

Baptists throw a lifeline to flooded Gainesville

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Texas Baptist Men volunteers Larry Toney of Wichita Falls and Jane Hayes of Whitesboro move boxes of food as the set up to serve meals in Gainesville.

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By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

GAINESVILLE—Duke Dowling, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, admits he doesn't know much about home repair. He can't refurbish the more than 300 flooded homes in his community. He can't even fix the home of the one family in his congregation whose home was swamped. But he knows plenty of people who can.

"I can't build," he said. "But I can go out and find people who can."

In cooperation with volunteers from around the state, Texas Baptists are wrapping their arms around Gainesville in the wake of flooding that killed five people. Baptists were among the first to respond, with local church members feeding victims and collecting items to distribute.

**For more information
on the Texas Baptist
disaster response
effort and how to
support it financially,
visit
www.bgct.org/disaster.**

Texas Baptist Men teams began serving more than 600 meals a day for flood victims and recovery workers. TBM volunteers also are cleaning out victims' homes.

Mark Fuller, minister of discipleship and evangelism at First Baptist Church, is coordinating volunteer teams working in Gainesville. TBM volunteers are surveying houses and letting him know how many volunteers

are needed at each location.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas is working alongside TBM, offering financial assistance for flood victims that are part of BGCT-affiliated congregations. TBM's work and BGCT disaster response efforts are supported through designated disaster relief offerings.

Fuller and Dowling said they are grateful for the assistance Texas Baptists are providing. The help encourages faster recovery in the area and helps congregations expand their ministries in the county.

Christians are called to help each other in times of need because they are children of God, Dowling stressed. The Texas Baptist family is rallying around Gainesville.

"We are the eternal family," he said. "This is your family."

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