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**NEWS****MSU HOME >> NEWS >> 2006 RELEASES >> APRIL >> 'SPRING BREAK, SPRING BACK' RECAP****'Spring Break, Spring Back' recap**

It wasn't the normal spring break for 117 faculty, staff and students from Morehead State University. The usual spring break setting has them resting and relaxing, but for the team from MSU that traveled to Gulfport, Miss., to assist in the hurricane clean up, this year could be something they remember for the rest of their lives.

"I am very proud to lead an institution that has the heart and character of ours. I was asked many times during the course of our travels, where was I from. When I replied Morehead State University and that we had a group of 117 people with us to assist with the relief effort in Gulfport, people were astounded," said MSU President Wayne D. Andrews.

"They wanted to know what we did to convince that many to give up their spring breaks to travel and help others. My reply was simple, all we did was ask. People signed up because they saw the opportunity to help others."

The MSU group worked in general construction, rebuilding and clean up in the city of Gulfport and the surrounding area. The crew's main focus was service to those directly affected by the hurricane and learning the needs that have been created by these recent natural disasters.

"We tore off and put on roofs, gutted the interiors of several houses that had been completely submerged under water, cleaned up lots of debris," said Dr. Andrews.

"We learned about teamwork and the power of a positive attitude. We learned that while we are burdened with many of life's problems, our problems pale in comparison to those we were able to help.

"This trip was a strong affirmation that MSU's future is very bright. I believe we can accomplish anything we choose to do because of the people associated with our University."

Diana Zipp, **Jeffersonville, Ind.**, senior, agreed with Dr. Andrews that the trip was a great experience to be able to aid the people that still need it the most.

"Gulfport, Miss., has been one of the most wonderful experiences that I will take with me for the rest of my life. I have met so many wonderful people that have opened my eyes to a new way of life. This trip has shown me who I want



**Enrollment Services Specialist, Sherry Adkins and MSU President Wayne D. Andrews helped the victims of Hurricane Katrina.**



to aspire to be and what wonderful things you can achieve with hard work and a little bit of faith.”

Morehead State received numerous donations in preparations for the trip.

According to Al Baldwin, assistant to the provost, many faculty and staff members helped with gifts of support. He also said that the Spring Gala and Student Government Association each have chipped in \$5,000 while Wal-Mart of Morehead gave \$1,000.

Harold White Millworks of Morehead donated wood products in the range of \$15,000 while Lowe's of Morehead gave hand tools; Trane of Lexington provided work gloves for everyone; Vallen Sheridan Safety Supply of Dayton, Ohio, donated ear plugs; Trent Hamilton of Hamilton Beverage in Morehead, gave bottled water; and the Family Dollar Distribution Center in Morehead contributed a wide variety of supplies for the volunteers to use.



Doug Klein, Cincinnati senior, from left, shows, Megan Mraz, Morehead sophomore, Nikki Pergram, MSU dance team coach, and Sarah Fischer, Cynthiana senior, some roofing tips.

Megan Mraz, **Morehead** sophomore, expected to work hard during the break. However, she couldn't have expected what she would gain from the trip.

“I went to Gulfport expecting to lend what little help could to assist in rebuilding the hurricane-torn community. I left with a refreshed perspective, some new skills, a little more wisdom, heart-wrenching memories, and new friendships,” said Mraz.

“These are the true gifts the Gulfport people unknowingly gave to me. I wish I could even come close to repaying them.

“More importantly, though, we were fortunate enough to get to interact with those families who had lived in the houses we were rebuilding. Each resident had a unique, humbling story to share, and deep despair would surface often through trembling voices and tear-filled eyes. Yet, even though these people had lost practically every remnant of their lives before Hurricane Katrina - jobs, homes, clothing, photos and other cherished belongings - they were not bitter. In fact, each person seemed to give off an air of endless warmth, extreme gratitude and hope.”

The Office of the President, Office of Student Activities, and Student Government Association sponsored the trip.

Photos, blogs (online journals) from students, staff and Dr. Andrews from the trip may be viewed at <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/springbreak/>.

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