

# TBM sees God ‘putting everything together’ in disaster zone

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—It didn’t take long for Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteers to make their first friend upon arriving in Nashville, Tenn.



TBM disaster relief volunteer Joe Crutchfield greets newfound friend Stephon, age 8, with a fist bump. (TBM Photo)

Shortly after they set up a mobile kitchen at New Season Baptist Church, 8-year-old Stephon showed up. He quickly began getting to know the Texans, asking them questions: Why were they in Nashville? What are they doing at the church? Where are they going to sleep? Could he help?

The young man stuck by their side all day as the TBM Rapid Response Unit prepared 300 lunches and 300 evening meals for people whose lives were turned upside-down days earlier by a series of tornadoes that devastated

Tennessee. The storms killed 24 people and injured 88. The twister that struck Putnam County had winds as high as 175 mph.

## **Prepared more than 2,400 meals**

In the span of a few days, TBM volunteers prepared more than 2,400 meals and distributed them with New Season Church members to communities that lost electricity. For many of the families the volunteers served, TBM was their only source of hot meals during some of the most difficult days of their lives.

“We got to share with them,” said Gary Dusek, a TBM volunteer from First Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs. “At points, it got quite emotional. The tornadoes affected some rough parts of town. They’re really hurting.”

The team worked from before sunrise to after sunset to meet needs however possible. The group provided meals to children as they left school for the day to make sure they’d have something to eat. The Texans delivered supplies to an elementary school that served students who had been affected.

“It’s amazing how God is putting everything together—not only the survivors, but the church members that are helping serve the community,” said TBM volunteer Sonny Garza from Faith Baptist Church in Benevides.

## **Overwhelmed with gratitude**

As TBM volunteers served, people were overwhelmed with gratitude. Individuals thanked the men for helping, gave them hugs and welcomed them with conversation.

None was more grateful than Stephon. The second day he knew the TBM volunteers, he asked his grandmother if he could go to the church service

with them. She agreed, and he sat between two TBM volunteers during the first worship service of his young life.

Near the end of the service, the pastor made an altar call. Stephon asked his new friends what the pastor was talking about and why people get baptized. After a short conversation, Stephon professed Christ as Lord and Savior.

“The Lord was really speaking to him that day,” Dusek said. “It was wonderful.”