

DSC's House in a Box™ Program to Provide Home Essentials for Michigan Flood Survivors

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WASHINGTON, DC , UNITED STATES, February 19, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A historic 500-year flood that swept through Midland County, Mich. in May 2020 left thousands facing hardship. The Midland County flood—caused by two dam failures in May 2020— created over \$200 million in damages to more than 2,500 buildings. Over 10,000 people had to flee their homes to find safety. Despite the damages, not one person died as a result of the disaster. But thanks to a partnership between the Long-Term Disaster Recovery Group, United Way of Midland County and the Disaster Services Corporation, flood survivors can receive home essentials in an efficient “one-stop shop” way as they work to rebuild their lives.

Organized and led by the Disaster Services Corporation - Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA, the House in a Box Program™ (HIB) provides necessary home items for disaster survivors, all in one kit. One package includes the following brand-new items:

- Beds
- Linens
- Dishes
- Bots and pans
- Dressers
- Silverware
- Bathroom setup
- Dinette
- Couch

“The goal of the program is to provide new household items for families who have lost everything due to a disaster—like the flood that Midland County experienced—and who are forced into situational poverty because of such events,” said Kevin Peach, COO, Disaster Services Corporation - Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA. “House in a Box™ gives dignity to families in crisis as it gives them a new and fresh start.”

Midland County's Long-Term Disaster Recovery Group—a cross-sector group of individuals from a variety of organizations and agencies working together to help the community recover from the flood—helped spearhead the efforts to bring HIB to Midland County.

As part of the Long-Term Disaster Recovery Group, United Way of Midland County helped provide financial support, as well as logistical and volunteer coordination for distribution of the household items. Currently, the HIB items are stored in a Midland warehouse owned by J.E. Johnson, a local heating and cooling company, which United Way is partnering with for flood relief storage and logistics.

On February 23, volunteers coordinated through United Way will get together at the warehouse to assemble and organize the HIB materials for distribution. The organizations are currently discussing potential future collaborative efforts, depending on need.

“United Way is excited to host DSC St. Vincent de Paul volunteers,” said Bre Sklar, disaster volunteer manager. “It will be so meaningful to homeowners to see first-hand these brand-new items they can look forward to. [Flood recovery](#) is a staggered process and it will be wonderful to have these items ready to go the moment a flood survivor is ready for them. We could not have done this so effectively without the partnership with the Disaster Services Corp., SVDP-USA’s Kevin Peach and his team, and we are truly grateful.” The Disaster Services Corporation (DSC) is a Catholic lay organization that helps people in situational poverty brought about by natural and man-made disasters get their lives back in order.

So how does the HIB program’s selection process work?

“Families are reviewed and referred to the program through a Disaster Case Management process that ensures that there is no duplication of benefits,” Peach said. “DSC buys furniture and furnishings in volume through pre-screened vendors so that it can provide a starter household furniture kit at a greatly reduced price.”

All families receive the same new items which are packaged for efficiency of delivery. The program is scalable to the size of the family and starts at \$3,200 for a family of four. “Rebuilding after a disaster is a marathon, not a sprint,” said Sklar. “It does not happen overnight. But through the generosity of organizations and programs like House in a Box™, our community members can get access to much-needed resources to pick up the pieces of their lives.”

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