Virginia Baptist Disaster Response trains and serves at BGAV annual meeting

“Serving at the annual meeting is a great way for Virginia Baptist Disaster Response to showcase our capabilities to the Virginia Baptist family and give our volunteers an opportunity to exercise in preparation for response,” explained Aaron Lee, Disaster Response Coordinator.

The large presence of Disaster Response team members at the annual meeting was intended to illustrate some of the ways in which volunteers are able to meet the needs of large numbers of people in efficient ways. For the meeting of over 1,000 people, the volunteers provided snacks, a communication trailer, and childcare in addition to feeding many attendees their lunch on Tuesday.

Volunteers were enthusiastic as they worked hard serving people at the meeting. “I like for people to see what we’re all about. I think a lot of Virginia Baptists don’t realize what we have and what we do in Disaster Response,” commented Joe Prince, Disaster Response volunteer and member of Starling Avenue Baptist Church in Martinsville, who helped serve lunch to annual meeting attendees.

Virginia Baptist Disaster Response equips trained volunteers to bring relief and hope in response to natural and manmade...
disasters throughout Virginia, across the US, and around the world. They bring aid in various forms, two of which were highlighted in a tangible way at the annual meeting: mass care feeding and childcare. Volunteers must undergo training and be certified in order to participate on a team.

Suzanne Nester, member of Harmony Grove Baptist Church in Saluda, helped to coordinate and staff the childcare for the meeting. “We set up a mobile childcare unit similar to what we do at a site following a disaster,” she explained. “After a disaster, we bring a mobile childcare unit and offer daycare for children so their parents can do things they need to do like work, apply for FEMA assistance, and other critical things. This was a good opportunity for us to update the childcare trailer and do a practice run, since it hadn’t been used in a while.”

Miriam Chambliss, DR-trained volunteer and member of Mechanicsville Baptist Church, has been a Disaster Response volunteer for many years. She thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the team serving at the annual meeting and commented, “It was a joy to have that many people come through our tent. I love serving here today and seeing so many Virginia Baptists.”