

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**TEXAS BAPTIST MEN COMBINES PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL RELIEF IN HARVEY RECOVERY***TBM unites statewide efforts to donate supplies, manpower toward ongoing Hurricane Harvey recovery*

When 9-year-old Madison Parks heard radio reports about the Hurricane Harvey victims for whom her family had prayed, she told her father, James Parks, wouldn't it be great if we could give all those people Bibles? And Mr. Parks knew just who to contact. He set up a GoFundMe called "Madison's Bibles for Flood Victims" at gofundme.com/madisonsbiblesforflood, helping his daughter to raise more than \$350 for Bibles to send to Texas Baptist Men for distribution in disaster areas.

With the organization's reputation for uniting volunteers and coordinating resources in response to disasters and national emergencies, Mr. Parks said he knew his donation would be in good hands.

"They are known to be people who get their hands dirty and get in and really help firsthand with these sorts of events," Parks said. "They don't shy away from doing this, because they are Christians and want to share the Gospel. We're believers, and we think that's critical. It should drive everything we do, and it should be a part of how we respond to people in need."

In Victoria, TBM Instant Commander Alan Fires oversees disaster relief units. On Thursday, Fires said TBM units already had addressed 244 of the more than 600 work orders sent their way. Units based in Northside Baptist Church and First Baptist Church-Victoria have worked in shifts to help the public wash laundry, clean out flooded homes, begin mold remediation, clear debris, and tarp damaged roofs, among other crucial services.

Donations of man hours, Bibles, and supplies, in addition to financial support, enable TBM's continued support in recovery efforts. Fires said, at every finished job, TBM units present a Bible signed by all team members who worked on the site.

"We always say that we're working a disaster as long as we have resources, whether we run out of people or we run out of money, so we really appreciate all the people that have donated," Fires said. "Our primary objective is ministry here. We're trying to help the people out, but we're also trying to do like Jesus did and spread the Gospel by helping people out. Our motto is, 'a cup of cold water in Jesus' name,' so our primary motivation is ministry, but we also pride ourselves in getting a lot of work done, as far as helping the individuals out."

Also in Victoria, Texas, TBM Chaplain Steve Price, who additionally served in asset protection, saw firsthand the

benefit of TBM's practical and missional disaster response.

"The spiritual component seems to be where, as the term is, 'rubber meets the road,' where you're impacting lives," Price said. "The fact that you merely come to them in an hour of need and, in turn, you meet that need, but you're doing it for no other reason than to honor God, because you love the Lord and want to show his love to others—people feel that immediately."

Flower Mound business owner Laura Sparks, owner of Southern Life Forever, witnessed TBM's work ethic and ministry on Sunday.

Knowing livestock owners in hurricane-impacted regions faced a desperate shortage of supplies to care for their animals, Sparks planned to pull two bales at a time behind her personal vehicle, donating them to individuals in need. She contacted TBM, who connected her with Dennis Hochgraber, willing to donate his time and rig to transport supplies. The two partnered with Landmark Retrievers business owner Conant Rogers, and the team set out to deliver a load of hay to Doguet Turf Farm in Beaumont, Texas, which served as a supply hub for local farmers. They then continued to make a direct supply drop to a farmer in Port Arthur.

"As we approached Port Arthur, we could feel the heaviness in the air, for what the people of South Texas had experienced," Sparks said in a written statement. "The smell of mildew was thick as smog, and you could see the wreckage of people's homes, and their life's possessions piled up debris on the curb. It was one of the most humbling things I have ever seen."

She said she hopes attention can be brought back to the devastation wreaked by Harvey in the state of Texas and the recovery efforts of Texas Baptist Men.

"Although the cameras and news crews have left South Texas, there remains much work to be done," Sparks said.

Individuals may continue to donate toward TBM's Hurricane Harvey relief efforts by visiting TexasBaptistMen.org.

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Photographs, additional information, interviews, and full written statement by Laura Sparks are available upon request.