

# WELS Christian Aid & Relief

## Our Purpose

WELS Christian Aid and Relief (CAR) serves as our synod's "ministry of compassion", bringing physical relief to victims of natural disasters in the form of cash grants, food, clothing, and medical supplies. CAR also partners with WELS missionaries to support humanitarian aid projects to help build bridges to proclaim the gospel. The mission of CAR is drawn from the Scriptural encouragement, *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:10* Because of all that Christ has done for us, we are eager to reflect Christ's love and compassion to those in need. We seek to personalize our efforts by conducting careful assessments and distributing our funds first through our churches, and then through other trusted secular agencies.



## Life Line

### Crown Community Garden

The WELS Christian Aid and Relief "Life Line" video series has been developed to share the gospel bridge building work being done throughout the world by the support of gifts from the generous people in the WELS. The latest "Life Line" features Crown of Life Lutheran Church in New Orleans, LA, ten years after hurricane Katrina. This "Life Line" features interviews from members of Crown of Life with a special invitation for those who helped with the Katrina recovery effort to attend the church's rededication service on Sunday, October 30th, 2016 at 9 A.M. In addition, this "Life Line" shares the creation and growth of the Crown Community Garden. **To watch the video visit, [vimeo.com/153045342](http://vimeo.com/153045342).**



## "Can you help?"

This is the question we hear the most. It comes either from pastors who are looking for assistance with a member family that is in need or, from individuals who contact us who are struggling with critical issues in their lives.

The answer is almost always "Yes." However, there is a process and guidelines as to how we help. This process and these guidelines have been established to make sure that the relief assistance actually gets to those in need and, that we share opportunities to express our Christ-like love and compassion with our members and congregations.

The way that we do this is by working with and through our WELS/ELS congregations when someone is in need. So, the question is really not, "Can you help?" The question should really be, "How can you help us help them?"

When a pastor or congregational leader contacts us about assisting an individual or family, we want to learn what the circumstances are, what other sources of assistance may be available, and what is the congregation able to do to help. With this knowledge we can then brainstorm with them different ways Christian Aid and Relief may be able to help them to get the best outcome possible for the individual or family.

When an individual contacts us outside of the congregation, we want to do the same thing. We want to learn the circumstances, what other sources of assistance may be available and then if they are WELS/ELS, contact their pastor to see how we can assist the congregation in helping them. If they are not WELS/ELS, then we ask where they are located and we put them in contact with the nearest WELS/ELS pastor so not only physical aid may be offered, but spiritual as well.

Every year, a large portion of our grant activity is for general aid which provides food for pantries, inner city relief and general aid for called workers and congregational members suffering from extreme medical and financial burdens. Last year we granted \$100,119 in general aid grants to help congregations help those in need. Every penny of these funds came from the donations of WELS/ELS members, congregations, and schools who wanted to share in those opportunities to reach out with love and compassion to those that were hurting.



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## Malawi Flood Relief

In the fall of 2015, the staff and volunteers of WELS Christian Aid and Relief (CAR) completed a joint disaster relief project with the WELS mission team and the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) in Malawi. This project began back in February of 2015 after torrential storms and flooding ravaged many areas of the country where the LCCA had members and churches. CAR sent initial funds to the mission team to purchase and distribute (with the assistance of Kingdom Workers personnel) emergency supplies to those in the hardest hit areas.

The CA&R director of operations, Mark Vance, was dispatched in March to do an initial assessment and to meet with the Mission team and leadership of the LCCA to determine a disaster response plan for the near future. The LCCA leadership identified maize (food) as their greatest need because most of the corn crops had been washed away with the flooding.



A response plan was coordinated that would deliver over 450 tons of maize to more than 4,700 families in 21 different areas of the country. The focus of the plan was to bring enough maize to each family to assist them in making it through the crucial months of September through January. A food distribution project of this magnitude in a foreign country had never been attempted by the WELS before.

Purely by the grace of God, the last of the 10,000 bags of maize were delivered to the last village on October 26th. This challenging project was completed on schedule and within budget.

Every time Mark Vance addressed an LCCA congregation or village he shared with them, "This gift of love and compassion comes from your fellow Lutherans back in the US and around the world." And their response was always, "Please send our thanks and love to our brothers in sisters when you see them."

To watch the video visit, [vimeo.com/147614102](https://vimeo.com/147614102).

## Nepal Earthquake Aid



On April 25th a 7.8 earthquake rocked the country of Nepal killing over 8,000 people and injuring many more. Our sister church, the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nepal had 10 churches that were destroyed along with virtually all the homes in villages affected by the quake. 29 members were killed. Some of those members died while attending worship as walls collapsed on them. Christian Aid and Relief sent \$32,000 for immediate relief supplies as requested from the leaders of the CELC of Nepal.

Counselors from WLCFS - Christian Family Solutions, John Schuetze and Anita Smith, arrived in Nepal on February 4 to hold a workshop to provide trauma and grief counseling to men, women, and children affected by the earthquake and its aftermath. The purpose of the workshop was to bring comfort to the survivors - so that they will receive healing for their trauma and grief - and in turn share what they learned with others when they return to their villages. Counselor Anita Smith shared, "there is joy here despite all the losses they have suffered."

## FY 2016-17 Humanitarian Aid Grants

During the June 2016 meeting, WELS Christian Aid and Relief will approve humanitarian aid grants for FY 2016-17. Last year \$332,064 was approved in support of these projects which help our home and world missionaries build relationships to share the Gospel by meeting community needs. Humanitarian Aid is used to dig fresh water wells, fund health clinics, provide for orphans, develop community gardens and welcome legal immigrants to our churches and communities. We thank you, our members, and our gracious Lord, for allowing us to increase our support for these Gospel bridge building projects.