



By MARCELLA PEYRE-FERRY
Correspondent Intelligencer Journal/Lancaster New Era

The members of the Christiana Lions Club are known as supporters of their community — now they are helping another community struck by tragedy.

Christiana Lions Club President Jim Groff is in Joplin, Mo., this week with Glen Dehart to help with demolition work needed in the wake of a devastating tornado that struck May 22.

With him are cases of emergency food donated by the Chester County Food Bank and a signature quilt with the well wishes of the community.

"I knew there was a need out there. I called my district up, and they called Lions International," Groff said of how the trip was set up.

Volunteers from across the country have pulled together to help Joplin.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, \$14 million in government assistance already is in place to rebuild the community, in which more than 120 people were killed.

The Lions' effort is coordinated by clubs in the two states, but what makes it a bit different is the personal touch that is steeped in Lancaster County tradition.

"It's a lot of Lions saying we care," Christiana Lions treasurer Walter Crellin said, adding that the Joplin club even lost its building in the storm.

The signature quilt Groff is taking with him to be given to the Lions Club in Joplin was created by Leslie Reese.

"A signature quilt is very old. When you were moving on the Oregon Trail, your church would provide you with one. The congregation would make one with their signatures to remind you of them because you may never see them again," Reese said.

"I had made this quilt two weeks beforehand when Jim came in. I said, 'I have the quilt for you.' It really just blossomed from there," Reese continued. "This community and the communities around us are some of the most generous people I have ever met. No matter how hard it is, they did deep into their pockets and give."

The white strips that are part of the design are the perfect background for messages of hope from the local community.

Members of the community turned the quilt into a fundraiser, paying \$5 each to sign quilt squares. The money raised will be donated to the relief efforts.