

Family serves together in East Texas helping flood victims rebuild

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DEWEYVILLE—When the Managan family took up residence in Deweyville for the summer to coordinate disaster recovery, each member played a valuable role in helping families rebuild their homes after a devastating flood.

Vaughn and Sunshine Managan served as volunteer coordinators with Texas Baptists' disaster recovery program, now a part of Texas Baptist Men's disaster relief ministry.

Throughout the summer, the Managans coordinated church and associational groups, mobilizing more than 200 volunteers as they worked on nine homes.

All in the family

✘ Milo Managan, age 7, works with his father, Vaughn, to sweep away sand after installing a paving-stone porch for a Deweyville family. The Managan's children—Jax, age 13; Lily, 11; and Milo, 7—accompanied them each day, delivering supplies to work groups, helping tape and float drywall, hauling limbs and debris from yards, playing with homeowners' puppies and learning what being the hands and feet of Jesus looks like.

The Managans are not expert carpenters or homebuilders. In fact, they learned many skills like floating and mudding drywall alongside the volunteers.

“We are not always called to something we are good at, but in those places, you need God more,” Sunshine said. “This fit our personalities. We like being with people and doing hard work.”

‘Ministry of drywall’

The Monagans first engaged in disaster recovery in 2013, following a fertilizer plant explosion in West. The couple felt called to help coordinate efforts, but having their family along with them was important. Vaughn took a two-month leave of absence from his job as an engineer, and they moved to nearby Waco for the summer while they worked in West.

Three years later, the Managans began saving to spend their summer doing similar work. Following the Deweyville flood in March, just miles from Vaughn’s childhood home in western Louisiana, the Managans felt called to go. They contacted Marla Bearden, disaster recovery specialist, who put them in touch with Pastor John Fortenberry from Calvary Baptist Church in Deweyville, and plans began to fall into place.

“We were doing the ministry of drywall,” Vaughn said of the summer work. “This is what people have needed. Day and night, as long as there were volunteers, we were putting up drywall.”

Living out faith through service

 Jax Managan removes a fallen tree limb from the yard of a Deweyville family. One of the Managans’ greatest joys in serving was having their children with them and teaching them about living out faith through service to people in need.

Jax served as his dad’s right-hand man for the summer, riding shotgun in his truck on every project. Milo and Lily made innumerable trips to home-improvement warehouse stores with their mom to pick up last-minute supplies for a day’s projects.

“We needed it as a family, and it came at a beautiful time for us to stay connected— sweating together and talking more,” Vaughn said.

God provides

“It is good to hear kids talking about how God is providing,” Sunshine added. “You don’t always see this in regular life, even when God is providing. We are praying the kids don’t forget how God provides here. Even the little stuff matters.”

“Little stuff” includes things like needing an electrician to work on a house and finding a master electrician on the team that just arrived. Or the time a local company donated a truckload of sand to help level paving stones to create a porch for two homeowners. Children at a Vacation Bible School at North Orange Baptist Church donated the money to purchase those paving stones.

Without an operating budget and with minimal funds for supplies, the Managans saw God daily meet needs to accomplish each task set before them.

Building lasting relationships

The Managan family not only helped rebuild homes, but also built lasting relationships with the homeowners they served.

And their children gained several honorary Deweyville grandparents.

At the mention of going to visit Miss Lena, Milo and Lily’s faces radiated excitement. Pulling up her driveway, Lena would wave exuberantly and welcome the children with the same affection and love. As she walked through her home, which was nearing completion in mid-July, Lena explained the work done by each of the Managans. From the closet Milo helped clean out, to the seam in the middle of the wall Lily helped cover

with mud and Sunshine sanded down, every ounce of work was met with an overflow of appreciation.

Detailing the many ways God provided for her following the storm, “most of all God sent Vaughn, Sunshine, Milo, Lily and Jax,” Lena said.

The Managans encourage other families to consider taking time to serve with their children in mission work of some kind.

“Jesus gave us everything. How can we not give everything?” Sunshine asked. “People say we are ‘good people,’ but we aren’t. God doesn’t need us, but he chooses to let us be involved, and it is such a privilege.

“It is worth whatever you have to give up. Don’t waste this time when your kids are under the roof of your house. Stop talking about it, and do something they can do with you.”