

Cleaning up after Hurricane Sandy



Major Stanley Griffin, Jamaica Eastern divisional commander, distributes food and water in Jamaica. Photo courtesy of Caribbean Territory

Salvation Army relief efforts are in full swing in Haiti, Cuba and Jamaica.

Hurricane Sandy hit the Caribbean hard on Oct. 25, with winds up to 115 mph, taking lives and leaving chaos behind: destroyed homes, power outages and food shortages. Even while the storm raged, The Salvation Army was—and remains—on the scene, offering relief and hope to victims.

The death toll in Haiti is 51 people, but that number could rise. Fifteen people are missing, with more than 200,000 homeless and over 17,000 in shelters.

Both Haiti and Cuba are mostly without power, water and phone service, and food is scarce.

The storm damaged several Salvation Army facilities. The School for the Blind in Jamaica had roofs torn off its dormitories; walkways were destroyed along with its crops of bananas and plantains.

In Haiti, Army buildings in Poirrier, Lafosse, Vieux Bourg, Fond-des-Negres and Campeche sustained severe damage. Poorly maintained toilets overflowed and garbage was everywhere. With 16 cholera cases reported, the fear is that the disease may spread.

Despite their own losses, Salvation Army teams of officers and volunteers were on the streets transporting homeless people to shelters, serving food to evacuees and offering counseling and pastoral care to victims.

In Cuba, where 11 people were reported dead, The Salvation Army continues to supply food, shelter and water to displaced persons and has begun building temporary shelters. In Santiago, the Army removed toppled trees and electrical poles and wires.

“The churches in Santiago are in very bad shape—some are just rubble; others have lost their roofs,” said Cuban President Raul Castro. “We will celebrate mass in the streets...The priority isn’t the church buildings; it is the people.”

To support the Army’s relief/recovery work, visit salvationarmy.org, specifying your gift for Sandy relief in the Caribbean, or call 1-800-725-2769 (Sal-ARMY).