



## The Flood, The Camp, The Team

**Orphan Grain Train Spring Mission Trip  
Camp Linn Haven, NC  
March 9-14, 2025**



In late September, 2024, the Lutheran Summer Camp in the Northwest region of North Carolina, Camp Linn Haven, had its entire campus severely damaged from the flood. Flood waters rose some 30 feet above normal and damaged nearly every building in camp site on their campus (The maintenance building is pictured above).

Bill McAllister, past football coach of Concordia University Nebraska, teamed up with current Head Coach, Pat Daberkow, to form a group of players and coaches to travel to North Carolina to spend their spring break repairing the camp and spending their evenings in a week long Bible Study (pictured above). Orphan Grain Train assisted in supporting the event financially and providing the materials needed for restoration and reconstruction.



# OGT Spring Mission

Upon arrival, three major tasks were completed.

- Rebuild the roof, steps, and entry into the camp staff quarters
- Reposition a 40" handicapped ramp into the sanctuary
- Build a new deck for the storage of firewood

All of these were completed in the first day, so with the guidance of the camp director, a whole new set of tasks were established, and as shown in the following pictures, the team of volunteers accomplished more than the camp directors had ever imagined.



Over a dozen more tasks were completed including much needed duct work, new entries to buildings, repair to the shop, replaced the wood shed and the pump house and more! The Camp was blessed by the Concordia football team and for the success of this mission team event!

***"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms"***  
**1 Peter 4:10**

## Giving Generously - 2Corinthians 9:11

Through your generous giving this year, Orphan Grain Train has been able to help families recover with disaster relief such as food & mercy meals, hygiene supplies, drinking water, for victims of Hurricane Helene. Donations of hay for wildfire relief for ranchers and caring for orphans through our Adopt-An-Orphanage Ministry, THANK YOU!

Did you also know that giving generously from your retirement assets benefits Orphan Grain Train and saves taxes with a current gift of all or part of your required minimum distribution? You may also wish to designate Orphan Grain Train as a beneficiary of an estate gift in your Will or Trust or, from your retirement assets. Please call me or text Tom Watson 402-940-2007, [twatson@ogt.org](mailto:twatson@ogt.org) or Ralph Schmidt 260-452-4207, [ralphschmidt1947@gmail.com](mailto:ralphschmidt1947@gmail.com). We can provide whatever assistance you need to complete a current plan or an estate gift. May God continue to bless you!



**A number of OGT branches across the U.S. came to the aid of North Carolina after Hurricane Helen. Pictured are loads from Indiana and Michigan and hygiene kits made at the Mid-Atlantic branch.**



*Mid-Atlantic OGT branch volunteers responded to the need for hygiene kits for Hurricane Helene victims. Almost 2,000 kits were made and sent to Asheville, N.C.*



*Michigan branch unloading a generator that was donated.*



*Volunteers from the Indiana Branch in Jonesville delivered generators, heaters, power cords and other disaster relief items. They also delivered a 2011 Toyota Sienna van to Mia, a single mom who lost everything in the flooding from Hurricane Helene.*



*Pictured with Grant Schmidt is Lois Tackett, Director of "Manna from Heaven" of Myra, KY, receiving a check for \$10,000.00 to help her repair her warehouse and purchase 5 freezers that were destroyed in the most recent floods. Orphan Grain Train partners with her to assist in supplying food and supplies for the folks in southern Kentucky.*

## World's Largest Displacement and Hunger Crisis

The world's largest human displacement and hunger crisis of the 2023-2025 time period is a result of a conflict between the leader of the Sudanese Armed Forces army chief general Abdul Fattah al-Burhan and head of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, Mohamed Hamdan Dagal.

6.1 million people are fleeing in North and South Sudan. 1.5 million are fleeing to countries abroad. The countries affected are South Sudan, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya and Uganda. Sudan and South Sudan top the watch list. The people most affected in this largest human crisis of 2023 through 2025 are suffering daily with the threat of death.



*Beans, rice and maize flour will be shared with Christians and nonChristians alike.*

In the midst of this, the Bishop of the Lutheran Church South Sudan, the Rev. Peter Anibati Abia has become a source of life. Bishop Peter, (As he likes to

be called), became known to Rev. Ray S. Wilke, president of Orphan Grain Train, as a result of the friendship that Bishop Peter had established with



# Continued...



*Families and community members wait for food to be distributed.*

Rev. Russell Sommerfeld, former Nebraska LCMS District President. Pastor Sommerfeld had established a good relationship with Bishop Peter while spending time with him in Juba, South Sudan.

Orphan Grain Train in Norfolk sent a shipment of rolled corn via Mombasa, Kenya bound for Juba, South Sudan with the intention of it being distributed by Bishop Pete and the pastors of the South Sudan Lutheran Church. That container was held up by customs in Mombasa due to the war. It was not allowed to make the 1,000-mile overland journey from Mombasa to Juba. The trust established between Pastor Sommerfeld, Pastor Wilke and Bishop Peter was such that Orphan Grain Train began sending multiple bank transfers of \$10,000 each. This investment has proven very successful. Thousands of hungry men, women and children are being fed. According to Bishop Peter, the relief was distributed in three locations: Nuba Mountains,



*Organized distribution and clean storage keep purchased food safe and available to so many people in need of nourishment.*

Magwi County and Yambio County. He wrote, "In all these places the needs are far greater than we can handle. We thank God for your helping. We did not give the relief only to Lutheran members but to all who needed it including Muslims who run from the war in Khartoum. One Muslim lady confessed that she did not think a church could help her since she was a Muslim. She thought Christians were bad people all along!"

The items distributed were beans, rice, maize flour and bars of washing soap.

Orphan Grain Train most often tries to ship real food and

medical supplies, and survival goods that meet particular needs. In some cases, where real trust has been established, Orphan Grain Train sends cash by means of bank transfers. This means that real relief can be provided in a matter of hours, not days or weeks. This brings great happiness in

South Sudan in the midst of the world's greatest food crises. The food that Bishop Peter is providing comes directly from the marketplace. To our great surprise, this food can be purchased in-country more cheaply than it costs to ship it 12,000 miles. The food that is provided by Bishop Peter and the South Sudan Lutheran Church is still too expensive for refugees to purchase in the market place on their own. The food from OGT comes to them free of charge. They have tremendous gratitude. Everyone who receives the food knows that, Jesus, the Lord of the Church, is the source and the hands that touch it are those of His servants.

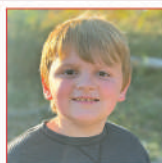
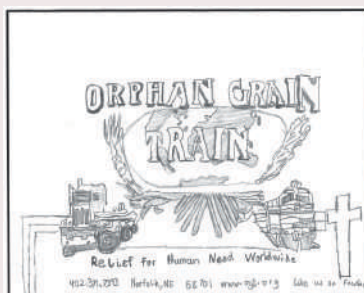
# Ravaged Malawi Grateful for Food & Clothing



There is a great need for the disadvantaged people of Malawi and Mozambique where floods, droughts and cyclones have ravaged their lands. A recent Orphan Grain Train-Norfolk warehouse shipment carrying 330 boxes of Mercy Meals, church pews, medical supplies and clothing arrived in Mitundu, Malawi. According to Bishop Harvey Chabinga, the people who received items from this shipment were extremely grateful for the quality and condition of the food, clothing and furniture. The shipment contained 71,280 Mercy Meals, fifteen waiting room chairs, eleven church pews, used clothing, geriatric supplies and equipment.



*Bishop Harvey said that distribution was done in three to four hours by members of Christ Mandate Church and people in the community.*



**Jarret Koerting**  
**First Place**  
**Winner**  
**4th Grade**

Designed for: Orphan Grain Train  
601 W. Phillip Ave., Norfolk (402) 371-7393  
Artist's Name: Jarret Koerting Grade: 4  
School: Zion Lutheran, Pierce Teacher: Mrs. Stonacek

Norfolk Daily News has been sponsoring "Design An-Ad" for 25 years. This year the son of our very own bookkeeper, Cassie Koerting won first place for his Orphan Grain Train design!



# You Feed Them

Food is often mentioned in the Bible, be it food for our physical nourishment or food for our spiritual nourishment. Christ knew we needed both. There are villages of people in Guatemala who are hungry and thirsty for both every day. Orphan Grain Train has been working with Mark Sewell and his ministry, Kingdom Connections International, to provide nourishing food and the life-saving gospel. Sewell partners with Christian churches in Guatemala and helps them distribute the rice, share the gospel and pray with the people. The rice helps people connect humanly. "People are coming to church because of the rice," said Sewell. According to Sewell, most of the villages only receive water one day a week and have very poor living conditions. Many of the families only have one meal a day. With this joint effort, Sewell is able to distribute eight one-pound bags of rice once a month for each family. A shipment of fortified rice meals from Orphan Grain Train Norfolk arrived in December and another shipment of Mercy Meals will be leaving Norfolk in early May.



*These Guatemalan women take the two-hour bus from El Churro and come to Jalapa to bag rice all day because they are so thankful to receive food.*



*Mothers and children line up to receive eight bags of rice per month. This is enough for two fortified meals per week.*



# Orphan Grain Train Dedicates New Servant Center in Houston



On Sunday, March 23, 2025, Orphan Grain Train reached an exciting milestone with the dedication of the Sara and Dick Rathgeber Servant Center in Pasadena (Houston), Texas. This moment marked the culmination of several years of determined effort by the Houston branch, which began its mission by operating out of just two shipping containers—often in 110-degree heat—preparing aid for people in desperate need.

Despite those early challenges, the local board remained committed to the mission and steadily built a dedicated team of volunteers. Now, their efforts have been rewarded with a beautiful, functional new facility.

The 12,000-square-foot center was thoughtfully designed with Houston's unique coastal location in mind. In addition to warehouse and packing space, it includes two multi-purpose classrooms that can convert into bunkhouses during storms—providing shelter for volunteers engaged in disaster relief efforts. The building also features full bathrooms with showers to accommodate extended stays.



Approximately 175 people attended the dedication ceremony, which included a powerful sermon by **Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick**, President Emeritus of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. A strong supporter of the project, Dr. Kieschnick helped raise funds for the center and reminded attendees of Jesus' call to feed the hungry and clothe the naked—commending Orphan Grain Train's mission and encouraging everyone to take part in such service.



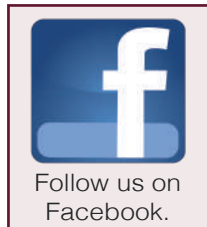


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P.O. Box 1466  
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Charity Navigator  
has given Orphan Grain  
Train "4 Stars", which  
is their highest rating.



#orphangraintrain



Pictured above is Pete Gnan, Grant Schmidt of Orphan Grain Train, and Mike Toberer, of Mountain Mule Packers. This is his newest member of his Mule Team named, "OG", in honor of our partnership which provides delivery of goods to the mountain folk in the flooded regions of North Carolina and Kentucky.