

For Immediate Release

Operation Blessing International To Coordinate Tornado Cleanup Volunteer Efforts In Van, TX

**--Residents Whose Homes Are Damaged Can Request Free Help--
--Volunteers Are Needed Starting Wednesday, May 13 --**

VAN, TX (May 12, 2015) – The Virginia Beach-based humanitarian organization Operation Blessing International will coordinate volunteer efforts in the wake of a deadly, EF3 tornado that struck earlier this week.

Specializing in disaster relief and logistics, and one of the largest charities in America, Operation Blessing International sent an advance team on Monday to assess the damages and meet with local emergency management authorities. The charity also deployed disaster relief equipment from its Ocala, FL warehouse and will be sending additional supplies from its Dallas, TX distribution facility.

Operation Blessing will coordinate volunteer efforts in Van and take free work order requests from residents whose homes were damaged by the tornado. Volunteer assignments will include: debris removal, installing tarps on roofs, chain saw work, helping salvage and pack personal belongings, and general labor.

Volunteers are needed beginning Wednesday morning, May 13 (see details below). 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 NEEDING HELP

For residents needing help, Operation Blessing is accepting FREE volunteer work requests at the OB Command Center located at Van United Methodist Church, 326 W. Main Street, Van.

Please call: 757.274.8650

Phones will be manned tomorrow from 8AM-5PM

*All homeowners must sign a work order form and a release form allowing volunteer teams access to 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. We will not be able to do any work without a form SIGNED BY THE HOMEOWNER. Priority is given based on need (elderly, sick, disabled, etc) and is based on volunteer availability.

WANT TO HELP? VOLUNTEERS

Meet at the Operation Blessing Mobile Command Center at Van United Methodist Church, 326 W. Main Street, Van

Beginning on Wednesday, May 13 at 8am sharp.

Local volunteer hotline: 757.374.0944

Phones will be manned tomorrow from 8AM-5PM

*Volunteers must be at least 18 years old, dress appropriately for work in the field, and also provide their own transportation to and from the work site. Operation Blessing will provide work assignments, management and tools.

For more information or to donate to the effort, please log on to 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 27 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.

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