

Old school becomes volunteer haven

By Ginger Jenkins
Managing Editor

A spirit of cooperation and volunteerism is furthering Liberty County's recovery from Hurricane Ike.

Solicited by the Liberty County Long Term Recovery Committee, AmeriCorps has been here organizing cases of people still in need after FEMA and insurance has done their part.

This past weekend, they put down the paper, pen and phone and grabbed cleaning supplies in anticipation of more volunteers coming to help with post storm recovery.

The committee has been working to identify those that Director Paul Graham said "may have fallen through the cracks."

With supplies and volunteers gathered to help, organizers searched for a

place to house and feed those coming to the area to help.

Hull-Daisetta ISD Superintendent Mary Huckaby offered the old high school campus, no longer used for instruction.

After hearing about the Long Term Recovery's effort and about volunteers coming to the county to help with recovery, Huckaby offered the campus that has been closed since June 2008 to the group.

AmeriCorps troops scrubbed the kitchen and cleaned the science wing in preparation for the helpers.

Meanwhile, Graham continues to search for a place to store building materials that he is finding for little or not cost.

The volunteers and the materials, coupled with a concentrated case management effort, will repair

roofs and help people put Ike behind them.

Tom Branch, emergency management coordinator for the county, released a statement thanking the AmeriCorps team of 18 to 24-year-old volunteers.

The coordinator said the team has called nearly 15,000 Liberty County residents to assess needs in the short time they have been in the County.

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps members currently in Liberty are Alyssa Lwless, Terence Dyson-Curran, Aubrey Cole, Stephanie Paul, Leanne Sisbarro, Bryan West, Sarah Clerc, Mikki Stephens and Kalani Kapahua.

To find out how to get help with recovery, call 936-648-6281.

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Bryan West of Hollister, CA, works with fellow AmeriCorps troops to clean the old Hull-Daisetta High School campus in preparation for volunteers coming to Liberty County to help rebuild after Hurricane Ike.