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# On the Level



A monthly newsletter from Mennonite Disaster Service

August 19, 2020

Greetings!

Time and time again, I hear people refer to “the new normal” as they consider resuming some aspects of their lives amid the COVID-19 pandemic. For MDS, embarking on our own “new normal” means scheduling volunteers for the fall season of October through December with equal measures of hope and caution.



Kevin's Corner

With hope, we have just opened weekly volunteer scheduling for projects in Marianna, FL; Pollocksville, NC; and an RV project in Coastal Bend, TX. And Early Response Teams are at work in Iowa. Our caution is knowing plans could change at a moment's notice.

We begin these projects in light of the uncertainties that COVID-19 has brought to the rest of the world. For MDS volunteers, that means following new protocols and precautions to work as safely as possible.

The continued closing of the Canada-U.S. border, and the inability of Canadians to get health insurance for COVID-19, means our Canadian sisters and brothers can't join us in volunteering in the U.S. We look forward to the day when they can once again go south! In the meantime, we ask them to support us with their prayers and donations.

Although this has been a challenging time, I continue to be inspired by the grassroots efforts of many MDS volunteers who have been able to work safely and creatively to help people in need despite all the challenges.

At a time like this, I like the Spanish word “esperanza.” It has the meaning of active waiting with a sense of hope. That's what we are doing at MDS: Actively waiting on the situation with the pandemic and on God as we move forward together with hope.

*Ken King*

Executive Director  
Mennonite Disaster Service



## Now Available

Our latest edition of Behind the Hammer is now available. This special 70th Anniversary Edition offers a look back at some of the MDS responses over our seven decades and the innovative ways MDS volunteers have touched lives and offered hope.

[Read Behind the Hammer](#)

## Responding to derecho damage in Iowa

MDS Early Response Teams are helping people clean up, remove damaged trees and buildings, and cope with feelings of isolation and despair.

Winds exceeding 100 mph tore off roofs, collapsed walls, and upended trees. Hardest hit areas include Cedar Rapids, Marshalltown, Des Moines, Ames, Shellsburg and more.

[Click here to read more.](#)

## Engineering firm sees design in action

Johann Zimmermann and his team of engineers, spent a week in Pocahontas, WV installing bridges to give families safer and easier access. These families have been waiting more than four years since a flood washed out a communal bridge connecting their homes to the main road.



[Click here to read more.](#)

MDS is hoping to reopen some volunteer projects this fall. We are now tentatively scheduling for some of these projects. Please visit the Volunteer section of our website for opportunities to request to serve as a weekly volunteer and to find volunteer opportunities near you.



## Spirit of MDS Canada Fund touches those living on the margins

“The grant helped people pay their bills and gave hope to the whole congregation in this time of difficulty by showing there are those who care about them,” says pastor Reuben Tut.

Read more about how the Spirit of MDS Fund is changing lives.

[Click here to read more.](#)



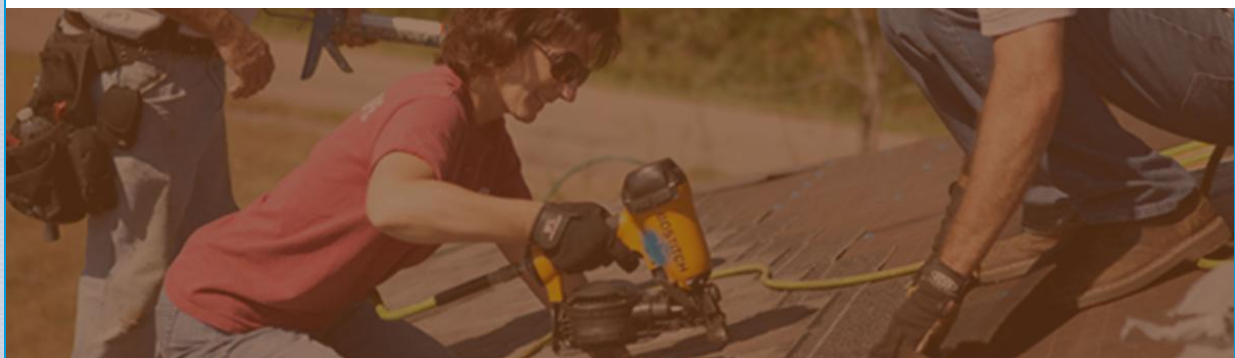
## Mennonite Disaster Service FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Rebuilding Churches in Alabama



Former Mennonite Disaster Service Executive Coordinator Tom Smucker recalls the time MDS rebuilt an African American church in Boligee, Alabama, in 1996.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



**Thank you for your support!**

We will resume responding, rebuilding, and restoring disaster damaged homes as it is safe for our volunteers to do so.

Your continued support will help us start back up—recruiting volunteers,

moving equipment, setting up accommodations, replenishing supplies, and many other things needed to get going.

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# Respond. Rebuild. Restore.

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