

**Houston Service Trip  
March 2018**

**By Hannah Tuckett**

This J-teen experience was something that I will remember forever. We helped people get back up on their feet after being hit by the devastating hurricane and made them feel as if they had someone there for them who was interested in what they went through and was willing to take the time out of their day to reassure them that this wasn't the end.

I learned how one of the biggest equalizers of our society is storytelling and the sharing of self. We open countless doors of understanding, compassion, education, and empathy when we take the time to actively listen and communicate with outer community members. The communities we helped in were a diverse fabric of human beings, and we all have a voice in enacting change, improving the lives of others, and promoting a more vibrant world. Volunteering encourages young people to think of others and become compassionate young adults. It is the perfect way to discover something you may be really good at as you develop a new skill.

Volunteering brings together a diverse range of people from all walks of life. It helps you gain perspective on life as there is no better way to understand the world than to help people in need. For me, I gained a newfound respect for the many people who suffer through these terrifying situations. While helping rebuild and knock down houses, I realized how much they endure while these natural disasters happen, and how much the little things that we may take for granted can mean to them.

Overall I found this experience really amazing and enjoyed it a lot. Although this did take me out of my comfort zone, it was definitely worth it. I was able to make new friends within a very short period of time. This goes to show how much you can gain from the giving of yourself. Leaving to go to a new state across the country was definitely something I did not see myself doing especially because I only signed up for the trip two weeks in advance. I also want to thank J-teen for allowing me to come on this amazing trip and get to experience something as empowering as what we did. Also thank you to Laurie who looked after me during this trip and got me involved with this whole program. Thank you for offering me this unique experience and providing me with skills I will be using for the rest of my life. And most of all thank you to Guy.