



# AmeriCorps & Disaster Response

## SPOTLIGHT ON HURRICANE SANDY



*Barbara had all but lost hope after Hurricane Sandy hit her beachfront town in central New Jersey in 2012, destroying her home and the family business and upending almost every aspect of life.*

Barbara's house, the one she grew up in, had survived other storms, but this time was different. She remembers watching "pieces of homes and things which once helped define our lives floating by." A sidewall was ripped from the outside of the house, letting in the rain and snow.

"We were left with a lot of mold. You could actually taste it," Barbara says. Her daughter, Harlea, began having serious health problems — her asthma flared up, as did skin and eye conditions, and she had to drop out of college. "It was just devastating to me as a parent, not being able to protect my child," says Barbara. "I was at the breaking point."

Then Barbara saw Habitat for Humanity in Monmouth County offering its services to hurricane-affected families. "I called the number, and they actually called back," Barbara says. "I said, 'I have an extremely little amount of hope left. If you can't help me, it is kinder to tell me that.' And they said, 'We are going to be with you through this.'"

Barbara partnered with Habitat Monmouth to raze and rebuild her home. Harlea is now back in college, and Barbara has actually joined the Habitat Monmouth team, now serving her second term as an AmeriCorps member.



"We have a beautiful and safe place to rest our heads at night," Barbara says.  
"Habitat rebuilt our home and healed our hearts."

*AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members respond to natural and manmade disasters including forest fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, terror attacks, and oil spills. Since 1994, these national service programs have provided critical support to millions of Americans affected by disasters. More than 2,400 AmeriCorps members participated in the response to Hurricane Sandy, mucking and gutting more than 2,000 homes in New York and New Jersey. AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members typically stay in communities for substantial periods of time, not just in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.*

*Voices for National Service would like to thank our partners at Habitat for Humanity for sharing this story, which originally appeared on the Habitat for Humanity website.*