

Teens rebuild flood-damaged homes in youth minister's hometown

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WIMBERLEY—When Bobby Catt, minister of students at First Baptist Church in San Angelo, discovered a student missions opportunity in Wimberley, he couldn't wait to sign up his youth group to serve in his hometown.

Last Memorial Day weekend, many Wimberley residents sustained severe damage to their homes after record rainfall caused flooding across Central Texas.



Bobby Catt, minister of students at First Baptist Church in San Angelo, brought a missions team to his hometown, Wimberley, over spring break to repair homes damaged by storm and floods last Memorial Day weekend. (Photo / Ty McAllister) Nine days after the flood, Catt and three members of his church traveled to Wimberley to help with disaster relief. Nearly 10 months later, he learned about a spring break mission trip through [Bounce](#), Texas Baptists' student disaster recovery program, and he was eager to involve his youth group.

"I was able to get a group (of students) together from San Angelo and come back to my hometown to serve where I spent the first 18 years of my life,"

he said.

Bounce responds to community needs following disasters by coordinating mission opportunities for middle school and high school students during spring break and summer vacation.

Eighteen volunteers from First Baptist in San Angelo worked on a house that bordered the Blanco River, which was a primary source of the flooding last year.

“A guy that I know grew up in this home. We played Little League baseball together,” Catt said. “We’ve known each other for 30 years, so there’s a personal connection here. It’s not just leading students to serve (just anybody) but to serve somebody that I can share the story about.”

Students spent the week demolishing a portion of the house, so the owners could begin repairing the foundation.

Catt was thrilled not only to show his students where he grew up, but also to see them spend their spring break serving the community he once called home.

“Some of the kids that I brought with me would probably be eating cereal in their pajamas on the couch right now. But instead, they woke up at 5:30 a.m. and are spending all day not just thinking about themselves, but thinking about God and thinking about the needs of other people,” he said.

Ryan Moran, part of the youth group at First Baptist in San Angelo, has participated in about 15 trips.

“Call me crazy, but I love this kind of stuff,” Moran said. “This is my time at the beach, I guess you could say. I have a blast doing it and hope to help people along the way.”

After experience with Bounce and Texas Baptists’ disaster recovery

ministry, Catt is convinced mission trips that involve manual labor teach Christian disciples to apply what they have learned at church.

“All people, but especially teenagers, learn better by doing than by sitting in a classroom in a Sunday school room or even in a worship service,” he explained.

“Those things are important, and they’re a part of what we do. But if we don’t get them out and teach them what it looks like to serve and love their neighbors, they might learn a lot in their head, but they’re not going to experience it with their hands and their feet and their whole bodies.”