

Appreciates community's support for storm victims

WELLBURN ORGANIZES RELIEF EFFORT

Loaded transport truck heads to Eastern Ontario

Food, firewood among items sent from area churches

By Pat Payton
STAFF REPORTER

Two good samaritans left Wellburn United Church Sunday evening with a transport truck full of food, supplies and firewood for the Brockville area.

Driving the truck and 45-foot transport trailer to Eastern Ontario were Ian McKay and Pat Switzer. Their destination was 20 miles outside of Brockville.

"I just know it's a small centre, because the church that we're going to is smaller than Wellburn's," Switzer, who helped organize the collection effort along with McKay and Jean McRoberts, said Sunday afternoon.

Switzer said she and McKay would be returning Monday evening or sometime Tuesday.

Eastern Ontario and Quebec residents are still recovering from

what's being called the worst ice storm in Canadian history. As of Monday, 240,000 customers in Quebec and another 24,000 in Ontario were still without hydro power.

Members of the Wellburn Pastoral Charge were responsible for doing the lion's share of the col-

'If anything, it's really pulled the community together . . .'

Pat Switzer

lecting and packing on the weekend, Switzer noted.

Loads of firewood continued to arrive Sunday afternoon, keeping a large group of volunteers busy loading the wood into the trans-

Dear Editor:

On Thursday, January 15 my friend Patsy Switzer of Wellburn called me to ask if I was ready to volunteer my time once again to help our fellow Canadians. (I first met Patsy last summer, when she was one of the 40 volunteers who went out to Manitoba with my husband and me to help clean up after the flood.)

I told her I would help in any way I could, and what did she need? She was arranging for a transport truck loaded full of supplies to head to Lyn, Ontario, a small farming community just west of Brockville. She asked if I could make a few phone calls and round up some supplies and donations if possible.

Well, a few phone calls to friends and family started a telephone chain. Within three days we collected more than \$1,600 in cash as well as more than \$1,000 worth of groceries sitting in my laundry room.

I am writing this letter to say

Thank You. Thank you to my good friend, Marlene Coulthard, and her fellow parishioners at Parkview United Church, to Elaine Thomson and her fellow parishioners at Harrington Presbyterian Church, to the staff at Versa Care Centre, to my

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daughters Mary Anne and Brenda and their fellow co-workers and friends, to Jack Matthison for helping me with phone calls to his neighbours and friends, as well as the St. Pauls WI for standing behind me and all my family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances for all your generous donations and support.

A very special thank you to Paul Oldford at Lori Jo Knechtel Food Market and Terry and Jill Funston

at Work World for your generous contributions of food, gloves and socks on our shopping expedition Sunday morning. Your kindness overwhelmed us. Thank you also to Canadian Tire.

The transport truck donated by Hutton Feed Mill left Wellburn United Church late Sunday afternoon loaded right full of food, baby supplies, toiletry items, firewood and two generators. I have yet to talk to Patsy to see how it was received on the other end. I'm sure it would have been worth it to see those people's faces. We had heard that the army had arrived on Saturday, January 17 to start helping them out and that they were feeding more than 400 people per day.

I can't thank everyone enough and if I forgot to mention someone, thank you to you too.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Betty Vink
RR2, St. Pauls

Wellburn United organizes relief effort

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port trailer. Half of the trailer going east was filled with firewood, Switzer pointed out.

Among the other items collected on Saturday and Sunday at Wellburn United included:

Baby food, diapers, batteries, flashlights, candles, matches, cereals, deodorant, fruit, hair accessories, juice, canned meats, paper towels, soap, peanut butter, shampoo, soups, beans, toilet paper, toothpaste and brushes, rice and pasta, medications, cleaning supplies, paper plates and cups, pickles, jams, water, cookies, canned milk, tea and coffee, motor oil, extension cords and gas cans.

"We found out (Sunday) morning that they need 10W-40 motor oil," Switzer noted. "It's everything and anything."

Five generators and two kerosene heaters were also on Sunday's east-bound truck.

Phoned former minister

Pat Switzer said the idea for the relief effort drive came about a couple of different ways.

"We were listening to a radio station (last week) and Chalmers Presbyterian Church (in London) was getting really motivated and they were sending a truck out that night," she recalled.

Switzer then phoned Jean Baker, a former Wellburn minister, now living in the Brockville area.

"Jean told me what was happening down there. She had just gotten her hydro back (Jan. 12). She's said she's got people who will be without hydro for another two, three, four weeks.

"They are in desperate need for a lot of things, and I asked her what kinds of things they needed. She gave me a list and I said, 'let me see what I can do.'

"I then phoned (Rev.) Reink (Vlietstra) and asked him if we could use the (Wellburn) church and he said 'yes.' And that's how it all started."

Switzer said the next step was phoning all the churches in the area. Those contributing to the cause included: Wellburn, Lakeside, Union, Thorndale, Browns, North Nissouri

and South Nissouri Presbyterian.

"A lot of it has been word of mouth because it started Thursday morning," she said. "We phoned the different groups, and they would in turn phone their groups."

'Overwhelming' response

Pat Switzer said the response to their effort has been "overwhelming."

"When we first started, we maybe expected a pick-up truck, one load of goods to go down . . . but it has just mushroomed. We've had pick-up trucks bringing loads in here. Things have been changing and evolving as we've gone along," she said Sunday afternoon.

"If anything, it's really pulled the community together because I think people wanted to do something but they didn't know how to do it. This was one way of getting together."

Switzer and McRoberts are both members of the Wellburn United Church, while McKay is a member of the St. Marys Presbyterian Church.

It's second time in the past year

that Switzer has travelled to an area affected by a natural disaster. Last spring, her and daughters Pam and Gayle journeyed to Manitoba to help flood victims.

Prior to that, Gayle Switzer travelled with United Church members on the Bluefields expedition to Nicaragua.

"Once you get that bug, it just seems that you want to keep helping," Pat Switzer commented. "It's kind of got in the blood now, so you want to start doing things."

Staffen's Food Market in St. Marys had a box at the store for customers to place items in for the trip to the Eastern Ontario.

Ian McKay donated his trailer for the trip, and Hutton Farm Supplies, a Terra Industries business, supplied the truck and all the fuel.

If more supplies arrive at Wellburn church this week, Pat Switzer said they'll be given to the Salvation Army for distribution.

"We worked with them when we were out in Winnipeg and they're fantastic," she said.