

# HOUSTON, WE STILL HAVE A PROBLEM

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The world's eyes turned to the hurricanes that devastated countless lives and cost billions of dollars in damage this last August and September. Hurricane Harvey alone leaving 77 people dead. But, it did not take long for the horrible disasters to be forgotten as our eyes too quickly focused upon the NFL. I mean, what do thousands of people's lives matter when faced with the horrendous dilemma of a few wealthy football players taking a knee during the national anthem? Surely the destruction of lives is of no importance compared to the peaceful protest of several NFL players. Meanwhile, Texans were and still are left with nothing but demolished homes and mold-filled memories, nowhere to turn but to nonprofit organizations and volunteers.

But, do they not have insurance to help them? Hardly. With only \$10,000 from an insurance company to rebuild your whole life, you really do not have much. Imagine trying to replace your family home, which probably costs upwards of \$200,000, along with every item you owned. It can not be done with only \$10,000. Not even considering the small amount of finances provided by insurance companies, the major-

ity of those hard-hit by Hurricane Harvey do not even have flood insurance in the first place. When homeowners are in a 500-year flood zone, they usually do not worry all that much about flood insurance. Besides that, the flooding that occurred because of Hurricane Harvey is being called a 1,000-year event. This means that every year the chance of something of this magnitude happening is about 0.1 percent.

**Before the Trip**

Although the world obviously is not all sunshine and rainbows, there is good going on and some hope for those affected by the hurricanes. Across the country, churches are sending teams to not only gut out and rebuild houses, but also to rebuild lives. Organizations such as ReachGlobal are in desperate need of volunteers as paperwork requesting help from those affected pile up. After receiving a phone call from the director of ReachGlobal's EFCA Crisis Response asking for a team of volunteers, Jason Newby, a youth pastor here in Eaton, started planning and putting a team together. As one of the members of this 18-person team, I left for Texas on the second of December with fellow EHS students Derek Renfroe (20), Spencer Renfroe (20), Vivian Renfroe (18) and

**The Trip**

**Day 3, December 4**  
This was the first day of work, so we were split up into teams and sent to the various places we worked at during the week. I was placed in a group with five other people, all of the Renfroes, their father and one other member from my church. It was a relatively long drive to the place we were assigned to, but we were lost for about an hour before finally finding the right house. Having the opportunity to walk through a small portion of a neighborhood, we got to see the devastation firsthand. Houses were demolished,

Addie Randel (20). A number of adults from the Evangelical Free Church of Eaton and some students from Frontier also went on this trip down to the Corpus Christi and Rockport area. Though doubts and fears crossed my mind, I had some level of excitement, but perhaps even more apprehension. Between missing a week of school, an allergy-stricken body, days of work, unsanitary conditions and a fairly strict diet, anxiety had already taken a hold of me. But, that is nothing when compared with the fact that countless people have lost almost everything and need people to work alongside them and show them the love of Jesus. So, I went.

**Day 4, December 5**  
Finally arriving at the correct house, we started work. I did a lot of mudding that first day and ended up covered in the stuff. Besides the work, we also got to meet at least one of the homeowners, Leilane, and later on Naekele, two Hawaiian sisters. These two women are literally two of the kindest people I have ever met. Derek said, "Literally they had nothing, but they still kept on giving towards us instead of receiving things." He continued, "They bought us Christmas presents, they always gave us drinks, and they gave us towels when it rained. They just always asked if we were hungry or if we needed anything. They bought us lunch one day, and cooked dinner for us two days." Our group leader told us the sisters had been told to quit providing lunch every day for the workers because they were spending so much money. Once we finished up for the day, we had to ride the ferry back from work because of a traffic accident.

**Day 5, December 6**  
Leilane and Naekele ordered us lunch from Popeyes after cooking dinner for us and the other teams the previous night, showing their incredible happiness and giving spirit once again. That evening was "sharing night," when all of the various teams and some homeowners meet at the church for dinner and sharing what God has done throughout the week. It was a powerful night full of joyful tears.

**Day 6, December 7**

Leilane portrayed her joy and love for Jesus once again through bringing us donuts for a fourth day in a row and referring to us as angels. Gladness radiates from her face, despite having lost so much. Spencer said, "These people, they lost their entire homes and their entire lives, and they have to rebuild from the ground up, and they don't have any money to do that or anything."

**Day 7, December 8th**

Well, it snowed, which added to the different kind of day it was already. Waking up early in the morning, people ran to the door to look outside at the snow falling down, the first accumulated snow in Corpus Christi since 2004.

Nonetheless, we went to work for half a day, our last full day in Corpus Christi. After we finished working, we gathered together in a circle to pray with Leilane and Naekele, an emotional and moving few minutes. These two ladies even went so far as to buy presents for us all and buy presents for Lenny's children. This final act of kindness of the week was incred-

ible. A number of adults from the Evangelical Free Church of Eaton and some students from Frontier also went on this trip down to the Corpus Christi and Rockport area. Though doubts and fears crossed my mind, I had some level of excitement, but perhaps even more apprehension. Between missing a week of school, an allergy-stricken body, days of work, unsanitary conditions and a fairly strict diet, anxiety had already taken a hold of me. But, that is nothing when compared with the fact that countless people have lost almost everything and need people to work alongside them and show them the love of Jesus. So, I went.

**Day 8, December 9**

On the way back, we made the decision to make a detour to a small town called Sutherland Springs, a town known for the fairly recent church shooting. Arriving there, our team got out of the vans and formed a circle so that we could pray and listen to my youth pastor speak to us. Before entering, I held my hat at my side solemnly as tears began to well up in my eyes. Vivian said, "When we were talking to the guy at the front, and he told us how he lost nine of his family members, I guess it was powerful, him saying that, but it didn't actually sink in, how severe everything was, until you walk through the doors." Entering the church, Vivian said "It was like the presence of God... a feeling that you can't really put your thumb on." She went on to say that the feeling probably came from all of the prayers and the love that people have poured out on the church. The inside was almost completely white and contained chairs with roses sitting on them, names of the victims inscribed in gold paint on the chairs, the chairs placed where each person was killed. A sermon was playing on a loop inside as we walked around and prayed within the small building. Outside messages of love and encouragement were strung along the fence on the church grounds, and crosses were set up near the tent that is temporarily being used for church services. It was powerful, sentimental and incredible.

**After the Trip**

While I was on the trip, I asked for God to show me something. Anything new, powerful, amazing, just something. God made me realize that I have a job to do. My small world of school, church, music and writing is just that: a small world. There is a much more important reality happening right now, and the majority of people in the world



Courtesy Photo



Everet Slaughenaupt



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Directly above, crosses, signs and other commemorations stand beside a road in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Very top, Spencer Renfroe (20), Derek Renfroe (20), Vivian Renfroe (18), and Everet Slaughenaupt (20) take a picture after a work day in Texas

Above middle, an overturned camper lies completely destroyed in front of a body of water in Rockport, Texas three months after Hurricane Harvey. Directly above, a house sits in ruins with a message warning not to enter the house because of mold.

that there is more than them. That people are dying. Vivian said, "Things happen all around, and being in such a tiny town we really are sheltered, and we don't realize how bad everything is out there. I kind of didn't realize how much damage was actually still going on in Texas, and I kind of forgot about it, just kind of put it on the backburner because it wasn't on the news all the time. Or the little town. That town was smaller than Eaton and they had 26 members die. That's very im-

## DOES ANYBODY REMEMBER?

**Puerto Rico**  
\* 64 dead  
\* Island lies in ruin  
\* Large portions still have no power



**Florida**  
\* More than 70 dead  
\* 60% left without homes



**Caribbean**  
\* Over 40 dead  
\* 99% of Barbuda buildings demolished



**California**  
\* More than 200,000 acres burned  
\* Over 1,000 structures

