



THUNDER BAY FLOOD

On May 27, 2012, heavy rain led to extensive flooding in northwestern Ontario. The City of Thunder Bay and some of the surrounding communities were particularly hard hit, leading the City to declare a state of emergency. For several days, the heavy rain continued, and many homes were left with one and a half metres of water and sewage in their basements.

Up to five thousand homes were affected, including hundreds that sustained serious loss and major damage. For residents living in basement apartments, the flood destroyed nearly all of their belongings. Many people were forced to leave their homes as the sewage backup created health risks.

The flooding caused such devastation that it warranted a large response – in fact, it was the largest Red Cross response in Ontario in the last decade. In 18 days, more than 160 Red Cross staff and volunteers logged more than 14,000 hours providing support and assistance to the families affected by the flood.



RED CROSS RESPONSE

The Canadian Red Cross responds to thousands of emergencies across the country every year and is recognized for its expertise in emergency response. Immediately following the flood in Thunder Bay, the Red Cross provided vital assistance for people's basic needs, including shelter, clothing, food, first aid, information, family reunification and assistance in finding support.

Working in cooperation with first responders, the City of Thunder Bay and other community organizations, the Red Cross established two shelters with shower facilities, an Information Centre and phone support line, three Assessment Centres where families could receive immediate aid, and a Disaster Response Unit that delivered almost 500 clean-up kits. Red Cross volunteers also went door to door to hundreds of homes in the hardest hit areas to determine the needs of the residents and ensure they receive assistance. In total, the Red Cross provided support to approximately 2,150 Thunder Bay residents.

The scale of this response required the assistance of more than 160 Red Cross volunteers, some of whom travelled from as far away as Vancouver and Newfoundland to assist their fellow Canadians. While the floodwaters have receded, it will take many more months for the community to recover from this disaster.



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RED CROSS RESPONSE by the numbers:

“The flood in Thunder Bay was the largest disaster in Ontario in the past decade. The Red Cross is truly grateful for the cooperation and generosity of everyone who responded and helped to meet the needs of the affected families.”

Ron Kelusky, Director-General, Ontario Zone

- **162** Number of Red Cross volunteers & staff deployed
- **14,378** Total Red Cross volunteer & staff hours
- **1,649** Inquiries answered at the Information Centre and on the Red Cross Phone Support Line
- **2,149** Total number of individuals assisted
- **379** Number of vulnerable clients identified and provided with more extensive assistance
- **381** Total number of homes with major damage
- **999** Assessments completed
- **924** Hygiene kits distributed
- **489** Cleanup kits distributed

Thank you for your generosity

Thanks to the generous response of Canadians, the Red Cross was able to quickly respond to the immediate needs of the affected families in Thunder Bay. More than \$300,000 was received from Red Cross donors, which will be matched two to one by the Province of Ontario through the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program. These donations enabled us to provide shelter, clothing, cleanup kits and other support in the aftermath of the flood. In addition, more than \$45,000 of in-kind donations were received – from food and personal goods to vehicles for transporting our volunteers. Return flights for 40 Red Cross disaster response volunteers from across Canada were also donated.

Donations will also be used to provide assistance for longer-term recovery. The Red Cross will remain in close communication with local leaders to help the community over the next several months while the affected families get back on their feet.

As always, the Canadian Red Cross will continue to honour the intention of its donors and ensure that the funds are used in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Red Cross to help the people affected by this disaster.

Thank you for entrusting the Canadian Red Cross with your generous donation.

For more information on how your support has made a difference for families in Thunder Bay, please visit www.redcross.ca.



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