



Disaster Corps Newsletter



AN E-NEWSLETTER FROM HFHI DISASTER RESPONSE

Habitat for Humanity International Disaster Corps Newsletter

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A quarterly newsletter prepared by HFHI Disaster Response Department with news and highlights around Habitat's disaster response initiatives and programs

Update: Recent US Disasters

Hurricane Irene & Tropical Storm Lee

Heavy rain from the remnants of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee has left behind extensive flooding damage in the Northeast region of the US. Irene caused damage in several states, most notably New Jersey, where the combination of saturated land from repeated summer rain and heavy wind gusts made residents susceptible to wind and flood damage. In Pennsylvania, 13 people died because of Tropical Storm Lee, with Sen. Bob Casey calling it "the worst flooding in the region since Hurricane Agnes in 1972." A former southern NY county executive observed that flooding caused by Irene was devastating to many small and rural communities around the state and recent damage in the Binghamton area poses different complications with senior- and low-income housing concerns in that urban area.

Thankfully only a few affiliate and SSO offices were minimally impacted by these two storms; some closed due to evacuation orders and are now back in operation. A number of Habitat partner families were affected by Irene and/or Lee, most of which are concentrated in Patterson, NJ and Binghamton, NY. The affiliates in both of those communities have been assisting homeowners in filing insurance and FEMA claims as needed. Other affiliates, such as Ulster County HFH and HFH of Westchester, have been actively working with others in their community to ensure that people had access to household items and could quickly begin to clean up their homes.

The HFHI Disaster Response department is currently talking to affected affiliates as well as the SSOs in New York and Pennsylvania to determine next steps for connecting and collaborating with other community efforts to respond to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. We hope to quickly determine roles for Disaster Corps volunteers to come in and help these groups as the communities begin to recover.

Wildfires in Texas

Wildfires in Bastrop County, Texas have burned 34,068 plus acres since September 4th, an estimated 1,814 homes have been destroyed. A Presidential Disaster Declaration was recently made for Bastrop County that will allow families to receive FEMA grant assistance for housing and other needs.

The Austin HFH affiliate applied and has been approved by HFHI to expand their service area to include Bastrop County. They have been referring families to other agencies who are addressing immediate needs while creating their own recovery plan.

Joplin, MO

Tulsa and Joplin Area Habitat for Humanity teams, surrounding businesses, and the City of Joplin are partnering on one of the most aggressive rebuilding efforts since the devastating EF-5 tornado last May. The Ten for Joplin project team plans to build 10 homes during a 16-day period for low-income families by Thanksgiving. Read more about this project [here](#).

Deployment Highlights

Jerry Gallun was deployed to Alabama Association of Habitat Affiliates (AAHA) SSO in Auburn, AL for three weeks to assist with communications and strategic planning for disaster affected affiliates. He helped provide hands-on support for the A House United build that brought together students of two great rival colleges - Auburn and Alabama. "The 60 or so students, including football and other athletic team members, constructed the first two Habitat homes to be built following the recent deadly tornadoes which brought about the tragic loss of 310 lives here in AL. I spent 5 workdays in Dale AL working on these two homes where we built the first ever 'safe room' to be constructed as part of a Habitat house. Built to FEMA standards, these rooms will serve as prototypes which may result in federal reimbursements for such construction and most importantly will provide safe haven for our partner families when the next tornado threatens providing protection from winds up to 190 mph carrying projectiles." He also worked on developing a grant application for CNCS to provide capacity building to the SSO, spent time at the Hale County affiliate investigating non-traditional, cutting edge architecture and developing an assessment tool for board development, and pursued establishing the first ever SSO ReStore. "All in all a wonderful deployment. Met some great friends along the way and will forever be moved by the overwhelming response of the Habitat staff, volunteers and supporters throughout Alabama following the tornado tragedies."



The grant application **Nancye Mims** submitted for George County HFH's ABWK program has been accepted! "It was a bit of a long shot, but we also used it as an opportunity to talk and think about making the case for George County Habitat for Humanity. It was nice to know that we actually succeeded!" Congratulations to Nancye and George County HFH!

Joanie Hopkins and Laird Kinnier deployed to Tuscaloosa to help with construction site supervision as they tackle an ambitious build schedule in response to the recent tornado. With numerous volunteer groups, AmeriCorps, and college students all on site, these two had their work cut out for them. Joanie was able to attend the dedication along with local judges, clergy, local businesses, the Alabama football coach, and several reporters and TV stations. "I felt this first house was a great relief to the local folks in that a true beginning of recovery has taken place," she says.

Stephanie Chapelliquen and Chris Paukstis were featured in a yearly magazine by the Pike County Chamber of Commerce called Discover from their deployment back in March. Barbara Burge, also featured, was excited to have DCVs displayed in this magazine in hopes it will bring more attention to the affiliate and their commitment to community involvement.



Disaster Response Around the World

Australia

Habitat for Humanity is responding to the devastation in northern Australia after weeks of flooding followed by a category 5 typhoon that wrecked many Habitat homes and communities, rendering more than 50 percent of the affected homes unlivable. HFH Australia expressed an interest in having DCVs use their knowledge and experience to heighten capacity building efforts and assist with managing volunteer projects to clean, repair, and paint these homes so Habitat families can move in. In the summer of 2011, Disaster Corps deployed Bob and Joyce Daugherty, Jim Doran, and Dick Armstrong to assist HFH Australia in the areas of program development and project management. You can read more about their work in the [HFH Australia CEO Update](#), [HFH Ipswich Chapter Newsletter](#), and about the [Pearls MiiHome partnership](#) they helped to secure.

Japan

Habitat for Humanity Japan is now supporting the INGO Peaceboat with the procurement of futon sets to make up 'home starter kits', for distribution to people moving into temporary government shelters in earthquake affected Onagawa city, Miyagi prefecture, Japan. There are a total of more than 9,000 families still living in temporary shelters in Onagawa and nearby Ishinomaki city. They are also collaborating with All Hands Volunteers on home repair activity by providing technical and financial assistance to local carpenters. Their plans have changes many times since the inception of a disaster recovery plan, and it remain to be seen whether DCVs will be engaged in this recovery. You can read more about their progress in the ["Rebuilding Japan" Status Report](#).



Continuing Education

[Shelter Report 2012 — Build Hope: Housing Cities After a Disaster](#). This HFHI document highlights the urgent need for urban disaster planning and outlines how planning for permanence during rebuilding creates a more solid path to recovery.

[EMPOWER](#) (Emergency Management Professional Organization for Women's Enrichment) holds educational webinar series to introduce informative topics and facilitate discussion among EMPOWER Associates, leaders within the EM field, and others interested in issues and ideas presented. They offer recordings of each session so that those who could not participate may review the original presentation.

Helpful Links

[Modeling Behavior: What Motivates People to Prepare, or Not Prepare, for Natural Disasters?](#) – article provided by Joe Wills

[Prepare yourself, natural disasters will only get worse](#) - article provided by Giovanni Taylor-Peace

Volunteer Profile

Kathy and Clay Smilie Briefly describe yourselves in a nutshell; where you live, hobbies, family... We retired early from careers in engineering (Clay) and Information Technology (Kathy). We currently reside in Baton Rouge, LA. Hobbies and interests include boating, travel, HFH construction, Red Cross disaster response, church home repair mission trips and gardening (Kathy is a Master Gardener).

Can you sum up your past experiences with Disaster Corps?

Our Disaster Corp training was in New Orleans in January/February 2011 and then in Houston with the Northwest Harris County affiliate in March 2011. We assisted the construction staff in Houston as crew leaders while several collegiate challenge groups were volunteering over spring break. Being previous residents of Houston (Kathy is a native), it was good to return and give back to that community.

Please briefly describe your recent deployment experience. What were your accomplishments and the long term effects of these accomplishments?

We were deployed in August 2011 to Hackleburg, AL as house leaders for their two week blitz build. Hackleburg is a small town that lost most of its homes and services to a F5 tornado in May. Four houses were constructed during this two week blitz with as many as 150 volunteers on a single day. We helped accomplish the goal, which was not only about building these four houses, but also about providing hope that the community would be rebuilt. We met many wonderful volunteers and grateful homeowners that shared our desire to get the community back on its feet.

What is some advice you can give to other Disaster Corps Volunteers that you have learned through your experience?

People in these disaster affected areas face many challenges to "normal" living for months (even years). Things may not be convenient (many miles to hardware stores, grocery stores, etc.). You may face many of these same challenges while on deployment. Be resourceful and remain flexible in order to meet the needs of the affiliate and community.

What do you enjoy most about disaster response work and what are you looking forward to in the future with Disaster Corps?

We are long time HFH and Red Cross volunteers. Disaster Corps has given us the opportunity to combine these interests. We were deployed by the Red Cross to Joplin, MO after the May tornado. Seeing the devastation and getting to know the people and their stories made us want to help beyond the initial disaster response. Our HFH Disaster Corps deployment to Hackleburg allowed us to be a part of the next step in the recovery of a community affected by the spring tornadoes. It is very gratifying to help a community rebuild, and we hope to continue providing this help.



Other News

Risk Management while on Deployment

We hope that all DCVs have a fruitful and uplifting deployment, but if you experience a conflict with your supervisor or others at your host site and are either uncomfortable addressing the issue with the people concerned or have been unsuccessful in doing so, please feel free to contact us at HFHI DR. We can work with you to resolve the conflict without compromising your position at the host site. If you would like to file a complaint or concern anonymously, HFHI has an account at My Safe Workplace for confidential reporting of incidents. To use this service, visit www.MySafeWorkplace.com or call 800-461-9330.

Taylor-Peace elected to NVOAD board

Giovanni Taylor-Peace, manager of Disaster Response field operations at HFHI, has been elected to a

three-year term on the board of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. National VOA is a respected forum for organizations to share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle, from preparation to response and recovery. The inclusive, collaborative approach of National VOA makes it a natural partner for Habitat's work in disaster recovery, according to Kip Scheidler, senior director of Global Disaster Response at HFHI. "This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to more prominently position affordable housing on the reconstruction agenda in the United States," Scheidler said. "Giovanni's selection speaks volumes to the good work he's done over the years relating with the leadership of National VOA and our peer agencies." National VOA was founded in 1970 in response to the challenges faced by many disaster organizations in the wake of Hurricane Camille, which left the U.S. Gulf Coast in tatters in August 1969. In the four decades since, National VOA has helped agencies coordinate and complement their disaster recovery work to avoid duplication of efforts and target unmet needs. Other members of the board of National VOA include the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities USA, several state VOAs, Mennonite Disaster Services and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief.

Get to Know Kerry Craft

Our newest member of the team, Kerry Craft, has joined us as the DR Coordinator for US Gulf Coast. Read more about her in this [article](#).

On the Road to Recovery

HFHI's Disaster Response department coordinated opportunities for HFHI staff members to volunteer at affiliates in areas hardest hit by recent storms, tornadoes and flooding in the Midwestern and Southeastern United States. "On the Road to Recovery" encouraged HFHI staffers to lead mission trips to help rebuild these devastated communities. You can read more about their experiences here: [Mission Time Well Spent on Road to Recovery](#), [Recovery Guides](#).

Storm Chasers

Read about how members of the Discovery Channel are giving back to Habitat's rebuilding efforts and how you can help: [Discovering a Way to Help in Alabama](#).

Solar Decathlon

Jerry Gallun will take part in building a solar home with the D.C. Affiliate, and you can help. "Each year the federal government and other partners sponsor a 'Solar Decathlon' build. It takes up to two years for universities and other builders to design, construct, and ship the latest in solar and 'green' homes. This year some 19 homes were constructed and shipped for display and competition on the Mall. The homes were displayed for some three weeks. By prearrangement the D.C. Affiliate purchased one of the 19 homes. It has been moved to near its permanent site in Deanwood (N.E. Washington D.C.) where foundation and permitting work are underway. Next month construction of this duplex begins and will take several months."

If other DCVs are interested in traveling to D.C. and participating on this build of a cutting edge solar home, please contact Jerry Gallun.

Women Build

Habitat's Women Build program brings together women from all walks of life to address the world's housing crisis. Affiliates throughout U.S. and abroad regularly host special Women Build events as a way to build more homes and encourage women to become involved in their communities.

Women Build houses provide an opportunity for women to learn new skills while working on a construction site. Volunteers are offered comprehensive training and hands-on construction experience. Female volunteers often become long-term, committed affiliate volunteers and crew leaders. Women who have learned skills through Women Build are regularly found on Habitat builds, helping others build decent, affordable housing. To date, more than 1,900 Habitat houses have been built by women crews in communities around the world. This number grows each year as affiliates, donors and sponsors recognize the impact of women volunteers and their resources.

To become involved, find a [Women Build event](#) in your community or contact your [local Habitat affiliate](#). For more information, visit the Women Build [website](#) or e-mail womenbuild@habitat.org.