

Assisting in the Aftermath

Brothers lend a helping hand to those affected by storms this past fall.

By *Evan Moore*

In the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma this past August and September, undergraduates and alumni volunteered to help those affected by the storms. While those featured below are just a few of the brothers who assisted others, they received the Mark V. Anderson Character-in-Action™ Leadership Award for their efforts.

Brothers Help Rescue Those Stranded in Storm Waters

When Luke Oldham, **TARLETON STATE 2014**, learned of the devastation Hurricane Harvey was causing in Houston in late August 2017, he knew that he wanted to do something about it. Harvey made landfall as a category four hurricane on Aug. 25 near the Texas Gulf Coast, then was downgraded to a tropical storm and stalled over the area, keeping rain falling for days, dumping almost 52 inches of rain in the Houston area.

With the rising flood waters, many people were stranded and in need of help. On Aug. 28, Oldham and chapter brother Jake Jones, **2016**, went to Houston from Fort Worth, Texas, with a small boat in tow, so that they could rescue residents from the flood waters. Oldham says they helped several people.

Oldham and Jones started out using an app through which people would give their location and say they needed help, but when the Sigs got there, they were gone. "So, we ended up following a truck with some canoes on it," Oldham says, adding that they tagged along with those in the truck who were also there to rescue people.

He adds that he and Jones came across three families who refused to leave their homes because they were scared that people would loot their belongings. "We also rescued one gentleman and then took him back so he could get important documents and take pictures of the damages," Oldham says.

He adds that he and Jones came across many thankful people in Houston. "They were so grateful.

You can tell that they were still in shock because they lost all of their belongings. They were in awe of what was going on," he says.

Sigs Ensure Small-town Residents Were Not Forgotten

Alex Fleishman, **HOUSTON 1994**, believes the press coverage of Hurricane Harvey this past August left out the areas east of Houston and how residents there were grappling with the effects of the storm, focusing instead on the impact on those in the larger city. As a result, Fleishman directed his relief efforts to Sour Lake, Texas.

"We wanted to make sure these folks weren't forgotten," says Fleishman. He, four other Sigs and two more people borrowed an 18-foot trailer truck from a friend and filled it with supplies.

"Through donations, we were able to get that truck totally packed. We found out that [the residents] didn't need food or water. They needed cleaning supplies," Fleishman says.

According to Katie Magee, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Houston-Galveston, Texas, bureau, the 51.88 inches of rainfall that dropped on the Houston area as a result of the storm was a record. "We did see the most rainfall from a tropical storm in the U.S. The record was right at 52 inches," she adds.

This meant that residents had much flood damage to clean up. Fleishman and his group spent roughly four hours on Sept. 9 in Sour Lake handing out plastic bins, toilet tissue, paper towels, contractor-size trash bags, mosquito repellent, bleach and sunscreen to those who would take it. He estimates

Character-in-Action



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS

A person with good character shows trustworthiness, respect and fairness to others, as well as responsibility and citizenship. Those members who go out of their way to help others and those who overcome obstacles and lead with integrity are good candidates for the Mark V. Anderson Character-in-Action™ Leadership Award.

Sigma Chi has introduced the award to recognize the selfless acts of brothers. The Fraternity is known for building leaders, and its members have a reputation of acting with character to change their communities. A formal recognition of these actions by the Fraternity allows non-members to appreciate the scope of the organization.

For information about the award, see sigmachi.org/mark-v-anderson-character-in-action-leadership-award

his group helped at least 30 households.

"We drove the truck around to the people who needed it most," Fleishman says. "There was a man who had tears in his eyes as we were giving him some supplies."

Undergraduates Organize Cleanup Following Hurricane Irma

The Sigs from the Florida Atlantic University undergraduate chapter wanted to lend a helping hand in the aftermath of the devastation Hurricane Irma left on their campus after the storm went through the area on Sept. 10.

Three days later, the chapter's executive board met and came up with a plan involving social media, on which they announced their clean-up efforts.

"Irma left some pretty nasty damage to our campus and we wanted to make a change," says Consul Tyler Bonney, **2019**, of the tree branches, leaves and other debris that were strewn across campus. "We put out a call to all [of those in Greek-letter life] and other students. We wanted to do something to help the [campus] maintenance people [clean-up]."

On Sept. 15, five Sigs, two members of the Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity and three members of Sigma



Above Left: Consul Tyler Bonney, **FLORIDA ATLANTIC 2019**, picks up branches from his campus in Boca Raton, Florida, on Sept. 15, 2017, following Hurricane Irma. He and his chapter organized a campus-wide cleanup to help the university's maintenance crew.

Left: Luke Oldham, **TARLETON STATE 2014**, and chapter brother Jake Jones, **2016**, pause while on a small boat they took to Houston following late August's Hurricane Harvey. They went to Houston to rescue people from flood waters.

Kappa Sorority assisted the Sigs in cleaning the campus, which they did for two hours.

"We cleaned sidewalks [and] we raked up leaves and put them in trash cans. We helped move tree branches from the sidewalks. We basically did everything we could to make the campus presentable," Bonney says. "The maintenance guys are going to be cleaning up the environmental damage for the next couple of months. We want to come back out and clean up every two weeks to help out. We want to make sure our campus gets back to normal."