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# Orphan Grain Train, Inc.



## Caring for God's Children

Orphan Grain Train's Norfolk warehouse in Nebraska shipped 99,792 Mercy Meals (fortified rice meals), sleeping mats, school desks, chairs, school supplies and much more to a new recipient in Malawi.

Pastor Moses Nkhata, Bishop for Word of Grace Church received the container of food and aid and his heart could not have been filled more with gratitude! Pam Neresian with 'Christ's Footprints in Africa' is in Minnesota and helps support Word of Grace Church. Their goal is to equip pastors and community leaders to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and to promote community growth.

Pam arranged for the shipment from OGT and worked with Pastor Moses to write these touching words of how OGT impacts the region.

Malawi is one of the poorest nations in the world. It is considered 80% agricultural yet the land is over farmed and subject to adverse climate changes. Droughts and flooding make plentiful harvests few and far between. The people living in the area where we work are considered the rural poor and often forgotten. These gifts will not be wasted as they are distributed through the church and the schools to the neediest in the area.

*Continue reading on pages 2 & 3 how your support has enriched their lives.*

# Caring for God's Children

Many people in this area struggle to find food for their family or other items considered basic to many of us. Many are suffering from starvation now because of very low yields from their gardens in all of 2024 due to severe drought or flooding. Those who have planted a garden again are putting their hope in the next crop but, today, as I write this, many in Malawi are facing challenges from Cyclone Chido that is raging through Mozambique and into Malawi right now. The rainy season that has just started brings with it ideal mosquito breeding conditions and therefore the danger of more malaria. Blankets provide a covering from the rain and the mosquitos and many are without this basic need. These people need the help of outsiders like OGT and Mercy Meals to survive. We are forever grateful that you cared enough to donate these items and pray you know what a blessing they will be.



*Two children give a 'high five' for desks to sit on! They are excited not to sit on the ground or logs for class time. When the schools were built 10 years ago there was no funding for furnishings. Thank you, OGT supporters for giving the children desks & school supplies!*

School fees, notebooks, pencils and other items are not available for many of the children in this area and even if they were the government schools are too far away for the very young to attend. So about 10 years ago Word of Grace Church opened two preschools and one primary school where these children can now go to learn basic subjects required by the government and taught by local teachers. Buildings were put up to house these schools but funds for desks and chairs and other items were not available. Now because of OGT, all the teachers will have a desk

and chair and some of the classrooms will have chairs for the students to use rather than sitting on the floor! The school children will have Mercy Meals to eat and not just maize porridge. Rice that will provide some variety to their diet and nutrients to fight malnutrition. The kids will also have soccer balls and playground equipment to use. Something they have only dreamed about in the past!!! Hope is being restored and people are rejoicing!

Often, it's the children, the elderly, disabled and widows who suffer the most in areas like this. These schools are there to not only share "The Good News" but also to help meet some of the basic needs of the school families and the community members. Parents are happy their kids can be in school because the schools provide hope for their child's future. The community is seeing the changes that are happening and appreciates the help that is being given. To have this additional blessing of a container filled with donations that arrived in time for our Christmas events brings much excitement to everyone here. We distributed some of the blankets, clothing, shoes and other items at the schools. Many kids who have been walking to school over rocky soil with bare feet no longer have to suffer because now they have shoes to wear. People are excited!! Another distribution of clothing, shoes and blankets was shared with the elderly, widows and very poor through the church. As Pr. Moses wrote, "This generous donation, that arrived at Christmas time, will make it a Christmas like no other". The excitement is everywhere as distributions are being made.



*OGT's container filled with Mercy Meals and aid is unloaded for many in desperate need in Malawi.*





*Some of the younger students received clothing along with small chairs for the class room. They are feeling loved with being showered with gifts they rarely receive.*



*Lunch time is a lot better with Mercy Meals being served for a variety and nutrition. The children share meals and are grateful for full bellies.*

The church does what it can to help those in need but many pastors lack a regular income themselves or have any way to provide for their family. Now, some of these men and women who are skilled in sewing will have the opportunity to start a small sewing business because they will be given a sewing machine donated by OGT. Ten small businesses will be started with these donated sewing machines. They will not only help leaders support their family but also help support the work of the church in these areas.

"We are forever grateful for all you have done to make this donation possible and for allowing us to be a beneficiary of the many blessings that come from your work. I pray you

can feel some of the same joy and gratitude that we feel as it is being extended to you through the prayers of many in Malawi who will never forget you!" from Pam Neresian.

*Pictures courtesy of Pastor Moses, Bishop for Word of Grace Church Malawi.*

## **Correct Mailing Address**

Please be aware that OGT Office & Norfolk Warehouse have a PO Box for mail and your letter/package might be returned to you if using street address or wrong zip code.

Please Mail to:  
OGT  
PO Box 1466  
Norfolk, NE 68702

Thank you!



*The elderly & widows were shown the love of Christ with blankets, clothing and other goods from OGT supporters. Mercy Meals were also shared to feed the families living in severe poverty.*



# Hope for Families

At the time of writing this, it has been four months since the catastrophic rains and raging waters wiped out homes, businesses and even small towns in the southeast. Families continue to struggle with housing and resources to rebuild or what to do next. In December, Orphan Grain Train's Vice-President Grant Schmidt and Field Work Director Pete Gnan spent five days meeting the victims of this vicious storm and the heroes that continue to help in southeastern North Carolina. Grant handed out \$27,500.00 in checks to families that have lost everything and in need of a hand-up. These are just some of the photos and people helped. This would not be possible if it wasn't for the support we receive from our faithful, generous donors – Thank You!



*Grant Schmidt and Pete Gnan presented Mike and Michelle Toberer, with a check of \$10,000 to help with the distribution of Christmas gifts and supplies to victims, especially the children, of the Carolina floods. Mike and Michelle founded The Mountain Mule Packers to bring aid to those people who live in places that are not easily accessible by vehicle. Pictured second from the left is Grant Schmidt, pictured 4th & 5th is Mike and Michelle Toberer and far right is Pete Gnan.*



*Stacey Howell and her husband Chris, from Friends Assisting Neighbors, Stephen Lambert from Operation Anchor, and the Mayor of Lansing, NC., met with Grant Schmidt and assisted in distributing much needed funds to the different residents in the northeastern portion of North Carolina.*



*This is the sanctuary of Mountainside Lutheran Church which is located on the campus of the Lutheran Camp Linn Haven, just south of Linville, NC. The interior was completely filled with water all the way above the windows in this beautiful church. The insulation, drywall, and other supplies that you see in the picture were provided by OGT Domestic Disaster Relief funds to assist them with restoring the sanctuary back to its original beauty.*





*This is the interior of the cafeteria at Camp Linn Haven. Water 8' – 10' high flowed through this building and as you can see the interior was completely destroyed.*



*In the town of Swannanoa, NC, neighborhoods and homes were severely damaged as waters rose as high as 12' in most neighborhoods. This home, is an example of the condition that so many of these homes are in and that are struggling to restore back to its original state. OGT is working in this neighborhood assisting and partnering with other organizations to bring this area back to life.*

OGT will be there for the long-term helping families rebuild their lives. These efforts are possible because of our dedicated donors and volunteers along with Thrivent's prior match for hurricane victims. Thank you to everyone that gave and those that continue to support these relief efforts. May God continue to bless OGT, our supporters and the many families in need.

## **Thrivent Choice Dollars Expire Monday, March 31**

**Attention Thrivent Members** – Please direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Orphan Grain Train before they expire on Monday, March 31, 2025. Please keep in mind that the phones will be very busy on that Monday so why not designate your Choice Dollars Today. It is simple and doesn't cost you anything but your time. **YOU MUST RENEW THE DISTRIBUTION OF YOUR CHOICE DOLLARS EVERY YEAR. YOUR CHOICE OF A PRIOR YEAR DOES NOT CARRY OVER.**

There are two ways to direct your Choice Dollars. Go to [www.thriventchoice.com](http://www.thriventchoice.com) or call 1-800-847-4836 and say "choice dollars" at automation.

Thank you for considering OGT when making your Choice Dollars donation. **thrivent®**

# Increase in Donations and Volunteers

Since the new Servant Center in Norfolk, Nebraska has opened in September, we have seen the fruits of the labor that went into building it. Every day we feel that God is blessing our mission with increased donations, as well as, more volunteers. We have seen an increase in the number and type of opportunities that are coming to us, including doubling our production of Mercy Meals. Previously, we were often limited in the number and size of groups we were able to accommodate for sorting and packing donations. In our new space, we are routinely hosting groups of ten or more, while still having plenty of space for our regular volunteers.

We look forward to continued growth as God sees fit. We are now actively recruiting volunteers and looking for new opportunities to undertake. Even as this is published, we are preparing to host one of our largest groups yet – 79 seventh and eighth grade students to volunteer from Christ Lutheran School here in Norfolk. ~ Steve Fehrs, Norfolk Warehouse Manager.



*Servant Center sorting & packing room is busy with UNMC students in red and behind them is a group from Norfolk Public Schools. We are blessed to be able to accommodate more volunteers at the same time.*



*The new warehouse area is more efficient with storage along with easy access for loading shipping containers.*

## Support for Orphanages

ADOPT-AN-ORPHANAGE PROGRAM GROWS! Thanks to our recent partnership with Bible Orphan Ministry, we have begun supporting orphanages and other institutions in Ukraine, enabling them to Gospel outreach and deliver humanitarian aid. As you can imagine, the ongoing war with Russia has caused unimaginable hardships there. Supporters have already stepped forward to provide help for orphanages in Doneshi, Korostyshyv, and Nova Borova. More support is always welcome. We've just learned about a need for support for the Bererzivka Institution, where 240 women with disabilities reside; Kmitiv Orphanage, which shelters 80 children, ages 6-17; and Pugachivka Mental Institution, which harbors 90 women with special needs. Meanwhile, our Hannah House and Adopt-an-Orphanage teams in St. Petersburg, Russia, continue to work to visit orphanages and provide programs at Hannah House, all designed to provide for the spiritual, social, and physical needs for the young people they serve. For more information about opportunities to support our Hannah House and Adopt-an-Orphanage ministries, you can email Paul Leckband at [pleckband@ogt.org](mailto:pleckband@ogt.org) or call him on his cell phone at 402-992-0578.



*Pugachivka Mental Institution cares for many women with disabilities and is in need of hygiene and feminine supplies, blankets, and other needed supplies for daily activities at the center.*



# Help for Fire Victims

OGT is working with Pastor Ken Frese, a retired pastor in Los Angeles, CA. He is familiar with the area that has burned and knows many families there. We gave him \$50,000.00 to share \$1,000.00 checks to families that have lost everything. The Survival Money is for the families to use on immediate needs such as hotel, food, toiletries, etc. Please pray for these families that have lost so much and living in uncertainty.



If you would like to help support these families, please consider having your impact increased with a Thrivent Match by donating toward OGT Fire Relief Efforts on Thrivent's Giving platform; for every \$2 donated Thrivent will match \$1, up to \$500,000 through this online disaster response campaign. Thrivent will pay all transaction fees so 100% of your donation goes to CA fire relief efforts. To Give toward the Match, go to [www.ogt.org](http://www.ogt.org) and Click on the Button: 'Thrivent Match for OGT's Wildfire Relief Efforts' to be taken to Thrivent Giving Platform.

*\*Thrivent will provide a \$1 match for every \$2 donated up to a maximum match of \$500,000. This matching opportunity will run until the sooner of the match cap being met or 3/10/2025.*

## New Houston Warehouse

OGT's Houston Branch is waiting patiently for the final phase of construction on the Servant Center and Warehouse - windows, doors, flooring. We look forward to occupancy prior to a community ribbon-cutting event scheduled for Tuesday, February 25th at 11:30am.

Rev. Ralph Schmidt is orchestrating the dedication planned for Sunday, March 23rd at 3:00pm. The Rev. Dr. Jerry Kieschnick will share an uplifting message as we dedicate the building to the glory of our Lord and in service to those in need. Following the service guests are welcome to enjoy a first-hand look at the facility while enjoying light refreshments.



Everyone is welcome to join in the celebrations held in the new building - 5040 E Sam Houston Parkway S, Pasadena, TX 77505.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers - Mike Rathje, Branch Manager 281-723-4989

*Thank You*

THANK YOU.....so much for your support this past year. Your year-end gifts were a blessing and very appreciative. We are able to provide for Hurricane relief and now your warm generosity and gifts are providing support and relief for the fire victims in Southern California. As we begin a new year in 2025, please prayerfully consider a gift in your Will or Trust; gifts of Real Estate either current or deferred in a Charitable Remainder Trust. Naming Orphan Grain Train as part of your estate plan will be a blessing to many who are in need through disaster assistance and helping to feed many who are hungry in our world. If you have questions or assistance with a specific gift or planned gift, call or text Tom Watson (402-940-2007) or email [twatson@ogt.org](mailto:twatson@ogt.org) or Ralph Schmitt (260-452-4207) [ralphschmidt1947@gmail.com](mailto:ralphschmidt1947@gmail.com)

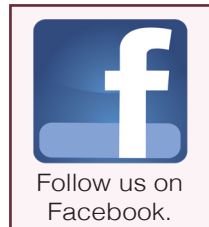


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## Orphan Grain Train

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Telephone: 402-371-7393  
[www.ogt.org](http://www.ogt.org)



Charity Navigator  
has given Orphan Grain  
Train "4 Stars", which  
is their highest rating.



[#orphangraintrain](https://www.instagram.com/orphangraintrain)



*These children were thrilled to receive tote bags filled with school supplies and chairs for their classroom! Many times, they share paper and pencils while sitting on the floor or on logs during school. Read more about other gifts received in Malawi on pages 1-3.*