

Newtown School Massacre Victims Still Reeling 6 Months Later

It was six months ago Friday, on Dec. 14, that a gunman went into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., and left 26 people dead. It was the worst non-university school shooting in American history. (Thirty-two people were killed in the Virginia Tech massacre in 2007.)

Six months later, the victims' families and the entire community are still reeling from the tragedy, and Christians are stepping up to provide counseling at this critical time.

My good friend Clive Calver, senior pastor of Walnut Hill Community Church, has joined forces with the local Assemblies of God and business leaders to raise money for the Sandy Hook Restoration Fund & Fellowship. They have raised approximately \$200,000, with a goal to double that amount.

"Today, the streets are congested with TV vans, mobile broadcasting units and the like," Clive told me in an email. "Tomorrow, all in Newtown will apparently return to sleepy normality. But one thing has changed—the legacy of troubled, disturbed lives of first responders and the personal pain endured by parents who have lost those they love."

Below, I tell about the need and the program. I believe it's been well thought out and is sound. Christian Life Missions, our nonprofit partner, has voted to give \$10,000 as a matching fund for everything I can raise today from my readers. So, I urge you to read on and give generously.

Remember, Jesus said to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Were you forced to live with such a terrible ordeal, you would appreciate the Christian community rallying

around you like this. If each of us would do a little, it would go a long way.

I remember that fateful day when I heard the news. I knew that my friend Clive pastored in Bethel, Conn. While I didn't know exactly where Newtown was, I knew it couldn't be too far because Connecticut is not too big. I called Clive and found out that he and his wife live in Newtown and that his church is only 14 minutes away. Clive told me that some of the first responders were from his church and that some of the children who died were actually connected to his church through some of the community outreaches his church does.

I invited Clive to write a commentary on what was happening from the perspective of a local pastor. You can read that by clicking [here](#).

When Clive, who is part of the guiding board of the project, told me this week about the Sandy Hook Restoration Fund & Fellowship and reminded me that the sixth-month anniversary is a traumatic time for the victims' families, I knew immediately that I needed to respond and share this need.

The Sandy Hook Restoration Fund & Fellowship exists to aid in the healing and rebuilding of the Sandy Hook/Newtown community by enabling and supporting immediate and long-term community, counseling and school needs and initiatives.

These services are being provided through the Fund:

Counseling and support: Providing ongoing professional counseling and trauma support to families who lost children, families of surviving children, first responders and the broader community via one-on-one counseling, public seminars, the GriefShare ministry, women's programs and counselors being available following major events.

Equipping and training: Professional equipping and training in how to help others work in the areas of trauma and grief for

local church leaders, prayer teams, care teams and therapists. In addition to workshops and seminars, resources have been developed and dispersed.

Healing, comfort and unity: Large-scale community events that bring together thousands from the area to heal, receive comfort and experience community.

Evangelism: With approximately 4,000 visitors having come through the doors of Walnut Hill Community Church in the past six months, the gospel has been clearly preached and the love of Jesus clearly shown. Walnut Hill has already seen more than 100 people surrender their lives to Jesus since the tragedy. Hundreds more are on a journey toward Him.

Financial support: Funds were provided to help those directly involved in the tragedy with pressing financial needs immediately following the tragedy in order to give them necessary space to heal. Funds continue to be made available for these purposes.

So often our readers have given generously to needs like this, most recently with the tornados in Oklahoma. Please give this time. Your gift is tax-deductible through Christian Life Missions, and every dollar will go to the Sandy Hook Restoration Fund. Nothing will be taken out for administration. And your gift is matched up to \$10,000 from Christian Life Missions.

It's like Clive Calver told me: "Counsel and support are so needed, and your help to make this possible is incredible. Thank you!"

Please click [here](#) to donate to the Sandy Hook Restoration Fund & Fellowship, and please give generously.

Steve Strang is the founder and publisher of Charisma. He has been friends with Clive Calver since 1992 and served for several years on the board of World Relief when Clive was

president. Follow him on Twitter at @sstrang or Facebook (stephenestrang).

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