ONE YEAR AFTER THE STORMS FRANKLIN GRAHAM RETURNS TO TUSCALOOSA TO ENCOURAGE STORM SURVIVORS

BOONE, N.C., April 24, 2012—When savage twisters devastated communities in Alabama, international Christian relief organization Samaritan’s Purse, headed by Franklin Graham, responded immediately - deploying two Disaster Relief Units and armies of volunteers. The organization coordinated more than 6,900 volunteers to remove debris, cut downed trees and perform emergency repairs on homes for 1,512 families in need. One year later, Samaritan’s Purse is still helping victims in need by rebuilding ruined homes in Tuscaloosa neighborhoods.

Graham, Samaritan’s Purse president and CEO, was on the scene just days after the tornadoes and has continued to monitor the work in the Tuscaloosa area. On April 26 Graham will be speaking at the West Alabama Leadership Prayer Breakfast in Tuscaloosa to encourage pastors and community leaders before flying to Accra, Ghana, for his international Celebration of Hope festival.

"Over the past year, our staff and volunteers have been sharing the love of Christ with the people of Tuscaloosa," said Luther Harrison, vice president of North American Ministries for the organization. "As we rebuild homes, we want to encourage storm survivors and let them know they haven’t been forgotten."

After the initial disaster relief and cleanup phase, Samaritan’s Purse has continued to work in Tuscaloosa to help tornado survivors, rebuilding new homes and repairing damaged ones at no cost to the homeowner.

Each new home includes a safe room, which is encased in concrete with a steel door and special steel hinges and deadbolts. It is built in the center of the house to keep residents safe if another storm comes their way. So far, the organization has rebuilt or repaired eight homes and plans to complete up to twenty. Some 500 volunteers have worked with Samaritan’s Purse staff to construct these homes for tornado victims.

COVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES

INTERVIEW via Skype, Phone or In Person

• Interview Luther Harrison who will be in Tuscaloosa April 24 - 27

• Interview homeowners who have moved into a new home built by the organization

• Interview individuals with homes that are currently under construction

• Speak with volunteers from all over the U.S. who are helping rebuild homes

*Hi-res photos and broll of Samaritan’s Purse's initial disaster relief efforts and ongoing Tuscaloosa rebuild efforts are available upon request.
Background on Samaritan's Purse: Samaritan's Purse is a North Carolina-based international Christian relief organization that responds to disasters and other emergencies across the nation and around the world. Last year, Samaritan's Purse helped more than 3,200 households affected by storms in 10 states through the efforts of more than 20,000 volunteers. In the last 8 weeks alone, Samaritan’s Purse has responded to tornadoes in Arlington and Lancaster, Texas; Henryville and Madison, Ind.; Harrisburg, Ill.; West Liberty, Ky.; and Charlotte, N.C. The organization coordinated volunteer crews who worked to patch roofs, cut trees, clear debris and assist some 400 households in their greatest time of need.

To volunteer with Samaritan's Purse, go to www.spvolunteernetwork.org. Donations to help storm victims can be made at www.samaritanspurse.org.

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