

For Immediate Release

## **Operation Blessing International Calling For Volunteers In Advance of Major Winter Storm**

HAMPTON ROADS, VA (February 25, 2015) – With a Winter Storm Warning issued by the National Weather Service for the Hampton Roads area tonight -- meaning that over 6 inches of snow is possible -- Operation Blessing International has put out a call for volunteers in advance to help residents in Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Chesapeake who need help to remove snow from their homes starting tomorrow morning.

The charity is asking for volunteers to help starting Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at either 8:30am or 1:30pm (see details below).

This marks the second time this month that Operation Blessing has activated the Snow Buddy program in Hampton Roads. Last week, the charity received over 200 requests from local residents who were unable to remove the snow themselves. Operation Blessing coordinated volunteers four days until all the snow was removed.

The “Snow Buddy” program is in partnership with the City of Norfolk. Operation Blessing will be able to respond based on the number of volunteers as well as the needs of the homeowner – priority is given to the elderly, sick, disabled, single-moms, or others needing assistance.

Operation Blessing has established a telephone hotline for people who wish to volunteer to help, as well as a hotline for homeowners who need help. The information is as follows:

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

**Meet at the Operation Blessing Mobile Command Center @ 8:30am or 1:30pm on Thursday, February 26**

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

**Local volunteer hotline: 757.374.0944**

**Phones are currently open to receive calls.**

Volunteers please bring snow shovels IF you have them, otherwise they will be provided.

### **RESIDENTS NEEDING HELP**

If you need assistance with shoveling snow from your home, 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, 1081 N Military Hwy, Norfolk**

**Phones will be manned starting tomorrow at 7AM**

\*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 number of volunteers.

For more information or to donate to the effort, please log on to [www.ob.org](http://www.ob.org).

**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. In 2014, OBI was awarded Charity Navigator's coveted 4-star rating for sound fiscal management marking 8 years the charity has received this prestigious ranking. Forbes also ranks OBI as one of its "100 Largest Charities" with an efficiency rating of 99%. 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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