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SERVING THE BRUNSWICK COUNTY COMMUNITY

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OCEAN RIDGE CHARITIES RAISES OVER \$50,000 FOR HURRICANE RELIEF

Two weeks after Hurricane Florence slammed into the North Carolina Coast, the Ocean Ridge Charities Association (ORCA) rolled into action to support relief efforts in Brunswick County.

The Charity announced a twofold effort: a commodity collection plan and a fundraising campaign that commits all dollars ORCA raises over the next six months for victims' assistance. "We know that hurricane recovery will take many months, even years of hard work. It's not over just because the headlines are gone. Too many of those whose lives have been shattered will still need our help," said ORCA's founding President Mike Gildea.

Immediately the organization donated over \$12,000 to several local charities already on the front lines of recovery efforts—Brunswick Family Assistance (BFA), Brunswick County Streetreach, the local Red Cross and the Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministries.

In early October ORCA quickly reorganized a long-planned Ocean Ridge community-wide annual Day of Service into two segments. The first was a commodity collection effort. Over \$11,000 worth of groceries, cleaning supplies, children's diapers and gift cards were collected and delivered to BFA and Streetreach. "It was the largest, single support effort by a Brunswick County community in the early stages of our efforts," reported Robert Talley, a BFA board member.

The second, even larger ORCA event came later in the month. This time the Ocean Ridge community nearly tripled its first effort by collecting over \$29,000 worth of food, toiletries, stuffed toys, clothing, furniture, linens, cleaning supplies, and various other sundries. Truckloads of hurricane relief supplies were then dispatched to the local Habitat for Humanity, Streetreach, Salvation Army and Brunswick Homeless Coalition.

ORCA board members Laura Wheaton and George Briggs, co-chairs for both events, were overwhelmed. "The generosity of the Ocean Ridge community never ceases to amaze me. But this went well beyond our wildest expectations," Wheaton emphasized. According to Briggs, "During these events the carloads of donations from the community just kept coming and coming. After six hours it seemed like there would be no end to it. Almost 200 collections and drop-offs were made by Ocean Ridge residents."

Wheaton noted that for the two events, over 100 Ocean Ridge neighbors worked nearly 500 volunteer hours to offload, sort, package, box and reload all collected items onto delivery trucks. "Without them and their compassion, we would never have completed this remarkable task!" said Wheaton.

Last year's Ocean Ridge Community Day of Service raised over \$20,000 in merchandise for resale at six thrift stores affiliated with ORCA-supported charities. For that effort, the ORCA received a national, \$10,000 award from the Make A Difference Day (MADD) foundation--one of only 13 organizations out of over 800 applicants nationwide and the only charity in the Carolinas to receive such recognition.

“The \$40,000 in collections in just the last four weeks is an amazing result but our efforts to fundraise for hurricane victims will continue into 2019,” Gildea noted.

ORCA is a tax exempt, non-profit corporation located within the Ocean Ridge Plantation development in southeast Brunswick County. The community is home to nearly 850 full and part-time households with over nearly 1,600 residents who are predominantly retirees. Organized in 2009-10, the award winning organization has raised over \$400,000 for local Brunswick County charities and non-profits.

To learn more about ORCA, go to www.orcharities.org or contact the organization at orcharities@gmail.com

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