

Louisiana Flood Survivors Grateful for FEMA Volunteer Agency Liaisons

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BATON ROUGE, La. — FEMA Volunteer Agency Liaisons continue to help in Louisiana 2016 flood recovery by connecting survivors with generous nonprofits.

Sherri Gill is a life-long Denham Springs resident and like many Baton Rouge-area residents, her home had never flooded.

Not until August 2016 when rising water forced Gill and her family to evacuate to her brother's home. For an extended period of time 27 people, 13 dogs and two cats lived in a three bedroom, two bath house.

With no flood insurance the Gill family's only option was to rebuild their home on their own, a job that quickly presented many challenges.

"My brother and husband framed up the house and put up the roof, but my husband, Ken, fell off a ladder and broke his ankle," said Gill.

The next setback was when the Gills ran out of funds before the home construction was complete. That's when FEMA's VAL reached out to the faith-based nonprofit Christian Aid Ministries to assist the Gill family.

The duty of FEMA VAL's is to support disaster survivors where there is an unmet need, locate resources and build a partnership between the survivor and resources to assist in the recovery process.

331 nonprofit, community and faith-based agencies have been assisting Louisiana survivors who were impacted by flooding in both March and August of 2016.

FEMA VAL Debbie Meyer said, "I look at a disaster as a puzzle. The pieces of the puzzle being the national, state and local nonprofits and faith-based groups that have stepped up to help citizens. I assisted in forming Long Term Recovery Committees with these nonprofits to help put the puzzle together."



It wasn't until Meyers connected Gill with Norma Schrock, of CAM, that the puzzle starting coming together for Gill. Gill said she is now hopeful her family will recover from the flood.

"The process is going faster than expected," said Gill.

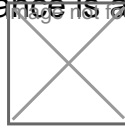
Schrock said her ministry is in the process of providing manpower for up to 40 flood recovery projects since August 2016."

"I feel like it's an opportunity that God has given us. He's placed us here and calls us to do this, we do it to bring all the glory to God," said Schrock.

Gill says working with Norma these last few months on building her home, has also built a lifelong friendship.

"I hope once we get in the house, me and her stay in contact," says Gill, "and maybe someday if she needs something she calls me up and I could go help Louisiana survivors for the March and August floods of 2016."

Any survivor still needing flood recovery assistance is asked to call 2-1-1 where they will be referred to the appropriate agency.



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