

For Immediate Release

## **Operation Blessing International & City of Norfolk To Launch “Snow Buddy” Program To Help Residents Needing Snow Removal**

### **Phone Hotline Set Up For Residents Needing Help: 757.274.8650**

NORFOLK, VA (January 30, 2014) – The Virginia Beach-based humanitarian organization Operation Blessing International has partnered with the City of Norfolk for a “Snow Buddy” volunteer program to help residents who need snow removal but do not have the resources or ability to do so.

This is in response to a major snowstorm that hit the region on Tuesday night, which left up to ten inches of snow on the ground and frigid temperatures in its wake.

Operation Blessing will coordinate the volunteer effort and take work order requests from residents. The charity is deploying its disaster relief staff from its Virginia Beach headquarters and will also be utilizing some of its heavy equipment including a Cat loader, skid steers and other equipment.

Volunteers are needed Friday and Saturday to help remove snow from homes in the city. Operation Blessing has established telephone hotlines for residents who need help, as well as for people who wish to volunteer to help. The information is as follows:

#### **RESIDENTS WHO NEED HELP**

If you need assistance with shoveling snow from your door step, driveway, and/or residential area and do not have the resources to accomplish this yourself, we can help based on available volunteer labor.

**Please either call: 757.274.8650 or, if possible, come in person to fill out a work request for**

**FREE volunteer help at the following location:**

**Operation Blessing Mobile Command Center, located at**

**Lowes parking lot at 1081 N Military Hwy, Norfolk**

\*All homeowners must sign a work order form and a release form allowing volunteer teams access to be on your property. If you cannot come to the Operation Blessing Command Center to fill out the form, you must **MAKE SURE** you are home when the volunteers arrive to sign the work order form giving the teams permission to be on your property. We will not be able to do any work without a form **SIGNED BY THE HOMEOWNER.**

\*Priority will be given based on elderly, sick, disabled, single-moms, etc., and will be based on the availability of volunteers.

#### **WANT TO HELP? VOLUNTEERS**

**Meet at the Operation Blessing Mobile Command Center @ 8:00 AM on**

**Friday and/or Saturday**  
**Lowes parking lot at 1081 N Military Hwy, Norfolk**  
**Local volunteer hotline: 757.374.0944**

\*Volunteers please bring snow shovels IF you have them

Since rock salt is in short supply in the entire region due to the severity of the storm, Operation Blessing has just purchased 40,000 pounds of rock salt in Ocala, Florida, which is currently being loading onto one of the charity's tractor-trailer trucks there. The salt will arrive in Norfolk tomorrow morning and will be used in the volunteer snow removal efforts.

Jody Herrington-Gettys, vice president of US disaster relief and programs for Operation Blessing International said, "While ten inches of snow is nothing for cities up north, that amount can be crippling here in the south. When Norfolk city officials reached out to us this morning to help residents to remove snow, Operation Blessing did not hesitate to offer our full assistance."

"We're thrilled to have Operation Blessing and Lowe's as our Team Norfolk partners," said Jim Redick, Director Emergency Operations and Preparedness. "This is just one more example of Team Norfolk coming together to make Norfolk a more resilient community."

**ABOUT OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL:**

Operation Blessing International (OBI) is one of the largest charities in America, providing strategic disaster relief, medical aid, hunger relief, clean water and community development in 23 countries around the world on a daily basis. Currently, Forbes ranks OBI as one of its "100 Largest Charities" with an efficiency rating of 99%, and Consumers Digest also named OBI as one of "America's Top Charities" in 2012. Founded in 1978, Operation Blessing International has touched the lives of more than 255 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$3.3 billion to date.

**ABOUT TEAM NORFOLK:**

Established in 2012, Team Norfolk is a City of Norfolk lead collaboration between public, private, non-profit, higher education and military organizations. Team Norfolk meets monthly to synchronize disaster plans to address potential issues before, during and after an incident.

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Media Contact:

Chris Roslan

Roslan & Campion Public Relations LLC

(212) 966-4600

[chris@rc-pr.com](mailto:chris@rc-pr.com)

Deborah Bensen

Vice President, Media and Development

Operation Blessing International

[www.operationblessing.org](http://www.operationblessing.org)

o: 757.226.3440

cell: 757.373.9200