



THE BRAUN FAMILY

SERVING THROUGH MISSIONARY
AVIATION AT JAARS



Hurricane Helene: Serving Our Neighbors.

As you probably have heard, two weeks ago Hurricane Helene ripped through the southwest region of the USA, including North Carolina. Thankfully our immediate area wasn't affected too badly (only power outages and fallen trees). But just two hours west of us, the mountainous area in western North Carolina (WNC) was slammed in full force.



No doubt you have heard about the devastation and crisis; the flooding and mudslides. About the houses that caved in and the many others that literally floated away. The structures of some entire communities were wiped out.

At least 250 people died as a result of the storm and countless others were stranded, cut off from resources and in need of rescue.

To make the challenge even greater, in this area many people intentionally live off the beaten path along the steep, windy mountain roads. Due to the hurricane, many of the roads became impassable from flooding and collapsed pavement. This meant that immediately after the hurricane it was virtually impossible to get deep into the area by car to bring supplies and help to many in need.



At JAARS we immediately knew that we were uniquely positioned to help. Reaching isolated communities to deliver supplies and fly people in and out is literally what we do around the world every single day. And not only that, but we also know the Western North

Carolina mountains well. WNC is the place we regularly take our missionary pilots for advanced training. The mountain passes are the perfect simulation of what pilots will face on the mission field. And over the past 40 years, JAARS has built amazing relationships with the local people that live up there. One community in the mountains even allows JAARS to camp out in their hangar and use their fields and runways whenever needed. Now with Hurricane Helene it was our chance to serve the people of this area with the same love for Jesus and love for our neighbors that compels us around the world.

JAARS got into action right away. Other humanitarian organizations were focused on reaching larger areas, so JAARS decided to focus on reaching more remote "micro-communities" that were otherwise inaccessible. Our whole town started dropping off loads of supplies at JAARS to be flown in, especially drinkable water. We flew the supplies on JAARS planes to fields and airstrips in WNC where they could be distributed to nearby families. Our pilots made countless flights into the area with supplies. And we used our helicopter for reconnaissance flights and to help evacuate people as needed, including one woman in labor who was flown to the hospital. Many partner organizations and individual private pilots joined in with our fleet. And JAARS' effort, in turn, joined in to collaborate with the whole, immense movement in the area.





Throughout the effort, it was a blessing that our JAARS pilots were so highly trained and experienced in operating on difficult landing fields. This, together with the fact that JAARS airplanes are modified specifically for short, rough runways, allowed us to safely land on a variety of fields that would not been possible otherwise. In addition, our team knows exactly how to weigh and pack supplies into our planes for maximum efficiency; an important skill on the mission field and also in this situation. As a result of all of these unique missionary aviation abilities, we were able to bring help to many people in need. Praise God! At one meeting with other organizations to coordinate strategies, someone recognized the JAARS team from across the room and stated "Oh good, JAARS is here, those guys know what they are doing." May they see God at work in and through us.



Eventually, roads have opened up more and we were able to send by land the remaining ABUNDANCE of supplies that were donated. In all, JAARS delivered a total of over 270,000 pounds of supplies by air and by road!! Now that help from other humanitarian organizations (including Samaritan's Purse) and the government is in full swing and the immediate crisis has passed, JAARS has turned over its corner of operations to them. We

are so glad to have had the skills, proximity, and ability to show up and serve our neighbors; all to God's glory! It truly felt like a "For Such a Time as This" moment from the Lord. Thank you for your partnership that helped make it possible! We pray those who were able to help felt the depth of God's love for them and come to know Him personally.



Interested in hearing more? Check out this great video recap made by JAARS about the opportunity to serve in western North Carolina



And as a side note, one neat side aspect of this opportunity to help was getting to take along many of our pilots and mechanics-in-training! It was a real-life chance for them to serve and put their skills into action. What an invaluable experience for them as they

prepare to serve in other corners of the world!

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