



Disaster Relief

Red Cross aids Ohio residents cleaning up from floods

Tuesday, August 28, 2007 – OTTAWA, OH – When disaster strikes, the American Red Cross is there with emergency relief to help those in need get back on their feet. Some need a dry and safe shelter to stay at, while others need family and individual assistance or mental health counseling. In the case of Jason Walls, all he requested of the Red Cross was some hot meals.

“I’ve got a crew here cleaning up my house on Maple Street,” called in Walls on the phone. “Do you have anything there that I could feed them, so we don’t lose any time cleaning up? I’ve got quite a mess here from the floods.”



Walls offered to come to the American Red Cross kitchen at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Ottawa to pick up the food, but Red Cross volunteer Dale Logan and his partner offered to take a dozen hot meals to Walls’ house. Logan lives in Ottawa and knows the neighborhood where Walls lives.

“They were hit pretty hard there when the Blanchard River overflowed,” he said. “Those houses on the end of Maple Street all back up on the river and had heavy flooding.”

A mountain of flood debris was piled at the end of Walls’ driveway and there were a dozen people in his back yard when Logan arrived with the hot meals. In addition to Walls and his wife there were two “mud out” teams.



The U. S. Department of Agriculture had sent a Rural Development team from Findley and a Youth for Christ crew was there from Paulding. All of them had rubber boots or work boots and their clothes were spattered with mud and plaster from the dirty, hard work they had been doing all morning. The hot meals were very much appreciated.

While Walls devoured his hamburger he told how he had watched the waters from the river come closer and closer to his house in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

“At midnight the water was over the banks of the river and coming across my back yard,” he said. “At 2:00 a.m. it was up to our back porch, and at 6:00 a.m. it was in the house. When my wife and two kids and I left for higher ground the water was chest deep in our street.”

Walls got his family to safety and then came back to help his neighbors evacuate. In all the flooding, no one was injured and none of his neighbors were left behind. Now, in his time of need others have come to help him recover.

“The Red Cross has been wonderful to us and everyone else here in Ottawa,” he added. “It is much more than just these hot meals you’ve brought over. The Red Cross are our neighbors and friends helping us, and we really appreciate the shelter and the kitchen and service center you’re running. Everything you’ve done for all of us here in Ohio is wonderful.”

The “mud out” team of volunteers finished their lunch and went right back to work in the 100-year old house. In only two days they had removed all the furniture, appliances,



carpets and cabinets. There had been three feet of flood waters in the house for more than two days, so using sledge hammers and pry bars the team also removed all the dry wall and insulation from the walls of the house. Load after wheelbarrow load of sodden debris was hauled out to the curb where the mountain of trash grew

to nearly the height of the house. All up and down Maple Street the same operation was underway.

Walls intends to renovate his home and will move back in, but he couldn't have done it without help from his neighbors, community organizations, and the American Red Cross.