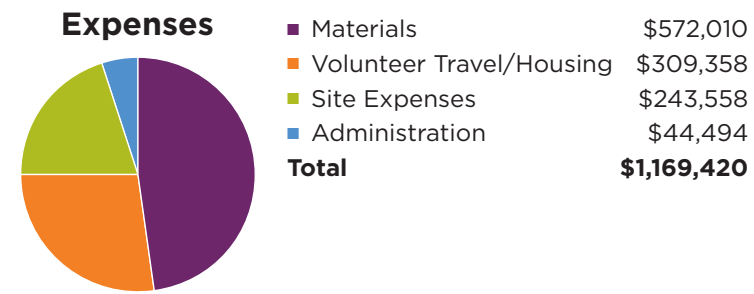
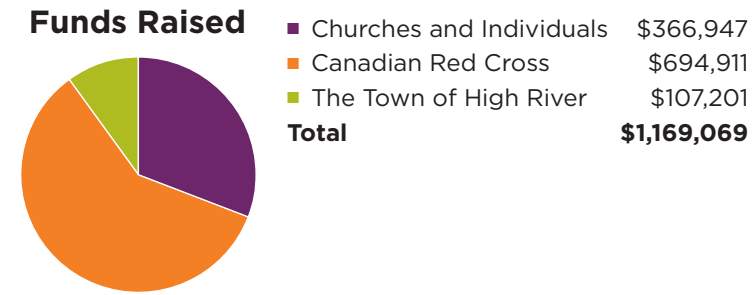




## Financial Information (in CAD)



- ### Special Thanks
- Canadian Red Cross
  - Canadian Mennonite Disaster Services
  - Cartwright Lighting, Calgary
  - Les Rempel, volunteer host
  - Park Lighting, Edmonton
  - The Provincial Government of Alberta
  - The Town of High River
  - World Renew on-site manager Al Brander
  - World Renew project managers Joel and Angie Ploegstra, and Henry and Linda Visscher



**On June 19, 2013, a massive flood swept through the region around Calgary, Alberta, forcing 100,000 people from their homes and causing billions of dollars of damage. In September 2015, World Renew wrapped up flood relief operations and reconstruction in the hard-hit town of High River.**

Initially World Renew Disaster Response Services (DRS) sent volunteers to help the initial responder, Samaritan's Purse, with clean up, and later DRS volunteers assessed the community's unmet needs. They then opened a reconstruction site in High River in January 2014, sending continual volunteer reconstruction teams every three weeks to help community members rebuild and move back into their homes.

Between donations from churches and individuals and grants from the Canadian Red Cross and the Town of High River, World Renew received over \$1 million in funding towards recovery efforts. Over the next couple of years, the money was used to purchase construction materials for home repair and hire case managers who helped advocate for flood survivors as they applied for insurance settlements and financial assistance from the government.

"High River is a very friendly town, a very thankful town," said Angie Ploegstra, who worked in High River alongside her husband Joel as World Renew DRS construction managers. "You could go places wearing your green DRS t-shirt, and people recognized us and stopped to say thank you for the work that we were doing and what it meant to them and their neighbors."

Most volunteers in High River were retirees who came for three-week stretches, and much of their time was spent doing demanding physical labor like installing dry-wall and flooring, replacing windows and doors, installing kitchen cabinets, and gutting basements. Churches also sent teams of workers, typically for a week at a time, to help with reconstruction. Between the opening of the site in January 2014 and its closing in September 2015, around 549 World Renew DRS volunteers worked on 43 flood-damaged homes, completing anything from minor repair tasks to completely rebuilding houses.

However, the impact of the work done by these volunteers went beyond simply fixing up a house and checking a name off a list.

cont. on page 2



cont. from page 1

“When people saw their house being put back together, and it was done correctly, they were just so thankful. They had new hope that their lives would get back to normal,” said Ploegstra.

“People always say to us, ‘It’s so wonderful that you help people. What a blessing that must be to disaster survivors.’ Really, we are the ones who receive an abundant blessing by helping other people,” she said. “Both the volunteer and the person helped get the blessing. It’s just a wonderful experience.”

The Ploegstras worked for many weeks in High River, and they were present for the closing of the reconstruction site in September 2015 when World Renew DRS ended its work there.



“One of my favorite stories is about one of the last three houses we finished rebuilding,” said Ploegstra. The homeowners were an elderly couple, and because the woman was suffering from dementia, her husband’s time was spent taking care of her.

“Our DRS work teams were really a blessing to [the husband]. He invited the volunteers into the kitchen for coffee, and he had someone he could talk to and relate to.” At the end of the three weeks, he sat down to talk one last time with the volunteers.

“He said, ‘My wife and I have been talking, we haven’t been in church for probably 30 years but we’re thinking that we really should go back,’” said Ploegstra. “When we left, we prayed with him. It was a wonderful to know that God was restoring their hearts as DRS volunteers rebuilt their home.”

It was nearly two and a half years after the flood that the Town of High River found its footing. But thanks to the efforts of World Renew and many other organizations, the community has in most part recovered, one home and one heart at a time.

### Fast Facts: World Renew DRS High River Response

- Zero homeowners received insurance settlements for damages to their homes for overland flooding.
- 94 percent of the homes in High River were affected.
- 43 were homes repaired or rebuilt.
- 315 homeowners received help in applying for assistance from the provincial government.
- 549 volunteers worked in High River during the flood response.
- 66,571 work hours were donated by volunteers after the flood.
- 235 unmet needs surveys were completed.
- 3,350 total contacts with homeowners were made by volunteers.
- 4 other organizations like World Renew were involved in the recovery.

## Friendship and Flood Response in High River



**Becky is a High River resident who stopped by for dinner with some World Renew DRS volunteers who were working on her home after it was damaged in a 2013 flood. As they shared the meal together, Becky talked about her experiences during the flood. She encouraged everyone on the volunteer team when she said, “You don’t just fix houses — you fix people’s spirits.”**

Becky’s experiences with the volunteers included enjoying the chatter and laughter that rose from the basement as the volunteers worked. It was a welcome change, Becky noted, from the quietness in the house after her husband passed away. When she was feeling broken with grief and loneliness, the joyful, servant-hearted attitude of World Renew DRS volunteers helped restore a part of her weary spirit.

Before completing the work on her home, World Renew DRS presented Becky with a decorative plaque that simply said Hope. It is given as a symbol of the hope and restoration we have in Christ.

Becky is one of many High River residents that World Renew DRS has had the privilege of serving since historic flooding two years ago forced more than 100,000 residents in southern Alberta from their homes. In a damage assessment in High River, it was reported that the flood impacted 94% of homes in the community.

After the water receded, families returned home to badly damaged houses that were filled with mold, debris, and destruction. They and those involved in the response realized that the road to recovery would be long.

“World Renew DRS made all the difference for homeowners who experienced the most flood damage,” says Sarah Bruinsma, a case manager for World Renew DRS in

High River. “Many people would not be able to fix their homes and return to them without our help. They would have had to walk away from the property or sell it. Others we helped were not in as dire a situation, but our help allowed them to recover with less significant hardship.”

World Renew DRS was active in the flood response in High River from the early days after the disaster and completed the following activities:

- Initial clean-up shortly after the flood
- Mold remediation
- Surveys to identify struggling homeowners and their needs
- Case management that helped qualified families get assistance
- Development and execution of the long-term recovery efforts
- Construction coordination
- Reconstruction services

World Renew DRS is grateful for grants we received from the Canadian Red Cross and the Town of High River, donations from individuals, churches, and businesses, as well as support from the Alberta provincial government and partnerships with other responding organizations that have made it possible for many families to return to safe and secure homes.

Volunteers have been an essential part of the recovery process in High River.

“As I reflect on World Renew’s presence in High River, I can tell by the reactions of the homeowners we helped that our volunteers were the hands and feet of Jesus there,” said Director Ron Willett. “What an amazing testament to folks who suffered so much that our dedicated volunteers will pack up for three weeks to give their time and skills to repair homes as a ministry of the love of Christ to people they don’t know.

“I want to thank each volunteer who served in High River. Many of them served there several times. We are so grateful to them, and I thank our Lord for them. Their impact on the entire town of High River has been an example of Christian love.”

As home reconstruction was winding down, the Town of High River began to construct an extensive diking system to prevent another flood from happening in southern Alberta in the future. “The dikes and berms were built a meter above the crest of the 2013 flood,” said Bruinsma. “The system now provides a much needed sense of security for many High River residents.”