

At National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster conference over 800 learn best ways to fight disasters together

The diverse responders included the Churches of Scientology Disaster Response team who joined fellow disaster volunteers for the 20th year.

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, May 18, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster](#) (NVOAD) just completed the annual conference for its national members, associates and government partners. This year the “Gateway to Collaboration” conference was held in St. Louis with over 800 in attendance coming from the 50 states as well as US territories.

The diversity of NVOAD is highlighted by the booths from member

organizations at the conference focusing on response activities and long-term care. Those showcasing their work included FEMA, the American Red Cross, Adventist Community Service, Feeding America, [Churches of Scientology Disaster Response](#) (CSDR), Islamic Relief, Salvation Army, Mennonite Disaster Services, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, Church World Service, Home Depot, Operation BBQ Relief, United Methodist Committee on Relief, Team Rubicon, Good360, and Headwaters Relief Organization.

To facilitate all efforts for maximum efficiency, disaster response organizations prepare and coordinate ahead of time in a unique umbrella organization called the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). It was founded over 50 years ago in response to the challenges many disaster organizations experienced following Hurricane Camille, a Category 5 storm that hit the Gulf Coast in August 1969. NVOAD membership includes a diverse group of highly competent organizations that provide a wide range of skills in service to our fellow man, our communities, and our nation.



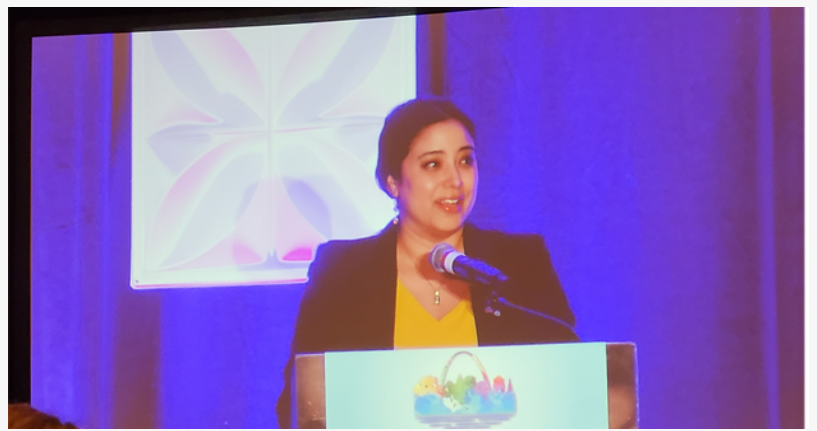
The keynote presenter for this year's national conference was Ms. Brenda Abdelall, Assistant Secretary of Partnership and Engagement at the US Department of Homeland Security, who praised the collaborative work of the National VOAD. During her presentation, she also related a personal story on how her family had been helped by those in the disaster community.

For the last 20 years the Churches of Scientology Disaster Response (CSDR) has had an exhibit booth, sharing with the attendees its mission and disaster response work in the US as well as internationally. Scientology disaster responders, called Volunteer Ministers, have worked with other volunteer organizations and brought relief to those devastated by earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, bombings and war-related disasters. In addition to the much needed cleanup, debris removal, and other relief activities, CSDR specializes in emotional and spiritual care not only for the survivors but responders and caregivers as well.

"It is all about relationships," said Rev. Susan Taylor, National Director of CSDR, "Without strong relationships at all levels between all of the disaster organizations and government agencies we would not be able to do the work that we do. These relationships are built during non-disaster times."

At the NVOAD conference, more than 50 educational workshop presentations shared vital information for the members to help increase their collaboration and effectiveness during their disaster response and long-term recovery efforts.

The National VOAD has been written into FEMA's [national disaster recovery](#) framework and state emergency frameworks, creating a disaster network community unlike any other in the world. According to the National Disaster Recovery Framework, "VOADs are present at national, state, substate levels. The National VOAD member agencies provide skilled direct services along the



Keynote speaker Ms. Brenda Abdelall, Assistant Secretary of Partnership and Engagement at the US Department of Homeland Security



NVOAD members from Utah, Washington, DC, and West Virginia joining over 800 other attendees

continuum of preparedness mission areas, from pre-disaster through the longest-term recovery. These member agencies provide their services through comprehensive, coordinated volunteer resources in partnership with emergency managers. This cooperative effort has proven to be the most effective way for a wide variety of volunteers and organizations to work together in a crisis.”

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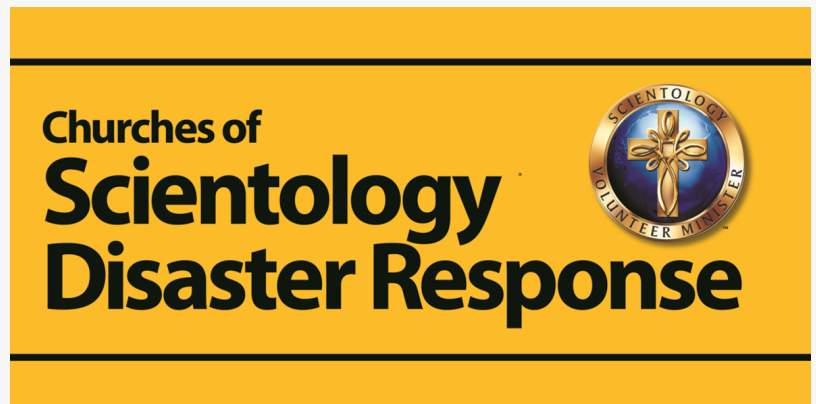
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*Rev. Susan Taylor, CSDR
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A Scientology Volunteer Minister greeting a guest at their booth



CSDR is a member of the National VOAD

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