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FROM THE STATES: Louisiana Baptist donate respirators; Texas church provides groceries

by Staff, posted Wednesday, March 25, 2020 (one month ago)

Louisiana Baptists donate respirators

By Message Staff

NEW ORLEANS (BP) -- Louisiana Baptists have donated 10,000 N95 respirators to help Ochsner Medical Center near New Orleans and about 14,000 more to other medical centers around the state to help in the fight against COVID-19.



John Hebert, Louisiana Baptists missions and ministry team director, told the Baptist Message he was honored to put to use disaster relief materials previously donated to help Louisiana Baptists respond after floods, hurricanes and other natural and manmade disasters. The N95 respirators are typically used by Louisiana Baptist volunteers to help in high dust operations like removing dried mud in clean-up operations and during different phases of reconstruction such as drywall sanding, etc.

The respirators, which offer crucial protection for health care workers, are in short supply as the COVID-19 pandemic worsens. President Trump issued a personal plea for construction companies and other organizations to donate what they can to hospitals facing shortages while manufacturers speed up the supply lines.

The respirators were delivered to Ochsner Hospital's facilities March 18.

"We are doing everything we know to do to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and to minister to the needs of the sick everywhere," Hebert said. "We had a stockpile of N95 respirators that we have been drawing down since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"God knew we would need them one day, and I'm happy He did preserve them for a time like this," he continued. "I just pray getting those masks to Ochsner Hospital saves someone's life."

Through March 25, Louisiana has a reported 1,388 cases of COVID-19 and has seen 46 deaths from the disease, according to the Louisiana Department of Health.

Texas church offers grocery relief during pandemic

By Staff

LONGVIEW, Texas (BP) -- More than 100 at-risk families in Longview, Texas, have had one less thing to worry about in the last few days -- how to acquire groceries during the COVID-19 pandemic. New Beginnings Baptist Church plans to ramp up its Grocery Relief Program to help 200 families each week throughout the crisis.

"There are kids and families who are being directly impacted by the coronavirus in ways that we cannot even imagine," George Willis, pastor of missions and pastoral care said.

Facebook: "We see in the Gospels that Jesus runs to those who are sick. He meets the needs of those who are hurting. As Christians we do not run from the sick, we run toward them. And in times of crisis, we do not hoard our possessions, but we share them.

As he has helped get the program going, Willis has seen single parents, elderly people and widows trying to make adjustments to a new living situation without leaving their homes.

"When you donate groceries or come help volunteer to assemble and distribute groceries, the food goes to people who truly need the help," he said.

New Beginnings is partnering with three local school districts to deliver food to 128 children enrolled in the schools' Backpack Program while schools are closed. The program serves children who are at risk of going hungry on weekends and during the holidays. School staff identifies children who show signs of hunger and malnutrition and discreetly distribute a backpack of food for them to take home.

Word about the free groceries is spreading in the community. Courtney Bill, a school nurse, said she could not leave home because she was sick. The groceries were a welcome relief.

"I got sick, and my doctor told me to stay at home and monitor the symptoms," Bill said. "I reached out to the church. When they dropped the groceries off, they prayed for us through our window. It was great to know you have a church family that's there for you when you need them," she said.

Todd Kaunitz, lead pastor of New Beginnings, said the church has always been a place of hope and help in times of crisis.

"We see in the Gospels that Jesus runs to those who are sick," Kaunitz said. "He meets the needs of those who are hurting. As Christians we do not run from the sick, we run toward them. And in times of crisis, we do not hoard our possessions, but we share them.

"We want our community to know that we are here for them and we love them. Our desire is to serve them in this time of crisis.

