



October 29, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

All disasters and needs that are served are local. This is why Mennonite Disaster Service and organizations like ROAD (Recovering Oklahomans After Disaster), a non-profit organized by Chad Detwiler, is necessary to maintain the VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) group and give hope to hundreds of Oklahoma victims of floods, tornadoes, fires and other natural disasters that occur within our state. Since the dissolution of the group Chad and his associates were working for, there is now a huge void in the VOAD organization. ROAD will be taking up where their previous organization left off.

The main asset to the VOAD group has been assessing damage, organizing volunteers and supervising home repairs. Very few groups stay in an area for long term recovery. Our volunteer groups are still working to finish up flood projects from 2015.

Large national groups receive a lot of attention and funding but usually only show up for FEMA declared disasters and have high overhead costs. Grass root organizations are the most important for long term recovery. Many smaller disasters happen within our state. Those victims receive no help unless VOAD can maintain relationships with many NGOs (non-government organizations).

I would highly encourage a representative from your organization to attend a VOAD meeting. I believe they would be impressed how Oklahoma responds to disaster on a local level. If you have any question, please feel free to respond to me via email or phone.

One of the most important reasons we do what we do and I feel I need to remind myself and other volunteers is: Remember we rebuild not only structures but give hope to victims and rebuild communities in Christian love.

Sincerely,

Jay A. Blough
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