



CHARLES H. JONES FAMILY DISASTER RELIEF CENTER

MNA Disaster Response has purchased a large campus in Rome GA and is in process of renovating it to become a disaster readiness hub. The purpose is to warehouse large quantities of disaster response supplies & equipment, and to provide a permanent training center where volunteers gain proficiency in disaster response mercy ministry.

Why do we need a warehouse?

MNA Disaster Response is charged by the Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly (PCA) with coordinating response to disasters in the United States and Canada. We have responded to every major disaster since 2003 and coordinated responses in 22 states. We have mobilized in excess of 110,000 PCA volunteers and have assisted in the rebuilding of 19 churches.

During this time of record mobilization we have confirmed our most urgent need as capacity to preposition supplies and equipment in advance of disaster events so as to better equip the PCA grassroots network of disaster first responders. This network of relief providers is greatly multiplying; however, ***a constant refrain is the demonstrated lag in response time immediately after a new disaster event before relief can be provided because commonly needed equipment and supplies are not on hand or are in short supply.*** With each new disaster MNA must begin a fresh appeal process to gather tools, equipment and supplies necessary to establish and provide sustaining support to new worksites; sometimes this process can take weeks or longer.

A centrally located warehouse equipped with critically needed items can easily support an initial response, then quickly transition into a central collection point to gather and redistribute items necessary to stand up longer term operations. MNA Disaster Response typically responds to anywhere from four to six major disaster events each year, mobilizes 10,000 volunteers, and conducts national or regional training events.

Why Rome?

Northwest Georgia/Southeast Tennessee was originally identified as the target location to establish the warehouse since it is central to a large number of PCA churches and is within eight hours of most everywhere that MNA DR has established operations since 2003. This area has easy access to major interstate highways, including I-75, I-85, I-59, I-20, and I-24, and is unlikely to take a direct hit from a hurricane.

Why not establish regional warehouses?

Right! We have a vision to do just that, but we need to begin somewhere. The Charles H. Jones Family Disaster Relief Center will become the central hub and a model for other such centers; a model that can be developed as God provides the resources.

How will the warehouse be used?

Warehousing large quantities of the following items:

Tools - including muck out tools like electric and gas powered water pumps and generators, wheelbarrows, shovels, buckets, dehumidifiers, circulation fans, etc. Gutting tools like sledge hammers, pry bars, brooms. Rebuilding tools such as air compressors, nail guns, all sorts of hand tools, generators, skill saws, scaffolds, walk boards, ladders, portable light trees, etc.

Supplies - including building materials to stabilize and secure family and church owned properties, including church buildings, schools, ministry locations. Lumber, plywood, nails and screws, sheetrock, sheetrock mud, light fixtures, basic cabinetry, roofing shingles, rolled roofing, FEMA tarps, rope, etc. Non-perishable food staples, toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates, personal hygiene items, diapers, cleaning supplies of all kinds. Pre-constructed Sheds of Hope components.

Large equipment storage - such as Bobcats, shower trailers, lowboys, delivery trucks, and specialized first responder trailers, e.g., food canteens, chainsaw, muck out, gutting and blue tarping, and long-term recovery / rebuilding units.

MNA has been blessed by a large mobilization of high school youth groups, RUF and other college students and young adults who respond to our call to serve at our established worksites. While younger volunteers have the energy and desire to serve, most do not have access to the necessary tools or financial resources necessary to join in relief efforts. With a minimal amount of pre-positioned supplies and equipment these teams can be a great blessing as they accomplish debris cleanup, engage in muck outs and gut outs, undertake blue-roofing, and undertake other Spirit led deeds of mercy.

When storms arrive in cities, supplies are quickly purchased leaving many families without and limiting the amount of help our sister churches can provide while reaching out in storm affected communities. Volunteers arriving fully equipped and supplied makes a huge impact to reach storm damaged communities.

Production of Relief Kits:

The campus will also be a production facility to assemble several types of relief kits. Individuals and church teams will volunteer to assemble these kits which will include:

Hygiene Kits - include vitally needed essentials, including women's health items, for basic personal care and first-aid for the storm-affected.

School Kits - include the essential items students need to return to school in the aftermath of disasters. School bags, which are produced by volunteers, hold these essential items.

Bedding Kits - include pillows, pillow cases, sheets, and a blanket that are vacuum-packed. This provides a source of comfort for the displaced individuals.

Flood Buckets - also known as cleaning kits, are five gallon buckets assembled with scouring pads, bleach, detergent, disinfectant, clothesline, clothespins, dust masks, gloves, trash bags, etc. which enables the property owners to begin the overwhelming process of cleaning up after a flood, hurricane, or tornado.

Sheds of Hope (SOH) Kits - are 8 x 8 shed (yard barn) kits. SOH provide property owners a place to secure their salvaged earthly belongings as well as supplies for repairs and rebuilding. To date these sheds have been built from scratch on the property of those who have been catastrophically affected by disaster. Although more than 1,000 SOH have been built, the kits to build these sheds were in short supply and hard to acquire after the disaster happened which greatly delayed our ability to get this much needed resource to those who desperately needed it. Production at the warehouse will facilitate a faster and better response by training and equipping churches in SOH kit production and storage resulting in kits that are ready to go prior to a disaster event. Disaster response volunteers would have immediate access to pre-assembled kits expediting getting this resource in place much more quickly for those in need.

Training. A permanent home will be established for disaster response training and education. Static training-aids will be constructed, allowing participants to get the training they need to become first responders and long-term recovery volunteers.

How can individuals and churches participate?

We are praying with deep desire for your participation in the following ways.

Staff Positions: The warehouse will be operated by MNA Disaster Response staff, called to this work as missionaries in the same manner as our entire MNA Disaster Response team. Could God be calling you to the front lines of providing relief to hurting people by using your management and organizational skills? If you would like to know more please let us know.

Volunteering: We depend on volunteers regularly serving at the warehouse, especially in the early days of new responses. Opportunities exist for individuals and church mission teams, including second career folks, and youth teams to volunteer by assisting with warehouse operations, relief-kit assembly, grounds maintenance, and with delivery of supplies and equipment to established worksites. This is a perfect opportunity for churches that are located in the Birmingham, Atlanta, and Chattanooga area. Since the warehouse is nearby and within 120 miles, day trips may be preferred. For teams further away, over-nighting is an option. Many hotels are within a few miles and other options exist with local churches.

Financial Partnership: We appreciate your support. Please prayerfully consider adding the warehouse to your yearly budget or making a one-time gift. We are currently appealing for 52 permanent donors that will each designate \$1,000 a year to purchase one week of our fixed cost operations budget. Would you prayerfully consider hosting one week of our fixed cost to operate the warehouse?