

Students help Golden Triangle bounce back after Harvey

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ORANGE—About a year and a half after Hurricane Harvey pummeled the Texas Gulf Coast, damage lingers and volunteers continue restoration—including young people who participated in this year’s Bounce student disaster recovery effort.

Over spring break, 287 middle school and high school students from 13 Texas Baptist churches worked on recovery projects in the Golden Triangle area of Southeast Texas. First Baptist Church in Nederland served as the host congregation for the missions initiative.

“I’m always pleased to see students serve at spring break,” said David Scott, director of Bounce, a Baptist General Convention of Texas ministry.

“They could have done any number of things during their time off—going to the beach, sleeping late or just hanging out with friends—but they chose to reflect Christ in the Golden Triangle. They have ministered to people who had great needs. I’m very proud of them, and I appreciate their churches for offering them the opportunity to be on mission.”

Opportunity to gain ‘God experiences’



Students remove storm-damaged shingles from a home in the Golden Triangle area during the recent Bounce project. (BGCT Photo)

Students served in seven locations working on a variety of projects—yard clean-up, drywall removal and installation, painting, roofing, debris repair and trim installation among many other things.

Will Hagle, junior high pastor at Mobberly Baptist Church in Longview led a group of 37 seventh and eighth graders on the trip. God used young people in the Bible and he still does today, Hagle insisted.

“We open the Bible and see teenagers doing a lot of stuff,” he said. “A lot of people think David was probably a teenager when he faced Goliath, and the disciples may have been teens and young adults.

“Thanks to this opportunity, these kids from Mobberly Baptist are developing a really good understanding of God, and I’ve gotten to see them take ownership of the project.”

Hagle emphasized the importance of providing young people with experiences where they learn their own “God stories.”

“When they go off to college, we see kids fall away from God. Our goal is to get them in places where they can have their own God experiences and be

used by God so there is a greater chance that'll sustain them later on in life," he said.

Meeting real needs

The group from Mobberly Baptist worked on a house owned by a young couple with a new baby. The homeowners told the students about their struggles with Harvey, explaining the husband had to carry his wife on his shoulders during the storm because the floodwater inside the house rose so high, she could not hold her head above the water. Volunteer efforts have helped get the couple back on their feet and in their home before the birth of their baby.

"The work that Bounce sets out for us is meaningful and meets a real need, so the kids get the satisfaction of knowing they are doing something that has a positive impact," Hagle said.

Jared Jochum from Woodlawn Baptist Church in Austin, took nine students between the ages of 12 and 16 to the Golden Triangle. They worked on one house where a homeowner was struggling with cancer. In addition to helping with yard work, replacing siding and putting on trim, they were able to do a simple plumbing job that allowed the family to use their washer and dryer.

"It was a big deal to them because her illness made it hard for her to have to make trips to the laundromat to do their laundry," Jochum said.

All of the students from Woodlawn who participated were on their first mission trip, so they did not fully know what to expect.

"I think they were very moved by their story and humbled to help them out," Jochum said. "It was my first time leading a group, too, so it was a special experience for everyone."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The first paragraph was edited after the article originally was posted to correct an error.