

TBM volunteers respond to far-flung disasters

September 26, 2018

From North Carolina to West Texas, Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteers continue to meet needs of families and individuals whose homes have been damaged by high winds, rising water or fallen trees.



A volunteer with a Texas Baptist Men chainsaw team removes a log cut from a tree that had fallen on the home of a North Carolina resident. (TBM Photo / Rand Jenkins)

Chainsaw, mud-out, temporary roofing, emergency food-service, heavy equipment, incident management, shower and laundry teams serve in North Carolina. They are working alongside Baptist volunteers from Oklahoma and Arkansas to offer help to survivors of Hurricane Florence.

Through Sept. 25, TBM volunteers had donated 2,735 volunteer hours in

North Carolina, cooking 467 meals, providing access to 130 showers and washing 74 loads of laundry. They completed seven chainsaw jobs, disinfected surfaces in four homes after removing damaged drywall and installed tarps as temporary roofs on two homes.

In the process, the TBM volunteers made 365 personal contacts and distributed 36 Bibles.

Removing fallen trees from homes

Wendell Romans and a 13-member chainsaw crew from Collin Baptist Association removed fallen trees from Janet Setzer's home in Arapaho, N.C.



A TBM chainsaw team member performs treetop ministry in North Carolina. (TBM Photo / Rand Jenkins)

“One of them came down on the house and took a power line out,” Romans said. “The power line was underneath the tree, and the power company wouldn’t come out and reinstall it until the tree was removed.”

Hurricane Florence hit when Setzer was at a hospital, attending to her

husband who was recovering from a heart attack and pneumonia. A neighbor called to tell her about the tree that had fallen on the roof of the Setzers' home.

"I was so stressed out," she said. "I was spending my days and nights at the hospital, not knowing what to do, thinking it would be forever before we could get back into the house."

Setzer's mother contacted Scott Fitzgerald, pastor of Bayboro Baptist Church in Bayboro, N.C. His congregation housed the TBM disaster relief volunteers and served as their base of operations.

The TBM crew successfully removed the tree from the Setzers' home, and the utilities were scheduled to be reinstalled.

"Honestly, it's been a lifesaver," Setzer said.



Members of a TBM chainsaw crew from Collin Baptist Association led by Wendell Romans (center, blue cap) gather around a cross they cut from the stump of a cedar tree in the yard of homeowner Janet Setzer. (TBM Photo / Rand Jenkins)

Before the TBM crew completed its work, some of the volunteers fashioned

a cross from the stump of a cedar tree in her yard. When the team presented her a Bible at the end of their time together, neither she nor they could hold back tears.

“The blessings that come from the Lord both ways—to the client and to us—are just phenomenal,” Romans said.

Homes flooded in Sonora, churches damaged

Meanwhile, other TBM crews responded to needs closer to home when more than 200 homes flooded in Sonora, about 65 miles south of San Angelo.

“The county judge asked us to feed about 1,800 meals a day,” said Dwain Carter, TBM statewide deputy director of disaster relief.

The educational building at First Baptist Church in Sonora flooded, but a company from San Angelo removed all the damaged drywall and took care of mold mitigation promptly, enabling the TBM crew to be housed at the church and set up its shower and laundry units there, said Bill Blackwell from Canyon Lake, on-site director for disaster relief.

Floodwaters also damaged the church facility and parsonage of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Sonora.

“We need to get the parsonage cleaned out,” Blackwell said. “They’re a fairly small congregation, and if we can get the job done right away, they will meet for services there in the house on Sunday.”

Local TBM flood-recovery volunteers also responded to needs in Oak Leaf, a community about 10 miles north of Waxahachie.

To contribute financially, send a check designated “disaster relief” to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas, TX 75227, call (214) 275-1116 or click [here](#).

Texas Baptist Men Communications Officer Rand Jenkins contributed to this report, reporting from North Carolina.