

Barbara Friesen: Tireless in the Face of Disaster

Fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes. These are just a few ways nature can turn a family's life upside down in an instant. One minute, you have everything, the next, it is all gone.

When this happens, people like Palm Village Patio Home resident, Barbara Friesen, are called to act on their belief that as the bible teaches, we are to help our neighbors when disaster strikes.

Barbara has been called many times to help, and today is Area Coordinator for Mennonite Disaster Service. Her dedication to helping began in 1993, after the Northridge earthquake. "My husband and I were called to Los Angeles to be project directors for MDS," said Barbara, "and little did we know that would lead to a long time service. I believe that the Lord has wanted people to volunteer to do this work, and it has been a means of teaching me that things are not so valuable. They can be taken away in a matter of seconds."

So Barbara was well prepared to act when she received a request to help a local family whose home was destroyed by fire. Their pastor, Juan Montes of Primera Iglesia Menonita, felt the project fit well with the MDS goal of finding local places to be involved using available volunteers from the Reedley area.

On November 19th, 22 members of Reedley's Mennonite churches gathered to frame up the house. After starting from a clean slab, all of the exterior and interior framing was com-

pleted in one day. As the house progresses, volunteers have been well cared for through homemade meals from the homeowner's family as well as the Mission and Service Committee of Reedley First Mennonite Church.

Barbara recruits volunteers and oversees projects in the Reedley area, and as a willing Ambassador for MDS these days, she loves to explain the importance of her work. "Through

**Always
there when
someone
needs help**

Barbara Friesen, right, is the Area Coordinator for the Mennonite Disaster Service, and recently was on scene helping to oversee the rebuilding of a Reedley family's home destroyed by fire.



the ministry of MDS, souls have been saved, hearts have been relieved of pain and suffering, lives have been rebuilt, churches have been started, families have homes rebuilt and friendships have been created. That is why I have stayed with MDS all these years. God has blessed me and I praise him for that, and I have received more than I could ever give."

As a memorial for her late husband Roger Friesen, Barbara has a high school youth scholarship in place, which helps pay the transportation costs for high school students to travel to MDS projects throughout the United States.

