS must limit collection of personal information to only that which is necessary to carry out our purposes

Limiting use, disclosure, and retention - the information must not be used or disclosed for purposes other than those for which it was initially collected except with your consent, and must not be kept indefinitely

Accuracy - MDS must ensure the information collected is accurate, complete, and up to date; you are encouraged to point out inaccuracies

Security safeguards - must be in place to protect the information appropriate to the sensitivity of the information

Openness - MDS privacy policies and procedures must be made available to our constituency

Individual access - MDS must provide you access to your personal information on record if you request it

Challenging compliance - MDS must have a designated person (the Administrative Coordinator) to whom you can raise a concern should you think this personal information is being used inappropriately.

(continued on page 6)



Marker scrawled on deck in Tennessee - volunteer graffiti?

by Mary Lou Bowers

“What can these three ‘kids’ do?” thought James Parks as he saw the little red MDS pick-up pull into his driveway.

Last May this spunky middle-aged man found his paradise collapsing around him as a tornado raked the ridge where his cozy brick bungalow sits.

For fifteen years Mr. Parks called this quiet country neighborhood his home. However, the storm wasn’t the first disaster to hit him. His rural paradise has become even more important to him in the last two years since a spinal cyst confined him to a wheel chair and forever ended his over-the-road truck driving career.

James sat quietly in his living room that fateful night, waiting for the worst as the storm raged about him. But miracle of miracles, only one tree from the forest fell on his house and repair to the roof was made by a relative in a few days. A TV antenna tower collapsed between his car and house, but neither was damaged. The greatest loss was the destruction of the back deck – the place where James sat to watch the birds

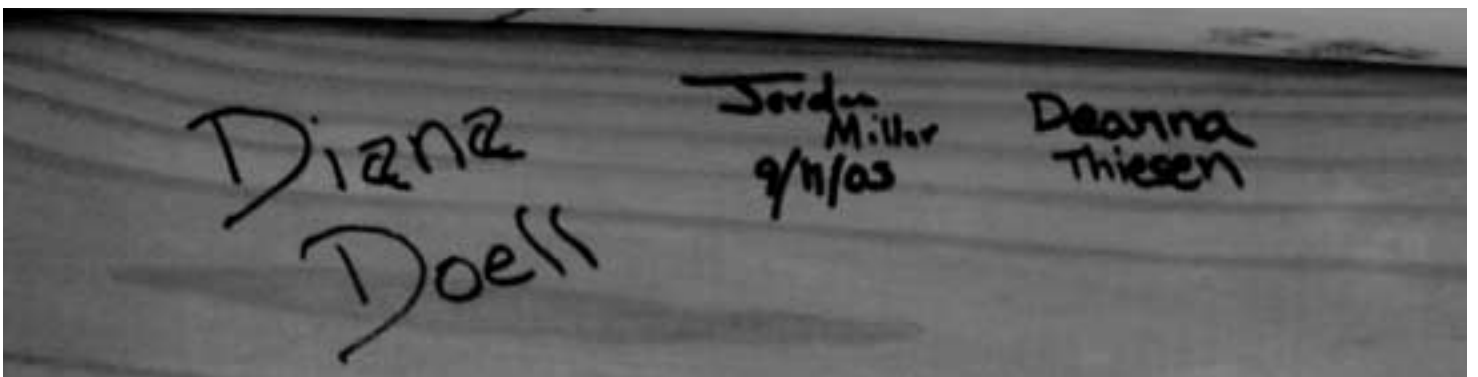
and animals in his back yard.

The storm was barely over when James heard a neighbor’s chain saw cutting through the trees that were scattered like match sticks all around his house and down the lane. Though suffering much damage to his own home, the neighbor was coming to “rescue” James.

Like most folks hit by the tornado, James did not have electricity for a week and a half. But unlike other area folks, his phone worked for a couple days until a truck brought down the low hanging wire.

“The Lord was with me,” said James. “It could have been so much worse.”

And now James has even more to be thankful for – his deck has been rebuilt by new-found friends from MDS. The young volunteers proved that “kids” can be ambitious and skillful and build wonderful things like a deck and ramp on the back of a house. In order to remember them always, James asked them to autograph their handiwork!



2003 binational disaster projects

MDS volunteers from Canada and the United States contributed \$1,400,000.00 in labor to the following binational project locations

Barriere, British Columbia

Disaster: Fire, Volunteers: 211, Clients: 56

Carbon Hill, Alabama

Disaster: Tornado, Vols: 66, Clients: 13

Corpus Christi, Texas

Disaster: Flood, Volunteers: 5, Clients: 1

Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia

Disaster: Typhoon, Volunteers: 43, Clients: 85

Pinedale, Arizona

Disaster: Fire, Volunteers: 124, Clients: 5

Columbus, Mississippi

Disaster: '02 Tornado, Vols: 208, Clients: 21

Eunice, Louisiana

Disaster: Hurricane, Vols: 191, Clients: 50

Houston, Texas

Disaster: Flood, Volunteers: 92, Clients: 25

Newport News, Virginia

Disaster: Hurricane, Vols: 7, Clients: 0

Jackson, Tennessee

Disaster: Tornado, Vols: 383, Clients: 99

Northfork, West Virginia

Disaster: Flood, Volunteers: 538, Clients: 39

Roseau, Minnesota

Disaster: Flood, Volunteers: 134, Clients: 42

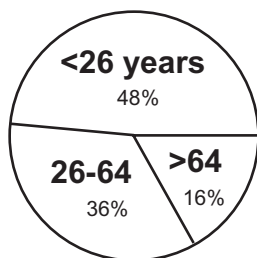
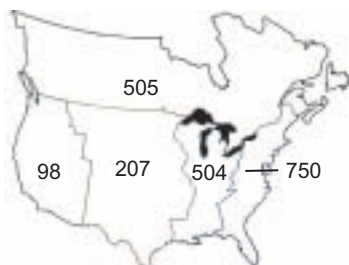
Stockton, Missouri

Disaster: Tornado, Vols: 62, Clients: 10



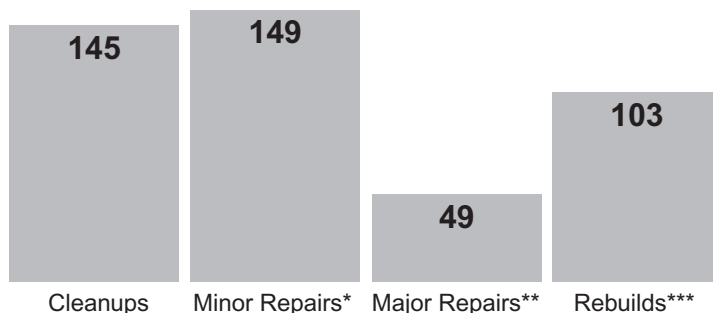
2003 financial activity

	Canada CN \$*	United States
BEGINNING BALANCE	336,000	1,003,000
REVENUE		
Contributions	392,500	832,000
Grants	62,500	0
Total	455,000	832,000
EXPENSE		
Projects	352,000	682,000
Supporting Activities	169,000	249,000
Total	521,000	931,000
ENDING BALANCE	270,000	904,000
	*15 month 9/02-11/03	



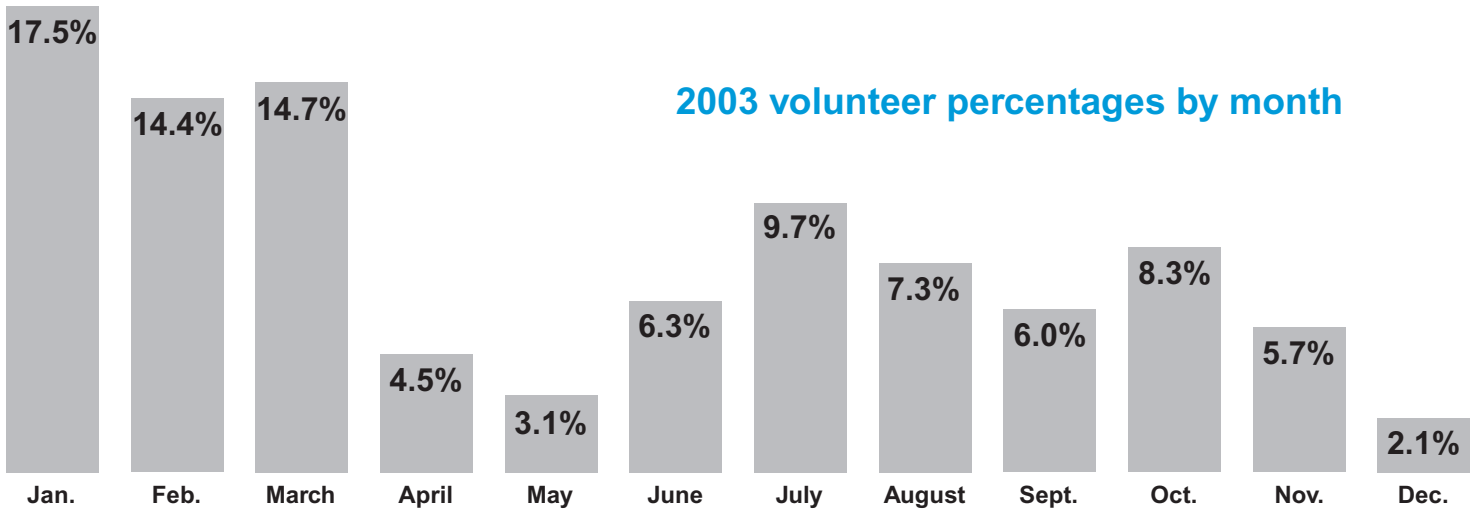
2,064 volunteers

volunteer ages



446 client families

*(up to 25% of home's value), **(up to 100% of home's value)
 *** (85 island homes were constructed in Chuuk)



In November of 2003, MDS opened a winter project in Corpus Christi, Texas. The project ran through March of 2004 to accommodate the high numbers of volunteers looking for southern destinations. The short sleeves in the photo above are a tell-tale sign of the weather in Corpus Christi where the average January high is 66 degrees Fahrenheit. The low is 46.

The numbers behind MDS

MDS volunteers show a clear preference for the winter months, but their impact on disaster survivors is felt throughout the year. The poem to the right is an illustration of that impact. At the end of the day, at the end of the year, MDS is remembered for so much more than the storm and the reconstruction. As time moves on, the numbers about how many and how often become insignificant. The impressive outcome is the unmeasurable impact that we have on the lives of those we affect through service. The mission of MDS lives on when the actions of our volunteers show the way for others. This transformation cannot be measured or plotted on a chart, but it can be seen in the lives of many.

The circle of love

by Susan Garland

MDS client in Barriere, BC

You picked us up
and carried our load.
You asked nothing
in return.

Your light shone
on our path
when we couldn't
see the way.

Your sympathetic ear,
patience and hard work
were examples
in our time of need.

You do not know,
you cannot know,
our losses or how much
the demonstration
of your belief has been
a source of strength
and hope.

What can we give
in return?

How do we repay?

Your example must
show the way.



Darryll and Linda Graber join Betty and Homer Andres for a fellowship meal at the 2004 MDS All-Unit Meeting in British Columbia.

MDS All-Unit a family affair

by Angelika Dawson

ABBOTSFORD B.C. - More than 450 people attended All-Unit Meeting at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, February 13 and 14. They joined to worship, fellowship, tell stories and envision the future.

The theme for the weekend, “Responding, Rebuilding, Restoring,” was based on Nehemiah. Pastor Dan Unrau, First Mennonite Church, Yarrow, introduced the theme by reflecting on what it means to be in a hurting world.

“You MDSers, have wept and walked and worked with those whose house walls have burned, or blown down,” said Unrau. “You have seen them wonder . . . where God is in their tragedy, in their weeping. You have seen whole persons broken in every way by the devastation of their walls.”

Pastor Ingrid Schultz, First Mennonite Church, Vancouver, continued with the theme of rebuilding. “Rebuilding is not just about restoring walls, and homes but also about restoring people and communities. Both, I believe, are important components of the work of MDS,” said Schultz.

“As MDS folk from across US and Canada arrived . . . it seemed more like a giant family reunion,” said Waldo Neufeld, MDS British Columbia Unit Chair and one of the event organizers. “The annual meetings are . . . where volunteers with MDS reconnect with others that they have served with on various assignments.”

The story telling began with stories of people who were hurting, followed by stories of responding, rebuilding, and restoring and celebration. Representatives from each region shared about the many disasters that MDS responded to in the past year; from wildfires in British Columbia to hurricanes in Pennsylvania and tornadoes in Tennessee.

The event also included the installation of Kevin King as the new Executive Coordinator and Rocky Miller as the new board chair.

Delegates from out of town were billeted in homes and local music was provided by the Abbotsford Male Choir, Clearbrook Instrumental Group, Columbia Bible College,

the Young Street Vocal Band, and the Pacific Mennonite Children’s Choir.

Women’s groups from King Road MB, West Abbotsford Mennonite, South Abbotsford MB, Eben-Ezer Mennonite and Emmanuel Mennonite Church provided meals in the Emmanuel kitchen. The Friday evening banquet was catered by Columbia Bible College.

At the final celebration on Saturday morning, Unrau reminded the crowd that they are to be like Nehemiah who listened to the call of God and fixed brokenness in the world.

“Did you know that when you drive into the Barriers of the world, when you walk into the carnage of the Jacksons, the Corpus Christis and the Newport News’ and you fix up their walls . . . you are affording those people no less than Nehemiah gave the downtrodden of Jerusalem-the opportunity to find God, to turn their sorrow into joy, their distress into worship,” said Unrau. “While the action of MDS is to rebuild the physical and emotional walls of a people victimized, what you are in fact giving them is the hand of God, lifting them up, touching their faces, healing their wounds, binding their sores, and saving their souls. You can do no better than this.”

Privacy Act

(continued from page 2)

MDS collects personal non-public information from: **volunteers** (for processing, statistics, and notices for appropriate workshops available or alumni gatherings), **clients** (for processing and statistics), **quarterly newsletter recipients** (for distribution), **donors** (for charitable tax receipts, fund appeal letters, notices of fundraising events), **congregational contact persons and board members** (for updates, meeting minutes and notices, workshop/seminar notices), **churches, conferences, and pastors** (for updates and requests for information) and **staff** (for employment related purposes). You will notice certain statements about privacy and use of personal non-public information on various forms and communications of MDS- these are requirements of this legislation.

The following **Purpose Statement** has also been approved by the MDS Region V Board as its pledge to you: “MDS respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. The information you provide will be used to deliver services and to keep you informed and up to date on the activities of MDS including programs, services, regular and special events, opportunities and needs to volunteer or to give, and more through periodic contacts. If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these contacts, simply contact us by phone at (866) 261-1274 or via e-mail at extension@mds.mennonite.net and we will gladly accommodate your request.”



“Hands On House” models the future of MDS fundraising

In a new grassroots effort that may become a prototype for future MDS fundraisers, the MDS Mississippi Unit is building a home that will be sold for a profit.

The fundraiser is called a “Hands On House,” named for the many volunteers and businesses who are rolling up their sleeves to get involved.

The proceeds will support MDS disaster response at the binational, regional and unit levels.

A similar fundraising campaign is also underway in Ohio.

How a “Hands On House” brings volunteers, materials and contributions together

The local MDS unit begins by looking for donations to purchase a piece of property. In Mississippi, a site was chosen on a piece of property already owned by MDS. A lot was purchased in Ohio for half price.

With the site selected, the local MDS unit settles on a house design and begins soliciting material contributions from local vendors and businesses.

As the materials fall into place, local volunteers construct the home. Because the houses are located near Mennonite communities, volunteers are able to donate a day or two of their time without having to travel to a far off project location.

Upon completion the homes will be sold to a community member at market value.

The proceeds from the sale are divided with 60% going to MDS binational, and 20% each to the region and unit. These funds are then used at each level of MDS to support volunteer response to natural disasters.

If you would like to help plan a “Hands On House” in your community, contact the MDS Binational Office at the address to the right.



Volunteers work on the MDS “Hands On House” in Columbus, Mississippi. The completed home will be landscaped and sold by a realtor. Proceeds from the sale will benefit MDS binational, Region II and the Mississippi Unit.

Get involved

connect locally with MDS

Region I Meeting: Oct. 2004

Bernard Martin, (540) 434-1916

Region II Meeting: Feb. 2005

Willis and Phyllis Troyer, (662) 738-5366

Region III Meeting : Nov. 19-20 2004

Vernon Miller, (316) 662-1584

Region IV Meeting: Sept. 2004

Wilmer Leichthy, (541) 928-8294

Region V: Oct. 2004

Gord Friesen, (204) 257-9048

behindthehammer

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Behind the hammer is published quarterly by the binational office of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). MDS is a non-profit agency that responds to the needs of disaster survivors. MDS volunteers cleanup, repair and rebuild damaged homes.

Behind the hammer is an opportunity for MDS volunteers, donors and clients to share about their common experience. Our stories encourage others to continue expressing the love of God through MDS.

We welcome your stories and ideas for print in this publication or for use online. Submit your ideas to Ted Houser, Editor, binational office.

Enjoy a free subscription. Contact the binational office to subscribe to this publication or notify MDS of an address change.

News updates from MDS projects are available by fax and E-mail or by calling 1-800-241-8111. You can visit us online at www.mds.mennonite.net for current photos and volunteer project information.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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STORIES AND IDEAS ABOUT PEOPLE CONNECTING THROUGH MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE

Final dedication

In February outgoing MDS executive coordinator, Tom Smucker, attended the dedication of five MDS homes in British Columbia. In this photo Smucker presents a Bible and a copy of "The Hammer Rings Hope" to Pearl Eustache and Don Guitard, survivors of last summer's wildfires. Since April of 1998, Smucker has opened 39 MDS projects, managed 17,612 volunteers and served 1,024 families affected by disaster.

