

Student Reflections

"I wanted to contribute to the relief effort in another way than just giving money. I also wanted to see firsthand what was happening and meet the people that were being affected. It was so much bigger than I expected. I had seen pictures and read news stories about the damage, but it wasn't until I went there that I realized how many people were affected. The extent of the damage was much worse than I could have imagined. I would tell people that it was a great experience. There is still a lot to do and a lot of ways to contribute. It will be many months before the relief work in New Orleans is completed."

-Scott Brown

"I was visiting New Orleans when the tropical storm that was advancing towards Florida became hurricane (Katrina) and headed towards our destination...I remember listening to a Jazz singer on the street and knowing that the way of life in New Orleans could be entirely different within days should the levees break. I remember visiting a popular park to see the many cats that regularly camped out there at night. I also saw many homeless people that night and wondered where they would be when Katrina hit. I know that some of those people probably did not survive Katrina. Others around me had their lives uprooted and now live elsewhere. I guess I wanted to help out with this hurricane relief trip out of guilt..."

-Kristine Knutter

"I decided to go on the Hurricane Relief trip because I wanted to help in a more personal way than just the giving of my money. Seeing the damage firsthand was different than I expected because it is unimaginable unless you actually see it in real life. You can not fathom the damage that has occurred there or the time it will take to put the area back together. I just would like to encourage anyone who has the resources to go down there and help to do so. My fear is that people will forget about what happened. The truth is that groups of people will still be needed to volunteer in that area for months and months, and maybe years. It is not nearly over."

-Shea Marsh

"I went because I knew I was needed and because I have always been very involved in volunteering and helping others. I wasn't prepared for what I saw when we entered the first house. My group of 11 people spent almost the entire first day just cleaning out all the stuff piled in the house. It was devastating to see all their personal things like pictures and scrapbooks and the girls toys just completely ruined and covered in mold and mildew. I felt helpless that first day, like there was no way what we were doing could possibly help. I was wrong though. When I was talking to the family especially the mother it was just remarkable how much she appreciated what we were doing...It really opens up your eyes and makes you realize that a lot of the material things that we cherish just don't matter as much as we think...This family was lucky that all they lost was material things. I remember her younger daughter saying to her mom "I'm glad we left mommy." It tore at my heart to hear that."

-Sarah Strojeba