

AHSRA 2019 Disaster Response Abstract

Participants' Perceptions Following Disaster Response

Mini Abstract

Academy and University students responded and provided disaster relief following hurricanes Florence and Michael. Students gave of their time, energy, and talents to provide food, water, and debris removal to hurricane victims. Learn how participants perceptions changed following hurricane disaster relief efforts.

Proposal

Background

In 2018 the US spent \$155 billion on the many disasters. Southern Adventist University, 2Serve, and Heritage Academy joined together in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide disaster response for a 2-week period to disaster victims. The MOU was signed in September and one week later hurricane Florence hit North Carolina. Southern sent four teams for a five-day tour of duty over a two week span. Southern students, joined together with Atlanta Adventist Academy, Heritage Academy, Highland Academy, Harbert Hills Academy, and Tri-Cities Academy, students and comprised 249 volunteers. Together they served over 2000 meals and helped with debris removal to over 150 families.

Dust settled and life got back to normal when along came a hurricane Michael and hit the Florida Panhandle in October. Southern students, joined together with Bass Memorial Academy, Beacon Academy, Forest Lake Academy, Heritage Academy, Laurelbrook Academy students and comprised 182 volunteers. Together they served food and water to over 10,000 people from the points of distribution (pods) They also did community assessments and helped with debris removal to over 50 families.

Providing students opportunities to serve has been found to be beneficial. Jamplis (2014) found that students who have service learning built into the curriculum are able to cultivate leadership traits and skills. Another study identified that students had a deeper understanding of human diversity (Fulkerson, Reitenauer, and Kerrigan, 2015). They also concluded that students had an increase in maturity, confidence, and an attitude of gratitude. When looking at student achievement, Brail (2016) found that students who participated in service learning experiences had higher grades than those who didn't participate in service learning. More specifically, she found that females tended to have even higher grades than males. The goal of this study was to explore participants perceptions of providing help and support to hurricane victims.

Methods

This pilot study utilized a mixed methods design. Following the deployment, participants were asked to share their feedback in a recorded debrief session followed with an invitation to participate in the online survey using their smartphones. The data populated a Google Sheet and descriptive frequencies were ran. The recordings were transcribed into electronic format and qualitative thematic analysis was conducted with constant comparison methods.

Results

Of the 18 participants, the majority (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that the people they served benefited from their disaster relief efforts. Almost three-quarters (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are now better prepared to give back to their community. The majority (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that service learning is a valuable experience for students. The findings from this study will add to the body of knowledge currently available on disaster relief efforts.

Implications

It's imperative that we keep our young people actively engaged, connected, and helping others. Providing disaster response is a beneficial venue to help promote altruistic behaviors and volunteerism among our Adventist young people. If we don't use our young people in positive ways, we will lose them.

References

Brail, S. (2016). Quantifying the Value of Service-Learning: A Comparison of Grade Achievement Between Service-Learning and Non-Service-Learning Students. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. 28(2), pp. 148-157.

Fullerton, A., Reitenauer, V.L., and Kerrigan, S.M. (2015). A Grateful Recollecting: A Qualitative Study of the Long-Term Impact of Service-Learning on Graduates. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 19(2), p. 65 – 92.

Jamplis, L. (2015). *Developing Leaders Through Service Learning*. Dissertation. Pepperdine University.