

### **“I never thought there were so many kind people in the world”**

That's what retiree Sylvia Starr said after volunteers from the MDS Manitoba Unit built her, and her husband, Jeff, a new home in Libau, Man. They needed a new place to live after the roof of their previous home collapsed following a large snowfall in 2022.

After their former home was rendered unlivable, the Starrs received limited help from the provincial government. But it wasn't enough to replace their home, which was uninsured. They didn't know what to do.

That's when MDS became involved. The Starrs were exactly the kind of people MDS wants to help—they were seniors, both have disabilities, the house was uninsured, and they had no means to replace their home.

“It didn't take long to decide we would help,” said Denis Sabourin, chair of the MDS Manitoba Unit and project director for the Libau build.

“When we had to move out, we didn't know what to do next,” said Jeff. “There are no words to explain what it means to us.” “We are so thankful,” said Sylvia.

The MDS project in Libau was one of eight in Canada in 2025. A total of 1,072 volunteers served in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. This included 748 in



*The Starrs in front of their new home in Libau, Man.*

Winnipeg, where volunteers helped at a reception centre set up to assist wildfire evacuees from the northern part of the province.

As well as serving in Canada, 316 Canadians served with MDS in the U.S. between November 2024 and October 2025.

In other news, 2025 saw the appointment of Reynold Friesen as the new Executive Director of MDS Canada. He will replace Ross Penner, who has been serving in that role since 2015. Reynold, the Director of Alumni, Church, and Donor Relations at Canadian Mennonite University, will begin his new role with MDS in February 2026.

Donations continued to be strong in 2025, with a total of \$1,282,000 donated in the 2024-25 fiscal year, compared to \$1,161,000 the previous year.

Thank you for your ongoing support of MDS as we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus to disaster survivors together with you and your church. May God bless you this new year.