



ND FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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Hotline set up for donations and volunteers

State emergency management officials say the outpouring of support and offers of help coming in to Fargo and the state is inspiring. They have established a hotline (211) to capture offers of help – both donations and unaffiliated volunteers.

Individuals and organizations not currently affiliated with volunteer response organizations should call 211 or their nation-wide toll free number 1-877-422-0062.

211 is an information and referral number with Call Center staff who will gather names, contact information and donation offers and convey information to appropriate entities. While all donations are appreciated, financial contributions are preferred. This allows relief organizations to purchase exactly what items are needed to assist in the response and recovery efforts.

Using the 211 system will help ensure appropriate use of donations, better management of volunteer resources and will free up voluntary organizations' phone lines to deal with health and safety.

BUT...WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH THE AFTERMATH OF DISASTER

Deborah Jendro, Editor

The children of North Dakota have learned a whole new set of vocabulary words over the past few weeks. Words like flood, crest, sandbagging, dike, levee and evacuation have become common place in many homes throughout many cities and rural areas of this northern plains state .

In Bismarck, our state capital, the Missouri River overflowed its banks sending muddy waters into some residential areas. North, South, East and West of there, waters threatened and some spilled over river embankments along with melting snow, and rain. Ice blocked culverts would not allow drainage and over land flooding gripped the door steps of many a farm and city home.

In Fargo, snow, rain, and the distention of the Red River of the North sent many of its inhabitants fleeing for high ground, while those that were spared worked diligently to fill and stock pile sandbags. Long

assembly lines of volunteers passed sandbags one at a time to surround homes for protection as well as reinforcing and patching dikes and levees for the salvation of our city.

All told there was huge community outpouring. Moms, dads, older kids, college students and other able bodied citizens donned their boots,

gloves and hats to meet their match...the bulging Red River of the North. Those affected, those protecting and those directing went without rest and endured much stress from hard work, waiting , watching and wondering what will happen next. But...what about the children? What are they thinking and feeling? How will we help them deal with the stress of the flood?



Snow begins to fall in downtown Fargo, North Dakota. A massive blizzard bore down on flood-ravaged North Dakota Monday as officials struggled to shore-up levees against potential erosion from high, powerful waves and swift moving waters.

THE EYE OF THE CHILD

Saturday, March 28th marked the anniversary of my grandson's birth. Little Forrest was turning 2! Nothing could keep us from this celebration, not even a flood! My family and I trekked across the only open bridge in the city to our sister city Moorhead MN. It is there that our daughter resides with

her husband and 3 children. As we entered their home, I was greeted with little open arms and squeal of delight. My 8 year old granddaughter, Addi standing next to her 5 year old sister Ireland was specifically glad to see us. She stated, "Grandma, I was so worried about you. I heard

some houses in Fargo went under and I thought it might be yours." I reassured her that our house was just fine . She was relieved to hear that."But, she said, I really wanted to know what it was like to live in a house under water!" The wonder of little minds!!
Deb Jendro

FAMILY VOICES OF NORTH DAKOTA READY TO HELP :

*Toys tossed on the floor
Hand prints on the wall
Slamming of the door
And footsteps down the hall*

*Boxes made into towers
Covers turned into tents
Voices get a lil' louder
Guide lines get a lil' bent*

*Boxes now go untouched
Covers in a folded pile
Silence never was so much
Guide lines never been n' awhile*

*Did we waste our time a way
We once had back then
Never taking time to play
To 'oft we walked right past them*

*Now they're grown and gone
The house stands still and neat
Only memories left to carry on
Oh, how our hearts do often weep*

*Would we change time if we could
Would we play a bigger part
Did we get to wrapped up in the world
For now we're left with just
Memories of the heart.*

-Gloria Babb,

"Memories of the Heart"

FVND is taking information from families across the state on medical equipment, clothes, adaptive equipment, diapers etc. for those who will lose many of these items due to flooding. If you have an item for another family please let us know asap, so we can log these as flood efforts resume.

Call 888-522-9654 or fvnd@drtel.net For the Red River Valley, we are coordinating efforts with First Link, Fargo Public Health and others. However we know and understand that flooding issues are not just isolated to the Red River Valley...so if you identify a family in need, please have them contact us. We also know as families are able to go back to their homes needs will be high in

cleanup efforts and assessing loss. We have started a Flood Relief account to help families of a child with a disability or chronic health illness. If you would like to donate even \$1, please send to FVND PO Box 163, Edgeley ND 58433. Please indicate on your correspondence Flood Relief, Flood Efforts.



Flood water from the Missouri River surrounds a home in the Fox Island neighborhood of Bismarck, N.D. on Tuesday, March 24, 2009

CHILDREN'S REACTIONS TO FLOODING

Children react differently to a flood and its aftermath depending on their age, developmental level, and prior experiences. Some will respond by withdrawing, while others will have angry outbursts. Still others will become agitated or irritable. Parents should attempt to remain sensitive to each child's reactions. The following are typical reactions children might exhibit during any natural disaster:

Children's Reactions:

- Fear and worry about their safety or the safety of others, including pets
- Fear of separation from family members
- Clinging to parents, siblings, or teachers

- Worry that another flood will come
- Increase in activity level
- Decrease in concentration and attention
- Withdrawal from others
- Angry outbursts or tantrums
- Aggression to parents, siblings, or friends
- Increase in physical complaints, such as headaches and stomachaches
- Change in school performance
- Long-lasting focus on the flood, such as talking repeatedly about it or acting out the event in play
- Increased sensitivity to reminders of the flood
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of interest in usual activities, even playing with friends
- Regressive behaviors, such as baby-talk, bed-wetting, or tantrums
- Increase in risky behaviors for teens, such as drinking alcohol, using substances, harming themselves, or engaging in dangerous activities

Information adapted and provided by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN).

Flood Quotes from Kids:

We haven't had school for over two weeks and I really miss my friends. I hope they are OK.

For three days, all I heard on TV was news about the flooding.

I was playing outside and when I came in I asked my mom why we were watching the news. She said it was because of a flood in our town. What if the flood would have come to our house when I was playing outside?

I have been worried about the flood, but after I went for a walk with my mother, I realized it was all under the Veteran's Memorial Bridge!

My dad hasn't been able to work for many many days. Now he says he won't get a pay check. I hope we have enough money for food.

Young girls being rescued by air boat from their flood ravaged home. They said the feeling of being trapped was terrifying.





North Dakota The
Flood of 2009:
Helping the
Children

**Support, advocacy
and education!**

1-800-484-2263

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Community Partner

HOW TO HELP CHILDREN DURING THESE STRESSFUL TIMES

Spend time talking to children, letting them know that it is okay to ask questions and to share their worries. Answer questions briefly and honestly and be sure to ask children for their opinions and ideas. To help children's recovery:

- Be a role model. Try to remain calm, so your child can learn from you how to handle stressful situations.
- Monitor adult conversations. Be aware of what adults are saying about the flood or the resulting damage. Children may misinterpret what they hear and be unnecessarily frightened.
- Limit media exposure. Protect your child from graphic images of the flood, including those on television, on the internet, and in the newspaper.
- Reassure children they are safe. You may need to repeat this frequently even after the flood passes. Spend extra time with them.
- Replace lost or damaged toys as soon as you are able.
- Calm worries about their friends' safety. Even though phones may not be working, reassure your children that their friends' parents are taking care of them, just the way they are being taken care of by you.
- Tell children about community recovery. Reassure children that things are being done to restore electricity, phones, water, and gas. Tell them that the town or city will be removing debris and helping families find housing.
- Take care of your children's health. Help them get enough rest, exercise, and healthy food. Be sure they have a balance of quiet times and physical activities.
- Maintain regular daily life. Even in the midst of disruption and change, children feel more secure with a familiar routine.
- Maintain expectations. Stick to your family rules about good behavior and respect for others. Continue family chores, but keep in mind that children may need more reminding than usual.
- Encourage children to help. Children cope better and recover sooner if they feel they are helping out. Give them small clean-up tasks or other ways to contribute.
- Be extra patient once children have returned to school. They may be more distracted and need extra help with homework for a while.
- Give support at bedtime. Children may be more anxious at times of separation from parents. Spend a little more time talking, cuddling, or reading than usual.
- Keep things hopeful. Even in the most difficult situation, it is important to remain optimistic about the future. Your positive outlook will help your children be able to see good things in the world around them.
- Seek professional help if your child still has difficulties more than six weeks after the flood.

Families Helping Families