

“The crew captain would give us the number for somebody who had asked for help,” says Nels S., 14, from Georgia, USA. “Then we would call and schedule a time to show up.”

Groups soon drove off to find their work sites. But the sight that greeted them was shocking.

Will This Take Forever?

“We started driving and after about 30 minutes we started seeing huge piles on the sides of the road,” says Hannah H., 14, from Alabama, USA.

“It was all of their personal stuff,” says Alana C., 15, from Alabama. “That was really sad. They were throwing it all out because it had gotten destroyed.”

“I was scared at first,” says Andrew H., 13, of Alabama, “because I saw all of this and thought it was going to take forever to clean up. But then I was happy because I realized this stuff wouldn’t stay sitting inside the house collecting mold. It would be easier for them to start new and get their lives back.”

And that was just what the Helping Hands hoped to do—help people start to get their lives back. So they set to work.

A Little Does a Lot

Teams tore out drywall, ripped out floors and ceilings, broke down walls, pulled out soggy insulation, removed furniture, and helped homeowners sort through their belongings. Then they gathered what was ruined and piled it by the road for sanitation

services to haul away.

“Everyone did a small job,” says Meghan K., 12, from Georgia, “but it all ended up equaling a big work effort.”

Hallie R., 17, from Georgia, agrees. “It may not seem like you’re making a huge difference, but every little bit counts. When so many people come together and help, you can make a big difference.”

Working Together

The Helping Hands weren’t alone in their work. Neighbors, other church groups, and larger organizations also joined the flood of service.

“There were rescue teams from other areas in Louisiana,” explains Anna J., 13, from Alabama. “I don’t think we would have been able to even get close to where we got with one house without those rescue teams and a few of the neighbors.”

“It was cool to see different churches working together under God’s name and to see God’s children working together even if they are from different churches and places,” Landon R., 14, from Georgia says.

Homeowners pitched in when they could too. Many of them worked side by side with the Helping Hands and others.

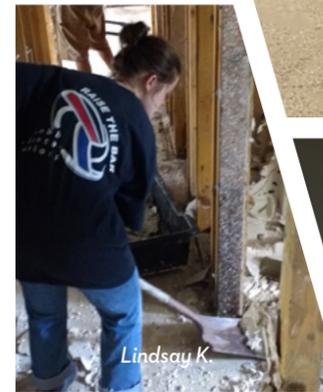
“You would think that they would all be absorbed in their own pain, and you wouldn’t blame them for that,” says Nels. “But most of them were positive and looking for ways to help their neighbors. They weren’t caught up in their emotions; they were just working to rebuild their lives.”



As the groups arrived at their work sites, the sight that greeted them was shocking.



Derek T.



Lindsay K.

Mark G., Steve G., and Luke G.



Teams tore out drywall, removed furniture, and helped homeowners sort through their belongings.



David S., Landon R.