

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 November 2013

Contact: Nancy Cramer, Director of Public Affairs
Lafayette Indiana Stake
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Latter-day Saints Clean Up Kokomo in Tornado Aftermath

KOKOMO, Indiana -- On Saturday, approximately 145 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints aided Kokomo communities affected by last week's tornadoes. Latter-day Saints from the greater Lafayette area cleared away fallen limbs and trees, as well as metal and pieces of houses. Long lines composed of 60 full-time missionaries passed debris hand-to-hand. Their work turned chaos into sorted curbside piles, ready for pickup.

The Church also donated hundreds of cleanup supplies, ranging from 35 wheelbarrows to 18 chainsaws to 100 hammers. Kurt Kennedy, inventory controller for the Church's welfare services said, "This is no time to be conservative. We are here to help." Many volunteers provided their own tools for the cleanup, including generators, shovels and tractors.

The Church of Jesus Christ cleaned up neighborhoods that had been struggling even before the tornado. Tim Gibb, leader of the congregations distributed throughout central Indiana, was eager to make a difference in these neighborhoods. "One guy in particular kept peeking out of his window with a huge smile on his face at the crew that went to work in his yard," he said. "We removed junk that had been there for decades. I was pretty sure that his place looked even better after the tornado than before. That did not slow us down." Many of the volunteer's assignments later in the day were to the dismantled golf course or other, more affluent neighborhoods. "No matter to us," Gibb said. "We helped everybody that needed us."

Mormon volunteers began gathering in Kokomo at 8 a.m. and remained until the 5:30 p.m. curfew, assisting tornado victims despite temperatures that remained near zero throughout the day. Gibb said that many water bottles froze when set on the ground for a short while.

Pam Pollard, who is part of the Kokomo congregation, worked on one woman's house that was set to be demolished. "I found some pictures in the rubble and handed them to the lady's son, who was standing in the yard with his mother. She came up to me and asked if she could give me a hug. I said yes and hugged her back. She said how grateful she was for all of the help. I told her I was grateful to be able to help."

The Church also provided relief supplies such as blankets, first aid kits, lumber, tarps, flashlights, water, hammers and nails earlier in the week.

Volunteers gratefully acknowledge United Way and local restaurants for providing lunch for the disaster relief forces.

For more information on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints see www.mormonnewsroom.org.

Style guide note: When reporting about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, please use the complete name of the Church in the first reference. For subsequent reference, the full name or the shortened names "the Church of Jesus Christ" or the Church are appropriate. For more information on the use of the name of the Church, go to www.mormonnewsroom.org and look at the bottom of the page for the "Style Guide" link.