A team from Bridgeville, PA stopped by the Go-Mart in Montgomery to pick up ice. The cashier asked the leader, “So what mission team are you all with?” He asked her how she knew they were a mission team. She replied, “God’s people just walk different!”

Indeed God’s people DO “walk different!” And they have brought so much to families in need in WV. The year 2012 has thus far brought three disasters to WV: flood, tornado, and something called a “derecho.” A what? We didn’t know we were even supposed to be afraid of a derecho, but on June 29 we discovered the hard way when all 55 counties of WV got the chance to experience this straight line wind storm of hurricane force that left millions of dollars in damages.

Through the years we have been blessed with partners both in and outside of our state who “walk different.” This is a summary of activities through September, 2012.

Brief description of the structure established to coordinate the response by the middle governing body (MGB)

West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamps, Inc. (WVMAW), was started as the Disaster Recovery arm of the Presbytery of West Virginia in September, 2001. The organization was incorporated in May, 2002. WVMAW’s Executive Director reports to a Board, which represents Presbyterians from around the state. The Executive Director also periodically presents reports to Presbytery, and is an agency member of the WV Presbytery Social and Ecumenical Ministry Committee.

Volunteer Management

Number of volunteer work teams.

From March 3, 2012 through September 20, 2012, we have hosted a total of 53 groups. They represent groups PA, IN, IL, OH, NC, SC, NY, NH, MD, MI, VA, NJ, GA, and WV. We even had a visitor from Nicaragua! Spring break college groups came from Cabrini College, Notre Dame University, Catholic Campus Ministry of Mary Washington in VA, Penn State, and the College of Wooster. We also hosted Holy Ghost Prep School from Philadelphia, St Peter’s Prep of NJ and Loyola School of Manhattan, NY. Yay spring break teams that choose WV over the beach!

Estimated value of volunteers

Total number of volunteers thus far: 807. Total volunteer hours: 25,408. Valued at $21.79 per hour, the total value of these volunteer hours is $553,630.
Hampden, WV: Pastor Cab and Bonita Wolford are the site supervisors at Hampden, near Gilbert. They have a team of volunteers from their congregation at the Freedom Full Gospel Assembly House of Prayer who work with the volunteer teams to help keep materials on site and give instruction. Cab and Bonita spent many hours working with the Long Term Recovery Group of Logan County as they put together the newly formed response to March 15 flooding. Working in collaboration with Catholic Charities, Community Lutheran Partners, WV Housing, United Methodists, Mennonites, Appalachian Service Project, and the American Baptists, volunteers with WVMAW have been able to help bring major repairs to 20 homes in Logan and Mingo Counties in WV. Work has included muck out, debris clean up, roofing, flooring and everything in between.
**Mount Hope, WV:** Tim Stewart led nine groups in Mount Hope, WV that helped work on nine homes, in the spring and the beginning of fall. Projects have involved roofing, repairing and rebuilding decks, porches, wheel chair ramps, replacing flooring, plumbing, and kitchen work.

**Montgomery, WV:** Tim Stewart led eight summer teams in Montgomery that have included replacing flooring, sheetrock work, replacing bathroom, kitchen, re-wiring for laundry, ceiling work, demolition and reconstruction of room and porch, and wheel chair ramps. Nine families were served.

Summer interns Hayden Brown at Montgomery and Ross Holland at Colcord

**Colcord, WV:** Art Petty supervised 5 weeks of teams that assisted 20 families. He and summer intern Ross Holland led projects that included siding, porches, wheel chair ramps, roofing, flooring and kitchen repair.

**Summerlee/Oak Hill, WV:** From June to the second week in August Mike D’Aversa from NJ led 8 teams to bring help to families. Projects included wheel chair ramps, decking, replacing flooring, building a bathroom, cleaning and plumbing. Mike also helped to case work some homes for the Emergency Manager office of Fayette County following the summer storm. His work helped the county to be able to apply for Individual Assistance through FEMA.
Clarksburg, WV: Jeff Mitchell led his first WVMAW teams this summer. Scheduled for two, Jeff willingly accepted a third team when the power was out in Southern WV and we had no where to send the Ohio group. He lined them up with Red Cross, and used them to help clean up after the storm. They helped to distribute food and water to families without power. Jeff led 3 teams that assisted 5 families with direct repairs, and an untold number of families through distribution of meals and water.

Huntington, WV: Thanks to Howard Aulick and a team of volunteers from Bates Memorial, a team of 32 from Charlotte, NC didn’t have to return home when their accommodations lost power in Colcord. With great flexibility and grace, they moved to Huntington and served six families (11 individuals). Then in a few weeks Jeff Glover from IN, returned to Huntington to lead a team that did repairs on two homes.

Webster Springs, WV: Jimmy Utt from Cowen, WV led 3 weeks of teams that painted, built porches, wheel chair ramp, roofing, and general repair. Seven families were served.

St. Albans, WV: Pastor Michael Poke led one team that built a bathroom, 2 roofs and set of stairs.

WVMAW Working in Partnerships

- When the tornado hit Wayne and Lincoln Counties on March 3, 2012, WVMAW worked with the forming long term recovery group in initial stages. A Presbyterian work camp, Cabwaylingo, led by Bill Likens, was right there at ground zero providing emergency response as well as recovery with work teams. Bill supervised groups totaling approximately 60 roof volunteers and workers that gave at least 4200 hours in recovery. (Cabwaylingo is sponsored by First Presbyterian, Huntington).
- WVMAW partnered with Cabell Lincoln Work Camps to help complete some projects after their week-long summer camp. Teams worked out of Bates Memorial Presbyterian in Huntington.
- WVMAW is an agency member of the Social and Ecumenical Ministries Committee of the Presbytery of WV.
- WVMAW is a member of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Cab Wolford was on the Long Term Recovery Group in Logan, WV, presenting cases and collaborating for materials and funding. He worked directly with United Methodist, American Baptist, Brethern, and Mennonite groups, as well as local non-denominational church folks who provided food, water and assistance to families.
- WVMAW collaborated with Catholic Charities, Community Lutheran Partners, United Methodists, and WV Housing to complete repairs for families in the Logan community devastated by flooding.
- WVMAW partnered with American Red Cross in Clarksburg to help distribute food and water following the storm that knocked out power for over a week.
- WVMAW Site Supervisor Mike D’Aversa worked with the Emergency Manager Office of Fayette County to case work many homes damaged by the June storm. He was able to inspect and report for much needed numbers to help the county obtain FEMA Individual Assistance.
• WVMAW partnered with Webster County Work Camps to bring in volunteers that stayed in the Baptist, Methodist and Catholic churches in Webster Springs.
• WVMAW partnered with Jones Memorial Baptist Church in Beckley while working on a home in that neighborhood. Members at JMBC allowed WVMAW teams to park in their lot, and gracefully opened their doors so that workers could use their facilities and have a place for lunch. AND the members even provided lunch for the first team!
• The Executive Director got the chance to speak during worship to the members of Jones Memorial Baptist Church to say thanks for their mission of hospitality for WVMAW teams.
• The Executive Director was a workshop leader at Trinity Youth Conference in Schellsburg, PA during the first week in August. TYC is a week-long camp led in part by a youth team. Our small group focused on “activism” and being advocates for people in need. As Disciples we have good news to bring to a hurting world.

• We continue to give thanks for Kristen Lohe, our “computer geek” who designed the new WVMAW web site. Kristen is from Carmel, IN and is a member of Crossroads Church.
• The Executive Director has enjoyed doing pulpit fill around the state in various churches, sharing WVMAW stories and getting to preach or present mission: Clarksburg, Summersville, Upperglade, Richwood, Barboursville, Frankfort, Hico, Summerlee.
• The Executive Director has traveled to share mission stories or be part of mission events with various partners outside of WV: Beaufort, SC; Leesburg, VA; Nokesville, VA; Rural hall, NC; Bridgeville, PA.
• WVMAW Treasurer Karen Robinson is on the Board of the Waste Water Treatment Coalition of McDowell County. WVMAW continues to collaborate with agencies and utilities to help develop wastewater treatment projects in remote areas of the county.

• WVMAW partnered with the St. Paul Community and Economic Development Corporation of St Albans, WV to bring repairs to a family and lay foundation for future mission teams. (see story for ecumenical partnership formed)

**Visions from St Paul Missionary Baptist Church, St Albans**

Pastor Michael A. Poke had a vision of mission ministry in St. Albans. He knew of projects to bring hope and help to families in need, and WVMAW Board Members Rev. Paul Romine and Elder Jack Rogers, of First Presbyterian, St. Albans, knew of some expertise. United Methodist pastor Rev. Richard Baker, long time friend of WVMAW, was willing to embark on this new adventure for the community, even though we were unsure how it would look. I told Richard that in my opinion, when we sing “Here I Am Lord” and mean it, we really don’t know where we will end up, but it is always good! With an enthusiastic AMEN, Richard brought an experienced team of 12 from Maryland to collaborate with SPCEDC. They worked with local volunteers on three homes putting on two new roofs, a new bathroom, and a new set of stairs. The mission was an incredible blessing to the families, but also to the community volunteers who got to work with the team and talk about future mission and ministry.

The Maryland folks were housed at Highlawn Baptist Church. First Presbyterian Church, St Andrews United Methodist, and St Paul Missionary Baptist provided meals. It was an ecumenical event about which Pastor Poke wrote, “During the week we made some new friends and we hope and pray that this will be the beginning of a great relationship between the WV Ministry of Advocacy and Workcamp Inc. and the SPCEDC.” We at WVMAW say AMEN to that!!!

**Future**

At this time, (the first week in October) FEMA is taking applications for Individual Assistance for families that suffered damages to their homes during the June 29 storm. WVMAW has to wait until FEMA re-inspects the homes and makes arrangements for funding before we can do much of the work that awaits us. The major need is roofing, and of course repairs for all damages from the rain that has poured in since July. WVMAW will collaborate with the Long Term Recovery Group once it is formed in the affected counties. We have skilled groups on the way, and hope that we will be able to reach some families with a few teams before winter sets in!

Groups are booking for as far away as 2014! WOW! Check out our web site for more stories and continued updates on our mission.

*Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever! Amen.*

The Reverend Joan Stewart,
Executive Director