St. James Parish Government YouthBuild Program

Nomination: Most Significant Innovation

St. James Parish was struck with an EF1-tornado with maximum winds of 105mph that traveled from Donaldsonville, LA and continued into St. James Parish causing damage to roofs, windows and power lines.

The Sugar Hill RV Park in Convent with 160 campers and travel trailers left 300 people homeless. Unfortunately, two deaths occurred because of this tornado, leaving families fatherless, husbandless and in disbelief.

The services rendered with this disaster deserves recognition for the participants and staff. The first responders included staff members, The Red Cross, local sheriff department, emergency preparedness department and countless citizens.

Participants and staff were instrumental in the clean-up efforts, distribution of non-perishable items, roofs tarps and etc. The participants and the Governor of Louisiana were on the grounds together assisting hundreds of wet, cold, hungry, scared and shocked residents of St. James Parish.

Additionally, staff transferred families to hotels in neighboring parishes and provided clients with vouchers, cash, water and other necessities to get through the night provided by the Human Resource department. Immediately following those services, staff and participants distributed cell phones to all affected as everything was destroyed in the tornado.

This heroic act from staff and participants were noted parish-wide as residents tried to make sense of an eight second life changing experience. Hats off to the YouthBuild participants and staff for