



THE HOUSING CRISIS OF ATTAWAPISKAT

“The swift response of our donors enabled the Red Cross to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable families in Attawapiskat. Thank you for your generosity and compassion.”

~Diana Borowski,
Director of Philanthropy

Safe and warm shelter is something many Canadians take for granted. But the recent housing crisis in Attawapiskat revealed that many people were living without warmth and protection from the elements during the harsh northern winters.

Homes with plywood walls, plastic-covered windows, and a lack of insulation, plumbing and electricity were not enough to protect the residents from the frigid temperatures. Many of the dwellings were overcrowded, and relied on makeshift heat sources, which led to burns and house fires. It was clear that the remote First Nation community was not prepared for the looming winter months.

Outside of the town, Beverly Koostachin and her partner, Joseph Lahtail, live in a small wooden house. Half of the house has electricity, but there is no running water. A handmade wood stove keeps the family warm during the winter.

Down the street, nine people including a child, share the small Tookate family home. With such little space, one person has moved their mattress to a crawl space under the floorboards. The sewage pump is located in the next room, which often breaks and backs up.

For Beverly, Joseph, the Tookates and other vulnerable families living in Attawapiskat, there was an immediate need to improve their housing conditions before the arrival of winter.

RED CROSS RESPONSE

The Canadian Red Cross is recognized for its expertise in emergency response and responds to thousands of emergencies across the country every year, including past emergency response operations in northern Ontario communities faced with forest fires and flooding. Community leaders in Attawapiskat requested the support of the Red Cross shortly after the housing crisis was identified. The role of the Red Cross was to assist with managing donations, identify immediate needs and make arrangements to get supplies to the community as quickly as possible.

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RED CROSS RESPONSE CONT'D

During the first couple of days, a Red Cross assessment team arrived in Attawapiskat. Staff and volunteers visited many of the dwellings, speaking with community members in order to determine the most urgent needs for vulnerable families. Working in cooperation with the community and local and provincial authorities, plans were made to obtain and transport supplies to keep families safe and warm during the winter.

Several flights were made to the remote community, delivering winter clothes and boots, blankets, bed frames, mattresses, heaters, generators, insulation and building materials and industrial laundry equipment. Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, first aid kits and other safety equipment were also provided. Many of the homes have unsafe heat sources, such as old oil drums being used as fire pits. To ensure the residents can stay warm safely, \$130,000 of the total donations has been allocated to the purchase and installation of proper woodstoves.

HOW YOUR DONATIONS MADE A DIFFERENCE

BUILDING SUPPLIES:

including generators, fridges, plastic sheeting and insulation, carpeting, lights, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors, beds, chimney supplies, heaters, and other materials to improve the safety and insulation of shelters

TRANSPORT:

of cargo and personnel

CLOTHING:

winter clothing and footwear

EMERGENCY & HOME SUPPLIES:

other necessary items including AEDs (automated external defibrillators), cots, first aid kits, comfort kits, etc.

KEEPING THEIR COMMUNITY SAFE AND WARM

Below are some of the items that were provided to ensure families in Attawapiskat would be safe and warm during the winter months.

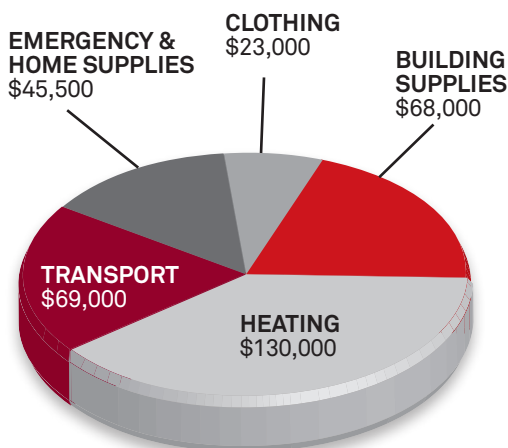
- 5 Diesel generators
- 13 Bed frames
- 20 Mattresses
- 30 Heaters
- 55 Hygiene kits
- 75 Crank flashlights
- 75 Water/wash basins
- 200 Fire extinguishers
- 200 Carbon monoxide detectors
- 200 First aid kits
- 200 Cots
- 250 Styrofoam insulation
- 300 Sleeping bags

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Thanks to the swift and generous response of Canadians, the Red Cross was able to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable families in Attawapiskat. Over the course of several weeks, a total of **\$335,688.85** was received from Red Cross donors.

These donations helped to improve the living conditions in Attawapiskat. The Red Cross will remain in close communication with local leaders to support the community in building capacity for future emergencies through preparedness activities and volunteer training.

It was only through the continued compassion of our donors that we were able to achieve our mission in Attawapiskat. Thank you for entrusting the Canadian Red Cross with your generous donation.



For more information on how your support has made a difference for families in Attawapiskat, please visit www.redcross.ca



“The efforts of the Canadian Red Cross have been instrumental in addressing immediate, short-term needs and will help to ensure the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable community members during the winter months.”

~Chief Theresa Spence