

2018 HOPE Mission Trip
Hattiesburg, MS

What do Southern Yellow Pine trees, trains and blooming Azalea bushes have in common? If you guessed Hattiesburg, Mississippi then you are correct. Hattiesburg was founded in 1882 by William Hardy who was a Captain in the Civil War. He named the town after his wife "Hattie." Hattiesburg is located at the junction of the Leaf and Bouie Rivers. This area had a magnificent stand of large, native pine trees which were important for the construction of buildings for a growing population. The two rivers and a new railroad line between New Orleans, LA and Meridian, MS provided transportation outlets for the pine wood lumber. The tall, straight pine trees were "vertical gold" for lumber barons. At the peak of tree harvest in the early 1900's, there were 59 saw mills in the Hattiesburg area cutting tree trunks into useable lumber for homes and businesses. Today, Hattiesburg, affectionately called "Hburg", is about the same size as Janesville, with many beautiful, historical homes built by the lumber barons in the late 1800's and landscaped with azalea bushes.

In 2017, an EF4 tornado descended on Hburg destroying hundreds of homes and killing four people. The 2018 HOPE Mission Group, consisting of 23 dedicated souls between the ages of 15 and 95, headed to Hburg to work on houses damaged by the tornados wind and rain. Volunteers included: John Amstadt, Char Behling, Dave Carr, Dan & Cathy Collins, Bill & Jackie Davis, Jerry Gapinski, Harold Hanauska, Craig Hanson, Anne Hershman, Marv Jensen, Jerry & Barb Kramer, Earl & Jan Marquis, Kathy Peterson, Charlotte & Austin Sartell, Tim Whitmore, Mike & Pam Williams and Irene Williams. Our team worked on four different homes in a poor residential neighborhood of Hburg. Our restoration work included removing carpet and padding, installing laminate flooring, scraping & painting exterior wood siding, roof repairs, installed baseboard and door casement, installed ceiling fans, plumbing repairs, installed kitchen cabinets, painting kitchen wall cabinets and window casement, built a new wood deck, built hot water heater enclosure, built front porch railing, installed new screen door, replaced exterior window sash and built a new side porch overhang. This mission trip was unique in that we worked seven days rather than the traditional five days. In addition, doing restoration work is much more complicated and challenging than new construction. HOPE is blessed to have many talented volunteers with a range of experience to analyze and implement restoration steps which are in the best interest of the home owner.

With each HOPE mission trip, I continue to be amazed with how God guides us in the right direction to touch his children who are in such great need of our physical skills, spiritual enrichment and healing embrace. The restoration of structures enables the healing of the soul and embracing the emotional needs of the storm victims. I sincerely appreciate the dedication and hard work of our volunteers who made multiple sacrifices in service to others who are in need of our Christian love. Special thanks to the members of our congregation for your financial support and prayers. Without your spiritual support we could not accomplish God's work.

Mike Williams
HOPE Coordinator

Photos follow:



