

SHARING

newsletter

Kenya church meets needs in wake of East Africa drought

By Elizabeth Truong

A severe drought and resulting famine has gripped the Horn of Africa since mid-summer. The worst drought in 60 years has caused a severe food crisis in and beyond the borders of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. For the first time in 30 years, the United Nations officially declared a state of famine in southern Somalia on July 20. Many Somalis have fled across the border to Kenya and Ethiopia, where refugees live in extremely crowded camps that are filled far beyond their intended capacity.

Through the merciful support of LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) donors, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK) has provided desperately needed food rations to refugees in northeast Kenya. Fleeing to Kenya in search of food and water, these refugees leave desperate situations in their home country. ELCK Bishop Walter Obare explained that many are near the point of death. He wrote, "The food shortage is very critical — some of the needy people have spent two days without eating. The food rations provided are hardly sufficient to meet their needs and only last two or three days."

Through a grant of \$140,000 from WR-HC, the ELCK has provided maize, beans, rice, sugar, cooking oil, nutritional supplements and water to suffering families in nine different Kenyan counties. The food and items were distributed to approximately 10,000 people, both members and non-members of the ELCK. Lutherans helping in the aid distribution had the opportunity to speak the Gospel while carrying out these acts of mercy.

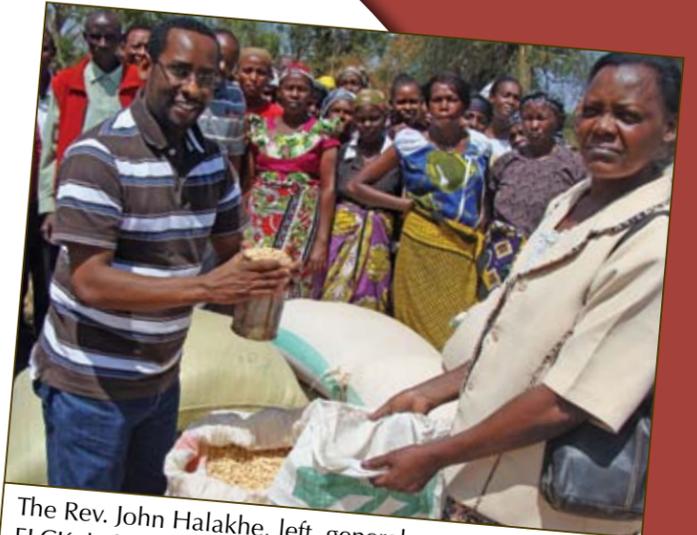
Obare explained that due to the drought, the people have been cut off from the normal water sources such as shallow wells, which have all dried up. Families not only have to limit water consumption for themselves, but also are forced to make difficult decisions about feeding and watering their livestock, which they depend on for long-term survival and income.

The current situation is physically separating families as mothers must travel several days' journey to find water and fathers are often forced to move on to the mountain regions of Kenya or into Ethiopia in an effort to find fertile pastures for their livestock.

With the water and food supplies provided through the WR-HC grant, more families can carry out their daily tasks together. The refugees can focus on securing long-term food supplies and make plans for where they might live and work when they move on from the camps.

Rev. John Halakhe, general secretary of the ELCK, helped distribute food supplies to a Lutheran school in Kitui and noted, "The kids were very happy to receive the food. I was told they did not have lunch prepared for them in the school for nearly a week due to the drought."

Join LCMS World Relief and Human Care in giving thanks for its generous donors and the partnership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya. Pray that the Lord would ease the suffering of the millions of lives affected by this historic famine, and that those who receive food and water might be



The Rev. John Halakhe, left, general secretary of the ELCK, helps distribute maize at a congregation in the Kitui parish.



ELCK Bishop Walter Obare visits with children and villagers in the Lenkishon area of Kajiado County, where there is an ELCK congregation that received food and water.

assured of God's love in Christ for them in this difficult time.

To learn more about mercy work around the world, visit www.lcms.org/worldrelief.

Give God Glory...

... for Maria, Billy and Rebekah, the grandchildren of Carole Sager of Mequon, Wis.

Maria, Billy and Rebekah came up with the idea to host a lemonade and cookie stand in their grandparents' front yard one Friday in June. The fliers they distributed advertised that all proceeds would go toward tornado disaster relief through LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

Through their efforts, \$157 was raised, which Carole sent in to go toward tornado relief ministry. She writes, "It was a good lesson for the grandchildren and we thank God for the generosity of our neighbors and friends."



Billy, left, and Maria, prepare the cookies that they sold to earn money for giving to LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

How Your Gifts Support LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You can help make projects like these possible with your continuing or new gifts to "Where Needed Most." Please use the envelope provided in this issue to send your gift to help LCMS World Relief and Human Care continue to reach out with Christ's mercy around the world. (Note: Thanks to your generous gifts, this publication may occasionally feature projects that have been fully funded.)

The mission of the church through LCMS World Relief and Human Care is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith.

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Youth serve from rooftops to campsites

By Kim Krull

“The hands and feet of God.” That’s how a single mother in Tuscola County, Mich., describes the young people who put a new roof on the house where she was using blankets to absorb the leaking rainfall.

This servant event, coordinated by St. Paul Lutheran Church in Caro, Mich., is one of many such events where LCMS ministries provide opportunities for youth to serve as the body of Christ, sharing their gifts and His love. This year, LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) awarded \$20,000 through a block grant to LCMS Youth Ministry to help fund 13 servant events.

Here’s a sampling of three servant opportunities already back on tap for next year.

For more information about these and other LCMS Servant Events, visit <http://servantevents.lcms.org>.

“Fixin’ Up the Thumb” in Michigan

Six homes were repaired through this longtime event that helps elderly, disabled and needy families in Tuscola County. “You guys have been the hands and feet of God, and met a need that I had no way of doing,” said Lian Mowry, the single mother whose family is among those now living under a new roof. The June 18-26 event marked the 16th year St. Paul in Caro was transformed into a work camp for students who travel from various states to serve in Michigan’s “Thumb” region, east of Saginaw. Along with helping homeowners, youth also took part in Bible studies and fellowship that nurture spiritual growth.

Shepherding Campers in Illinois

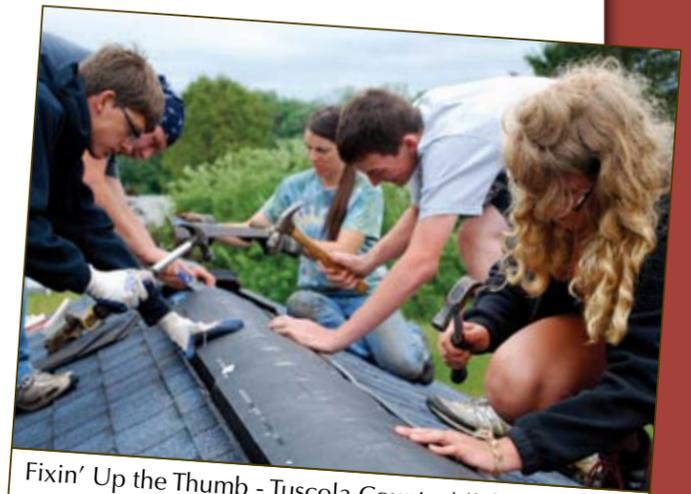
Campers trek to Camp Wartburg in Waterloo, Ill., throughout the year, but one of the most popular programs is the annual Shepherding Sheep outing for teens and adults with

disabilities. As always, young volunteers played key roles in this year’s event, May 29–June 3, serving as around-the-clock companions for 76 participants with mental and physical challenges. Activities included fishing, canoeing and hiking in the southwestern Illinois woods. The WR-HC grant helped make the camp, operated by Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois, affordable for participants, including many who live in group homes and residential facilities. Judging from the happy faces of both campers and their companions, it’s a priceless opportunity for all.

Tackling Construction in Idaho

An Idaho widow on a fixed income also got a new roof as one of a multitude of projects tackled this summer when more than 600 youngsters lent a hand in that state. Through its Idaho Servant Adventures, Lutherhaven Ministries matched youth with needs in the economically depressed Silver Valley, says project coordinator Clint Kunze, helping people with disabilities, the homebound, the elderly and more. The ministry used the WR-HC grant to buy materials to replace the roof on the home of Karen North. “What a joy it was to visit with Karen, as all of her grandkids were running all around the house . . .,” says Kunze, director at the ministry’s Shoshone Base Camp near Coeur d’Alene, in a project report. “It is neat to see God work on hearts and bring together His body to fill the very real needs here in the world.”

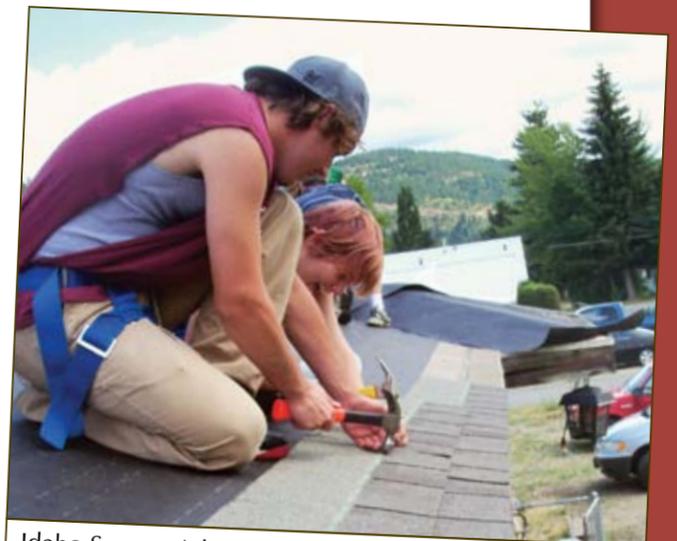
For information about WR-HC grant programs, contact Barb Hoffmann, manager, Grant Administration, at barb.hoffmann@lcms.org or 800-248-1930, ext. 1386.



Fixin’ Up the Thumb - Tuscola County, Mich.



Shepherding Sheep - Camp Wartburg in Waterloo, Ill.



Idaho Servant Adventures - Silver Valley, Idaho

From the Executive Director

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! For His mercy endures forever (Psalm 136:1).

A recent flight above flood-ravaged land provided me an opportunity for prayerful reflection and thanks giving to our Lord for you. I was returning from Minot, N.D., where LCMS pastors and congregational leaders gathered with me to assess the ongoing needs in the community from the unprecedented floods of June 26. I was still trying to comprehend what I saw: 4,100 homes destroyed, more than 12,000 residents forced to become boarders in rescue centers, hotels, and as long-term guests in the homes of gracious Minot residents. Twenty-five percent of an entire progressive city literally flooded into chaos! “Lord, have mercy!” was my silent prayer as I listened to the stories of those who lost everything and of those who work tirelessly to care for their spiritual and physical needs.

As the plane bounced along through mild turbulence, I was deep in thought and prayer for the people of Minot and for those who continue to experience the turbulent effects of hurricanes, tornados and the drought in East Africa. I turned my Bible to the Psalms and read Psalm 136. I began to laugh — there was the answer to my prayer — the Lord’s mercy endures forever! In this psalm of 26 verses, the Holy Spirit reminds us of God’s enduring mercy 26 times.

During this season of giving thanks, thank God for His mercy that endures in the midst of all suffering. This same mercy caused God to send His only begotten Son, Jesus, to atone for your sin and give you life. His mercy endures through Word and Sacrament and manifests itself through people caring for their neighbor in need.

I am thankful that Christ’s enduring mercy gives our donors a compassion that leads to action. Your generosity has been incredible. 2011 has seen more than its share of various needs in the United States and throughout the world. In the midst of it all, the God of all comfort uses you to bring tangible mercy and relief to others. Thank you for your support through prayer, volunteering and financial donations.

A blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas celebration to you and to your family.

Rev. John A. Fale
Interim Co-Executive Director, Office of International Mission
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