

Mennonite Disaster Service Canada REPORT



A great encouragement to our congregation and a catalyst for ministry..."

That's what Rob Patterson, pastor of the Scott St. Mennonite Brethren Church in St. Catharines, Ont. said about what a grant from the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada Spirit of MDS Fund meant to his church during the pandemic.

The church used the funds to provide about 500 meals for nearby families experiencing food insecurity because of COVID-19. "The grant allowed us to get the program up and running, helping with food purchasing and promotion," says Patterson.

He added it "made us feel that we are part of the larger Mennonite cause, both in St Catharines and around the world. This kind offer of support from MDS has been a real blessing, and in turn, allowed us to be a blessing to the larger community."

Scott St. was one of 80 congregations or other ministries in Canada that received \$1,000 grants or more from the Fund this year to respond to pandemic needs in their communities.

Due to the pandemic, MDS was unable to do its regular programs of repairing

and rebuilding homes for people impacted by natural disasters in the U.S. and Canada. Through the Fund we could support churches on the frontlines of responding to this huge pandemic disaster—supporting their efforts to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities.

Although the pandemic curtailed our regular programs in Canada, and prevented Canadians from going to the U.S. to volunteer, we were able to help flood victims in Fort Vermillion, Alta. clean out their houses, and rebuild one house in 70 Mile House, B.C.—all done following strict health and safety protocols to keep volunteers and members of the community safe.

The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13:13:

"So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love."

During this challenging year we experienced God's faithfulness as we brought hope to people struggling because of disaster, showing them the love of Christ that is in our hearts.

—Ross Penner, Director of Canadian Operations



Bob Ratelle does cleanup in the kitchen at Scott Street Church in St. Catharines, Ont., after making meals made possible by support from the MDS Canada Spirit of MDS Fund.

The MDS budget year runs from August 1 to July 31. In 2019-20, **6,048** volunteers from across Canada and the U.S. gave their time, skills and compassion to build **79** new homes, complete **280** repairs, and finish **91** cleanups for households who experienced a disaster. That volunteer labour was valued at **\$13.6** million. In Canada, we finished up a project rebuilding or repairing **15** houses in Grand Forks, B.C.; built or repaired **5** houses in Renfrew, Ont.; and built two new homes following fires in Marquette, Man. and Newfoundland.



**Mennonite
Disaster
Service**

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