Two Storms, One Family

Hurricane Floyd struck North Carolina on Sept. 16, 1999, just 10 days after Tropical Storm Dennis dumped 6 to 16 inches of rain across the eastern part of the state. The ground was already saturated when Floyd dumped another 12 to 20 inches of rain. Rivers overflowed their banks and floodwaters began to cover roads and inundate entire communities.

George, a volunteer from Stuarts Draft, responded to the callout for Hurricane Floyd, deploying with a flood clean up team to North Carolina.

One homeowner returned with her daughters to find their home had flooded nearly to the ceiling. Jackie Thomas was her name.*

“At the beginning, she wanted to save everything,” George recalls, “but then she realized it just wasn’t going to be possible.”

The whole experience was overwhelming for the homeowner and the first-time volunteer alike.

“At one point, she walked up and put her arm around me. She said, ‘I’m OK, my girls are OK, and we have the Lord. Everything is going to be OK.’"

Nearly two decades and dozens of callouts later, George returned to northeastern North Carolina in the fall of 2016 following Hurricane Matthew. Virginia Baptist Disaster Response feeding and clean up teams worked in the region for two months, with 125 volunteers contributing 4,336 hours of service in Rocky Mount, Tarboro, and Wallace.
George was sent to a home in Tarboro to assess the necessary repairs. When he finally met the homeowner, Mr. Thomas, George said, “By any chance are you related to Jackie Thomas?”

“She was my mother,” Mr. Thomas said.

George told Mr. Thomas the story of helping his mother, and though his mother has since passed away, Mr. Thomas called his sisters and shared the story of meeting George.

Volunteers like George continue to serve, and for the Thomas family, their faithful service has impacted generations of the same family.

*names have been changed for confidentiality

**VIRGINIA BAPTIST DISASTER RESPONSE**

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