

Practical Ways You Can Communicate God's Love to the Bahamas Right Now

Note: Somebody Cares America/International Vice President Jodie Chiricosta just returned from the Bahamas with an encouraging report, but recovery will be a long process. Here is her report:

In the midst of the vast need in the Bahamas, and while still dealing with the terrifying experience so many Dorian survivors faced during the hurricane, the church and government called a National Day of Prayer. They made it a priority to thank the Lord for His protection and ask Him for provision to rebuild. The situation is certainly dire for many people there, and will be for the foreseeable future, but it could have been far worse. It was such a blessing to be a part of their night of thanks and prayer.

We met with several people involved in leading relief efforts on Grand Bahama island who personally lost everything in the storm. They are serving in borrowed clothes while living with friends or neighbors. The hospital administrator in Freeport told us many of the doctors and nurses are in the same situation, having lost everything, and have no home, no vehicle nor even a change of clothes. The hospital was filled with floodwater, and virtually all of its lifesaving equipment was destroyed. The same happened to community clinics across the island. We will be communicating with them to see how the Somebody Cares network can help with much-needed medical equipment and supplies.

Our partners Iris Relief and Crisis Response International are also serving faithfully on the ground—passing out solar and battery powered lights in communities without power,

distributing goods that are shipped in and providing chaplaincy and crisis counseling to traumatized people. While there, we delivered Somebody Cares comfort bears to pastors in both Nassau, for Abaco evacuees, and Freeport, for children who have suffered loss.

We also provided art supplies in Freeport to help children process their grief through art therapy. One of the biggest needs expressed by every pastor and leader we spoke with is the need for crisis counseling—thousands of people are still in shock and suffering from trauma. At their invitation, we plan to provide training in crisis and trauma counseling to pastors and lay leaders.

The logistics of distributing aid throughout the communities, cays and islands affected is a big challenge for partner churches, as many people lost vehicles due to flooding. Somebody Cares is working to find a box truck with a lift gate to assist on Grand Bahama island, and researching the possibility of acquiring a boat to help with island-to-island deliveries.

Somebody Cares is honored to be a part of bringing relief and helping with recovery efforts for this nation that looks to the Lord as their source. Recovery will be a long-haul and finances are greatly needed to meet the needs. Please continue to pray for the Bahamas, and to give generously if you can at . We and the very gracious people of the Bahamas thank you!

Jodie Chiricosta *is the vice president for Somebody Cares/International.*