

Holly Hill May Flood Event Final Thoughts Deployment 1

This was a quick trip up and back. We really only were able to work on homes for 1 ½ days. But while we were there, God did some amazing things and opened some doors for the local church to minister. God also did some neat things with our group. This was the first time that Bill, I mean Steve, I mean Jeff (!) was able to join us. He was totally amazed to see God move and work out many things in our short time there. He's ready for his next deployment already! God even used him to bring us an awesome devotional on our second day before we got started!

Joe Bob, I mean Joe and Bob, also joined our team from Sarasota and this was also Joe's first deployment. He has spent countless hours working with me on the truck, trailer and tools to get things ready for deploying, but has never been able to join us. It was a blessing to have all of them to serve alongside.

We were really blessed by United Brethren In Christ Church of Holly Hill (UBIC). They opened their doors wide to receive us, giving us full access to their church. At one time they had an assisted living home on their property so we had plenty of rooms with full baths in each room. They can accommodate 40-50 people overnight! We had a regular kitchen that we used, but they also have a commercial kitchen for serving even more, that is available for us to use in the future, more on this later. The pastors, deacons and congregation were awesome. Many offered to help us in many ways and did so while we were there! We look forward to a long term relationship with their church!

We were able to go door to door on three streets that were flooded and talked to many people. Unfortunately the scammers had already beaten us to a few houses, convincing the homeowners to do things that were not correct and just a waste of their money. We try to tell people what the truth is, but don't force it on anyone, and simply move on if they don't want our help or instructions.

At the time that we were there the federal government hadn't stepped in yet, so the people were in huge despair. It wasn't easy talking to people, but we just took the time to listen and pray with them when we could. Though they want to trust in the government, we know and try to direct them to the fact that they can only truly trust in God, He is our source!

We worked on 4 different homes with a total of 19 volunteers. We met and served alongside some awesome people from the Daytona Beach area, what a blessing! We didn't finish 2 of the homes and had lined up 6 more that needed help. The homes have to be gutted, cleaned, disinfected/uncontaminated, dried out and then rebuilt. My unofficial numbers are almost 1000 homes damaged in Volusia County with almost 700 of them severely damaged. Though this flood didn't make much news, it has been declared a national disaster by the federal government, this is no small thing.

We talked to Covenant Life Presbyterian Church in Sarasota about activating their cooking crew to go over and help feed people for a couple of days. They had attended one of our training camps last year and have wanted to help out with disasters since before we met. They took off on Thursday and will cook for volunteers, staying and working alongside UBIC through Sunday. They are also planning a neighborhood outreach at the church on Sunday as the church sits in the middle of the area that we were working in. I'm almost as excited as they are about going over there and can't wait to hear about all that God does in each of their lives through this response!

We are praying about going back next week. We are staying in touch with several agencies in the area as well as UBIC, to monitor the progress. A team of 8 from one of UBIC's sister churches from out of state was scheduled to arrive today to help out and there may be another group in a few weeks to help with the long term recovery.

If you are interested in joining our team this time or in the future if the Lord so leads, please let us know.

Please continue to keep these people and ourselves in your prayers.

If you are interested in donating to our ministry to help with the cost of responding, please contact us or see our website for instructions at http://reliefministriesccsarasota.com/How_to_donate.html. We have secure online giving or you can find instructions with how to mail us funds. 100% of the money that comes in goes to funding the ministry!