



Pleasant Grove Church Offers Hope Through Education

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Jefferson County, Alabama

The EF-4 tornado that swept through a residential area in April 2011 shattered this suburban town. Residents were confused and disoriented as they searched for their homes. Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church became a beacon of hope. The church organized an outreach called “Survivor School” for area families affected by the tornado.



“With the uncertainty of what the future holds and unanswered questions as to why this has happened, folks wanted to know what to do,” said Pastor John Gates. “We have several other support groups in operation. So we thought it would be the thing to do, to get a support group started for individuals affected by the disaster.”

“Survivor School” gives participants an opportunity to openly discuss their feelings as well as their needs. Once a week, the church has hosted sessions on steps to take in the recovery process, including dealing with grief, applying for disaster assistance, securing real estate, financial planning, and preparing for future storms.

“We have a lot of volunteer workers that do this full time. They are able to provide accurate information. We want people to know what to do,” said Gates. “If a specific request is made on a certain topic, such as finding a trustworthy insurance adjustor, we try our best to honor it.”

Depending on the topic for discussion, attendance has varied from 12 to 45 residents. Sessions will continue for 6 months.

Located in the western section of Jefferson County, the church has a family life center, which further enhances the ability to reach people. Pleasant Grove United Methodist has served the citizens of Pleasant Grove and the surrounding communities for over 100 years.

Additional information is available at [http:// www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or <http://www.umcpleasantgrove.org>.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region IV**

State: **Alabama**

County: **Jefferson County**

City/Community: **Pleasant Grove**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Tornado**
Activity/Project Type: **Education/Outreach/Public Awareness**
Activity/Project Start Date: **05/2011**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Non-profit organization (NPO)**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**
Non FEMA Cost: **0**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**
Federal Disaster #: **1971 , 04/28/2011**
Federal Disaster Year: **2011**
Value Tested By Disaster? **No**
Repetitive Loss Property? **No**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.umcpleasantgrove.org/>

Main Points

No Main Points were entered.



Pleasant Grove Methodist Church where weekly sessions were hosted on disaster survival