

Buckner helps Houston flood victims

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HOUSTON—Bettye Mack awoke one Friday morning last month to discover water rapidly seeping under the door of her house. She did everything she could to make it stop, but it was no use.

The water entered her house so fast, she didn't have a chance to save any of her belongings. By the time she and her adult son evacuated, the water had risen above the top of their living room coffee table.

Greater Houston experienced record-breaking rains that caused flooding throughout the city and killed seven people. Some residents, like Mack, experienced it worse than others.

"My whole house was destroyed," she said. "It's depressing. It's devastating. And it's overwhelming. My husband passed two years ago, and I had him to help me with the flood in 2001. But now it is on me to do everything. And my sister passed two months ago in California. It's like everything is coming at me at one time."

Everything in her house is gone, she said. She tried to get help from several different places without luck until she found the [Buckner Family Hope Center at Aldine](#), one of the main relief agencies helping Houston-area flood victims.

The [Family Hope Center](#) has helped about 100 families affected by the floods, meeting immediate needs such as clothes, food, toiletries, hygiene items, bedding and even school uniforms.

"We are their community," said Shawna Roy, director of the Hope Center.

“We are here, and that is what community is about—helping those that are closest to us.”

The Hope Center is located next to several schools within the Aldine Independent School District and has partnered with the district to help provide relief to some of nearly 600 families affected by the floods.

As the floods resided, social workers and counselors for the district started referring donations and families still in need to the Hope Center.

“Our counselors and social workers are probably the first responders when they encounter the families,” said Charlotte Davis, director of guidance, counseling and at-risk students for the Aldine Independent School District. “But depending on how badly they were hit, it can take a good six months to a year ... for some families to get back to some sort of normalcy again.”

The Family Hope Center’s “vision and their desire to help families is huge with us,” she continued. “That keeps us pumping, because we know they are going to be taken care of with everything they have within their means to work with.”

Workers at the Hope Center daily collect and sort donations to distribute them to families in need.

“We’re really thankful for all the people who have come and donated,” Roy said. “I love the fact that our community has come together. It’s been great to see all the different schools and churches come together to help. I’m really proud of us and our staff for stepping up and meeting that challenge.”

Roy hopes families will continue to come to the Hope Center. Many families they have helped since the floods previously weren’t aware of the Hope Center or the programs they offer.

“It’s not really about what we’re giving them now, but helping to provide some long-term transformation and stability for the people that live right here,” Roy said. “We’re going to hug them and love them. Then hopefully build that relationship, so that we can be there for them long-term to get them where they need to be.”