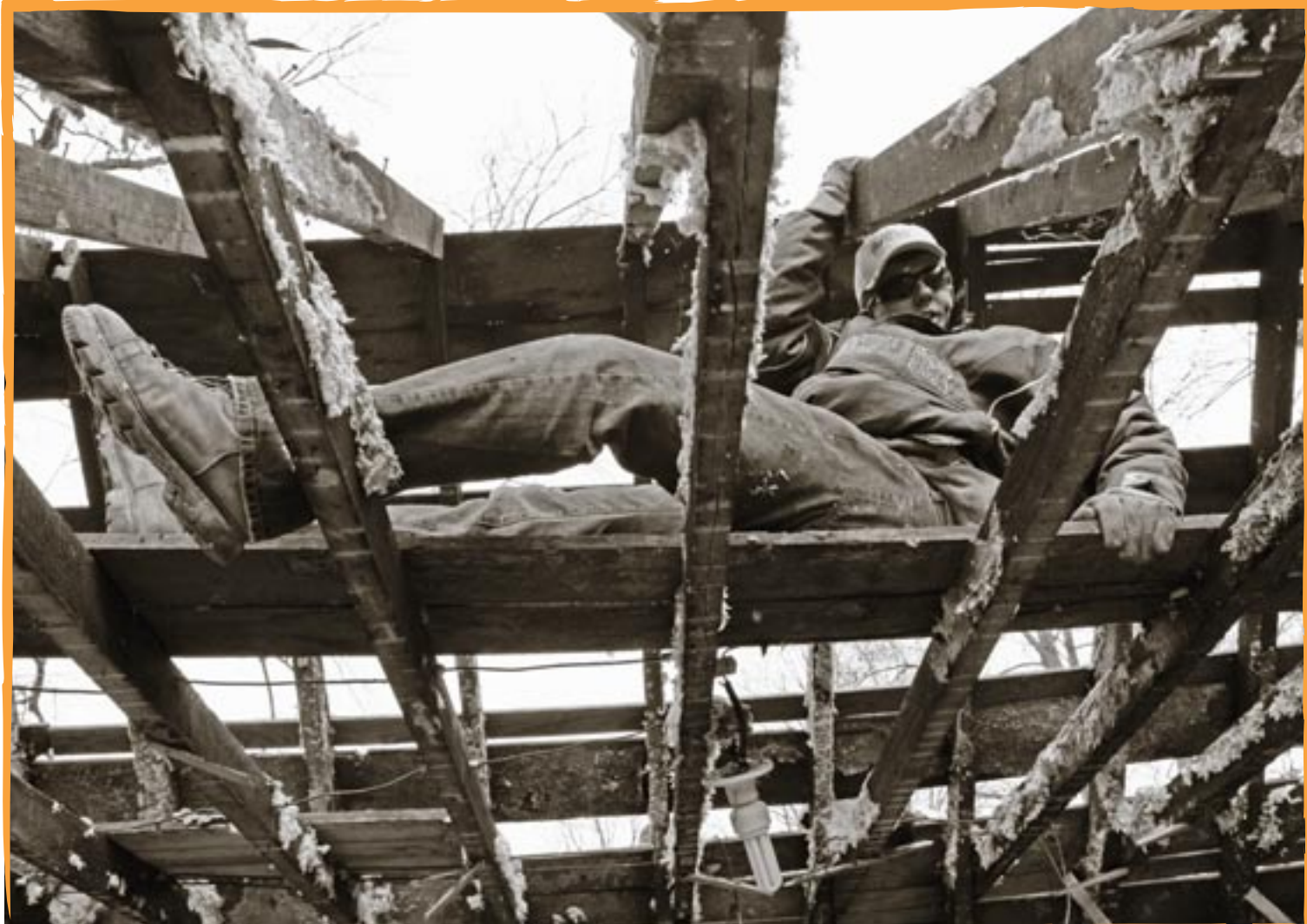


Indiana's Disaster Response



Spring Break

Indiana Association
of United Ways



Watershed

Watershed, an e-zine distributed by the Indiana Association of United Ways, showcases the united, community-based response to the tornado, flood and wind disasters that devastated large sections of Indiana in 2008. These natural disasters caused more than \$1 billion in damages to homes, neighborhoods, courthouses, fire stations, hospitals and other institutions. Major highways and county roads were closed due to waist-high water. Approximately 40,000 Hoosier homes sustained extensive damage, and thousands of people were evacuated from their neighborhoods. The state and federal governments have declared at least 86 Indiana counties disaster zones.

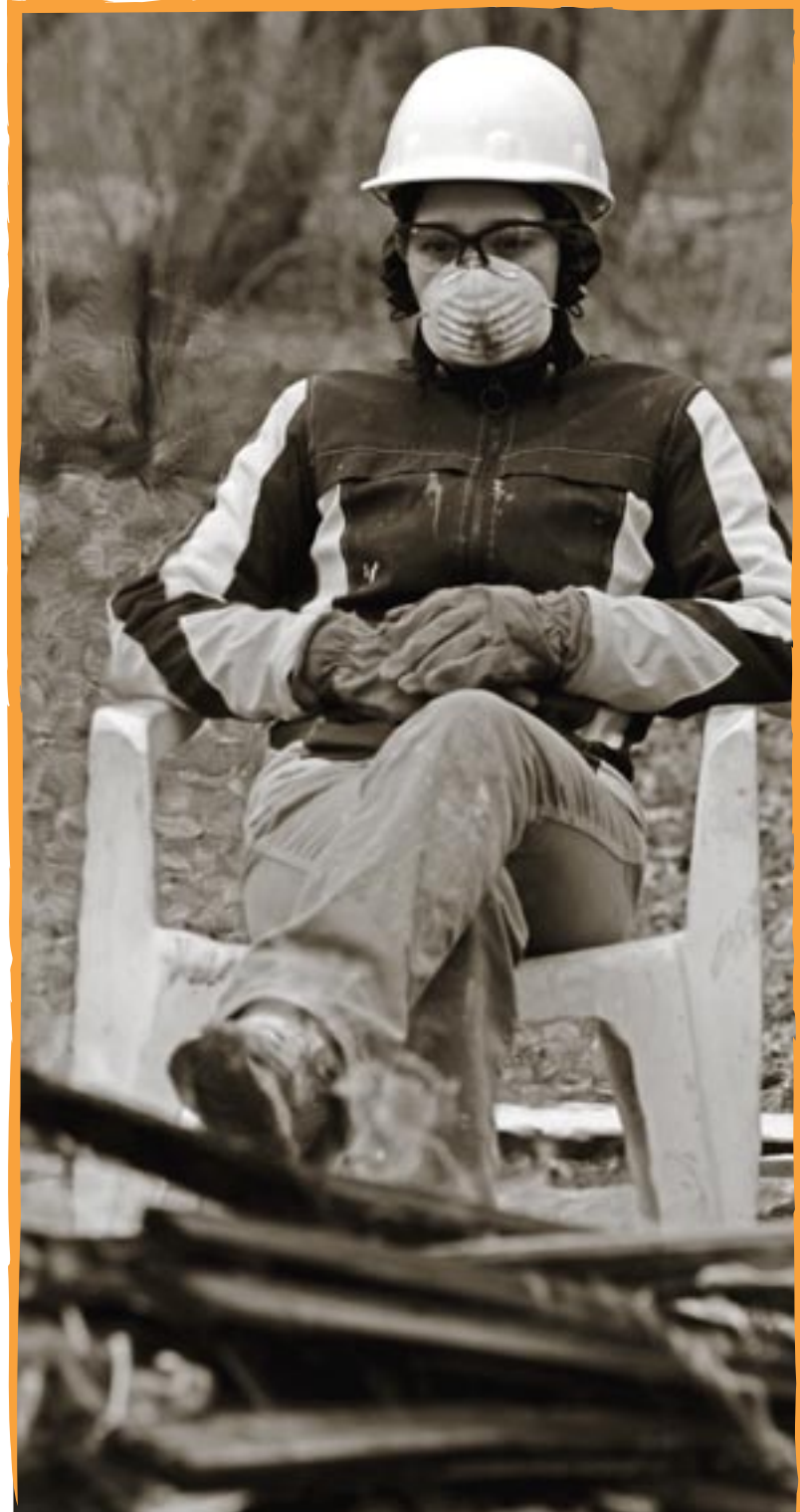
By all standards, Indiana's reaction to these natural disasters was exceptional. United Way agencies, community organizations, congregations of many faiths and strangers came together to clean up, rebuild and prepare for the future.

On the Cover: *Dan Stockmeyer of Delta College crawls through the rafter of a home he is helping to raze. He had just finished tearing the bricks out of the chimney in what was the attic of the home.*

Photo by Kevin Manning

Nyssa Kim of the University of Miami Ohio warms herself by a fire of flood debris as she takes a break from the cleanup of the Taft Street home in Terre Haute she and fellow college students are demolishing. Before the flood, homeowners Ruth Ann and Jim Payne used their yard for parties, cookouts and bonfires.

Kevin Manning



Ripped Jeans

On a cool spring day in March, they stood on the concrete floor at the Wabash Valley Long-Term Disaster Recovery Coalition warehouse cheering for a town they'd never heard of two months ago. "Terre aaaaaa Haute Haute Haute! Terre aaaaaa Haute Haute Haute!" the group shouts in unison.

"We're rocking on demo. We'll have a double crew out there today," cheers HonnaLora Hubbard, the volunteer construction and donations manager for the coalition.

Even though everyone had just rolled out of bed, probably not even an hour before, they shout back, "That house better be down today!"

Roughly 65 college students from California, Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C. stood before Hubbard. Many held coffee. They donned a variety of gear. A white hard hat. Ripped jeans. A blue bandanna. A Miami University cap. Colorful wool hats with braids running down the sides. Nike tennis shoes. Work boots. Hooded sweatshirts.

"Anything special and amazing we can do," Hubbard cheers.

"Whoop. Whoop. Whoop," they shout back.

The United Way of America selected Terre Haute as one of a handful of communities for its Alternative Spring Break program.

Because last June's flood left more than 4,000 people in the Wabash Valley area with FEMA applications and hundreds without clothing, food and shelter, the United Way of America selected Terre Haute as one of a handful of communities for its Alternative Spring Break program. The students stayed at



Kevin Manning

Jessy Fuller of Rockford University cuts drywall with a saw so other college students can hang it in a bathroom they are remodeling in a flood-damaged house.

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Indiana State University for about a week and spent their days tearing down one house, gutting another and refurbishing the coalition center.

“These kids have such big hearts, they are giving up their traditional spring break to a town they know nothing about and to help our community.”

“These kids have such big hearts,” says Troy Fears, executive director of the Wabash Valley United Way. “They are giving up their traditional spring break to a town they know nothing about and to help our community.”

Ben Thompson of Delta College works two jobs to put himself through college and volunteers in his spare time. When he heard about Alternative Spring Break, he felt it was an opportunity to help that he couldn’t pass up. Even though Thompson is from neighboring state Michigan, he knew very little about Indiana before arriving here.



Kevin Manning

College students Josh Vermeech (L), Jason Albertson, and Ben Downey are spending spring break helping residents in Terre Haute recover from the June 2008 floods. The United Way of America selected Terre Haute alongside Biloxi, Detroit, Houston and New Orleans as a setting for its Alternative Spring Break program. Those at the Wabash Valley United Way, Wabash Valley LTRC and Indiana State University worked together to make the program a success.

“I knew Larry Bird was from here,” the sophomore says. “Terre Haute reminds me of Bay City. It’s interesting how remarkable the community is and how much we are all the same. Indiana is a beautiful state.”

Sorority Girl

Sorority Girl

Jane Kwak's friends begged her to ditch her Terre Haute trip and accompany them to Panama City like usual. They wanted to celebrate Kwak's 21st birthday with her during the week, and they wanted her to hang out on the beach and bask in the sun with them like she had in years past. "This spring I wanted to do something different," says the Miami University junior. "I have always wanted to give back. Until now, I haven't found a way because I'm always too busy."

Along with several other students, Kwak was stuffing insulation into skeleton walls and then cutting and hanging drywall. Two feet of water filled the small ranch-style house after heavy rains dropped nearly a foot of water on Vigo County, pushing the Wabash River over its banks. A mother and her two teenage kids lived here when that happened.

"The daughter lost a lot of clothes. Like any teenage girl, they were all over the floor," says Allie Wilmes, a senior at University of Kansas. "The mother's passion in life is photography. She lost her camera in the flood."

The family has been living in a FEMA trailer for months. Daily, they check on the progress of the house and the students. The smell of chili and macaroni and cheese fills the

On the day of her 21st birthday, Jane Kwak of Miami University shapes drywall she will help hang in a flood-damaged home on Saginaw Street.



Kevin Manning

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Allie Wilmes of the University of Kansas and Ling Lin of Stevens Institute of Technology wrestle a sheet of drywall into place at a home on Saginaw Street.

air. Grandma Candace, the mother's mother who lives just a block away, fixed the food heating in two crock pots sitting on the bare floor along with bags of chips and a box of Twinkies. "The family is making sure we're taken care of, and we're wanting the same for them," Wilmes says.

"We are completely putting this house back together," Wilmes says.

"I'm a sorority girl. I'm a girly girl. But that doesn't mean I don't have the skills to do this. I'm a very passionate person. A friend saw my picture on Facebook and said, 'I can't believe you have a power tool in your hand.'"

In a way, though, that person on Facebook with the power tool is the real Wilmes. "This grounds you. My mom says, 'You are yourself when

"The team dynamic is unlike anything I've seen. These people have been here a week and act like they've known each other for years."

you come back from these trips.' We have a no-judging policy here. You can act silly or have passionate conversations."

In the living room, four students work together to balance a piece of drywall, lift it up to make the ceiling and screw it in. "The team dynamic is unlike anything I've seen. These people have been here a week and act like they've known each other for years," says Jessica N. Wozny, Special Events Coordinator & Campaign Associate of United Way of the Wabash Valley. She just graduated from Indiana State in December 2007 and joined the United Way four months later.

When Jason, a new site supervisor joined the group, the students showed off how well they knew each other by introducing the

“This is another step in our recovery. Indiana State wanted to support these students by giving them a warm bed and a roof over their heads.”



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Along with Heather Dalton Miklozek and HonnaLora Hubbard, Jessica Wonzy traveled to Virginia for training from the United Way of America on how to run an Alternative Spring Break program in Terre Haute. “They taught us how to pick good sites, manage them and teach the students to work on-site so they can easily understand what they need to do,” Wonzy says.

person next to them on the bus to Jason. At lunch they play games like telling two truths and one lie about themselves, and the others guess which statement is false. The seniors also talk about where they go from here. Some have decided to join AmeriCorps together if they can't find jobs after graduation.

At night, they play games like basketball, dodge ball and Apples to Apples at Indiana State. “We have supported alternative spring break the past six years,” says Heather Dalton Miklozek, assistant director for the Center for Public Service and Community Engagement. “We've sent students to Gulf Port for Katrina Relief. This year they're in Memphis and Atlanta. This is a great way for us to open our campus to other college students.”

Those at Indiana State have played a role in the flood recovery effort of the Wabash Valley since the day the flood hit. “Our staff and faculty were affected by the flood. This is another step in our recovery. Indiana State wanted to support these students by giving them a warm bed and a roof over their heads.”

Communicate With All

Alternative Spring Break is the initial push for recovery in the Valley, the first visible sign of recovery. So far, volunteers have cleaned houses, installed furnaces and donated furniture and other household goods, but no rebuilding has occurred. “So many are ready to see something come out of this flood,” Wozny says. “They feel like it’s time. Spring is here: Let’s see something new.”

Fears agrees. “It’s a sense of fresh air and hope that we can and are going to recover from this flood and make people aware there is still help eight months later,” he says. “Most importantly, it gets everyone talking about it again. This brings the flood back to the forefront so they know we’re making great progress but still have a way to go.”

Five counties make up the Wabash Valley Region, and that has been a challenge in recovery efforts. “Getting all five together and organized has taken longer than we anticipated,” Fears says. “Each county has its own wants and needs. They all ask, ‘Why not focus on my county?’ We have to make tough decisions on who is in immediate need and who is not.”

Fears and those from the Disaster Recovery Coalition are collaborating with organizations in Clay, Parke,



Kevin Manning

Shane Griffin of Sam Houston State University and Dan Stockmeyer of Delta College (L) tear into the roof of Ruth Ann and Jim Payne’s flood-damaged home.

Sullivan, Vermillion and Vigo counties to help rebuild communities. “Sometimes the United Way has to be the leader and make that first call and be the one main organization that assists everybody and brings everybody together.”

In the days ahead, Fears sees a coming together of those in the Valley. Communication has been the key to that union. “You’ve got to communicate with all of the stakeholders from every county, city, and community foundations. Communication is the ultimate goal in getting people back to pre-flood conditions.”

Chris Rose, a senior at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, has volunteered in several communities. He’s noticed a big difference in this one. “The reaction of the community to this is extraordinary. We don’t usually get this outside support. You give to this community, and they give right back,” Rose says.

Wearing a United Way Alternative Spring Break t-shirt, Wilmes and a few other students were shopping in Terre Haute’s Wal-Mart when a woman approached them and thanked them for coming to town to help.

Bittersweet

Ruth Ann Payne watches as students wield crowbars and sledgehammers to tear down her home. “They have been amazing all week,” Payne says. “They are busting butt, and they don’t take breaks. I was surprised when I read that many of them paid for their own airfare to get here. When I read that in the newspaper, I was just shell shocked.”

The lease is almost up on the small apartment Payne and her husband, Jim, are renting. Once the house is down, they plan to move onto their land and live in an RV until they find a way to build another house.

Miranda Pawlak, a junior at Delta College, shows Payne photos students took to note the progress of their work. “Here is your family at home,” she says pointing to Payne’s loved ones standing in front of the house before the crew began the demolition.

With the back of her hand, Payne wipes away tears.

“We’ll get you back.” Pawlak places her hand on Payne’s shoulder.

“I miss being here,” Payne says softly.

“We’re trying to get you back. That’s the idea,” Pawlak replies. “We are working so hard. We don’t take a full lunch. We just eat and get right back to work. We want to

get as much done as we can because we have to go back to school next week.”

That morning, Payne brought the crew hot chocolate. For the full week, members of her family have been working alongside the students to take the house down.

“We were happy when we found out they were rebuilding,” Pawlak says. “It was sad for us at first

because we were tearing down a home and leaving the family with nothing.”

Again, Payne glances at her house that’s turned to a wooden skeleton. “Every time you look up, it seems like there is more and more gone,” she says with a slight smile on her face and a tear on her cheek. For now, what stands before her is bittersweet.



Kevin Manning

Ruth Ann Payne watches as college students tear down her home on Taft Street in Terre Haute. For the last several months, she and her husband, Jim, have lived in a small apartment. Once the home is down, the couple will move onto their property and stay in a small RV until they build again.

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Upcoming Disaster Trainings

Disaster Volunteer Reception Center: Training will be from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (ET) May 15 at the Red Cross in Indianapolis. Indiana Association of Volunteer Centers opens this training to any organization that might act as a volunteer center during a disaster. The full-day session includes a morning training with a mock disaster situation followed by an afternoon session with guidance on how to set up

a volunteer reception center. The session includes training manual, sample forms, etc.

Lutheran Disaster Response Construction Estimation Training hosted by LARRI in Lake County May 1 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (CT) in Munster, IN. This training is ideal for construction managers, volunteer coordinators and case managers.

For more info about regular trainings, visit www.invoad.com/calendar.php.

It's more than Spring Break! Schedule your Volunteer Group to help in 2009.

High school and college students across Indiana and the U.S. gave their spring breaks to work in disaster recovery. Students replaced drywall, repaired floors, sanded and painted homes with many of Indiana's 14 Long-Term Recovery organizations.

Indiana's Long-Term Recovery organizations are schedul-

ing individuals and volunteer groups to help throughout 2009. Some LTRs provide housing and food. Some require a minimum age of 18; others require volunteers to be 16 with supervision. Clubs, church groups and civic organizations are welcome. Contact Lucinda Nord (lucinda.nord@iauw.org) to be connected.

Next Issue: Just one year after winter floods overtook parts of Northwestern Indiana, they hit again. Disaster Assistance for Northwest Indiana formed in 2008 to help communities based along the Tippecanoe River and those in surrounding areas. Learn why members of this group must continue to tackle the devastation left by the floods.

The Counties to Date Receiving Grants from the Indiana Natural Disaster Fund

United Way of Adams County

United Way of Allen County

United Way of Bartholomew County

Benton Community Foundation

Brown County Community Foundation

Carroll County Community Foundation

United Way of Cass County

United Way of Central Indiana/Morgan,
Hamilton, Marion Counties

United Way of Daviess County

Decatur County United Fund

United Way of Elkhart County

United Way of Franklin County

United Way of Fulton County

Greene County Foundation

Henry County United Fund

Jasper Foundation

United Way of Jackson County

United Way of Jefferson County

United Way of Jennings County

United Way of Johnson County

United Way of Knox County

United Way of Lake County

United Way of Porter County

United Way of LaPorte County

United Way of Madison County

United Way of Marshall County

United Way of Monroe County

Metro United Way/Clark, Floyd,
Harrison Counties

Newton County Community Foundation

Owen County Community Foundation

United Way of Pike County

United Way of Posey County

United Way of Putnam County

Ripley County Community Foundation

Rush County United Fund

Shelby County United Fund for You

United Way of South Central Indiana
(Orange County)

United Way of St. Joseph County

United Way of Tippecanoe County

United Way of the Wabash Valley/Vigo, Clay,
Sullivan, Parke, Vermillion counties

Washington County Community Foundation

United Way of White County

Editor: Stacey McArthur. Please feel free to send story ideas to Stacey at smcarthur@s3cg.com.

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