



All Disasters Are Local

..... RESPOND!

by Mark Gauthier,
Director of Mobilizing Churches

LARGE OR SMALL, EVERY DISASTER RESPONSE MUST BEGIN LOCALLY.

Each time SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief (DR) volunteers attend training, they hear: all disasters are local—respond! There are many disasters that, in the greater scheme of things, may be overlooked or seen as just a small storm—but for those affected, they are just as devastating as Hurricane Katrina or an earthquake.

In late November, just down the road from Enon Baptist Church in Chester, one such disaster occurred. A large tree fell, barely missing the home of a single lady. The root ball measured over seven feet high. Pastor Doug Echols from Enon knocked on her door to see if there was anything the church could do to help, but there was no answer. He then called the DR team leaders from his church, Carl and Bonnie Perry, and asked them to check on her too. When the Perrys stopped by, the owner answered the door. She could not believe there were trained volunteers willing to cut up the tree, move the brush to the woods, and salvage the good wood for firewood. The Perrys took time to pray with her and, with tears in her eyes, she said they could work on her tree. The entire community had been watching this tree, just waiting for it to fall, but no one else had offered to help.

Nine chainsaw-team members from Enon Baptist and Swift Creek Baptist in Midlothian finished 95% of the tree in one day and returned a second day to finish the job, cutting it down to the roots. The Enon Baptist family also delivered food to their new friend. When the homeowner called the Perrys to say “thank you,” she said, “no one could have done a better job.” Although the homeowner works on Sundays, the Perrys hope she will visit Enon soon—if not, they’ll be back at her door, telling her God has sent them again to give her the “Best News.”



Several other churches’ DR teams have similar stories of helping with local disasters. Whether large or small, every disaster response must begin locally. If your church responds and finds it is unable to meet a need, email disasterrelief@sbcv.org, and additional teams can be deployed to minister to your community.

RESOURCE

■ **Website:**
www.sbcv.org/disaster_relief

■ **SBCV Contact:**
disasterrelief@sbcv.org

■ **Prayer:**
Pray for the local church to have a strong impact in its community.