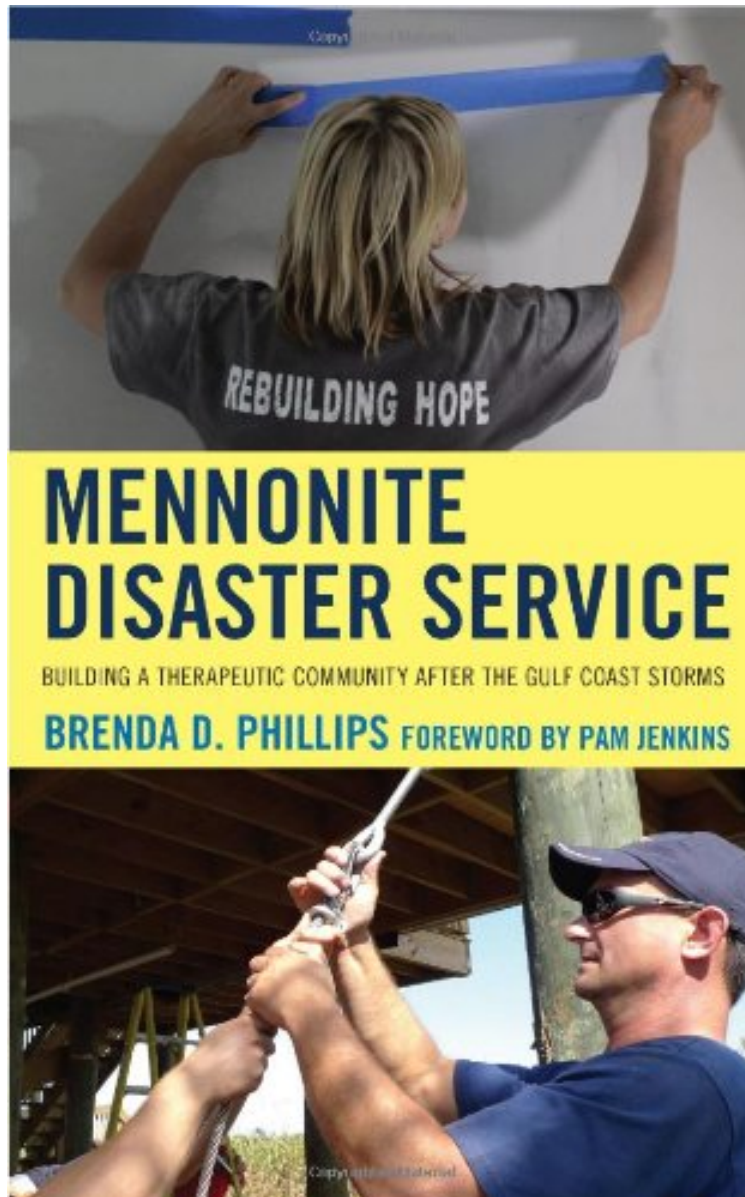


Mennonite Disaster Service: Building a Therapeutic Community after the Gulf Coast Storms

Brenda Phillips Ph.D

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Brenda Phillips Ph.D : Mennonite Disaster Service: Building a Therapeutic Community after the Gulf Coast Storms before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mennonite Disaster Service: Building a Therapeutic Community after the Gulf Coast Storms:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Stories about people who lived through Hurricane Katrina and those who came to help. By bbInspiring account of how a community rebuilds after disaster -- with a little help from strangers who become friends and neighbors.

In the aftermath of a traumatic disaster, Mennonite Disaster Service arrives to help. Established in 1950, associated volunteers have gone into devastated communities to pick up debris, muck out homes, and launch rebuilding efforts. These volunteer efforts have succeeded in building more than homes, however. Called the therapeutic community by disaster researchers, acts of volunteerism can generate healing moments. Though most studies see such therapeutic effects happening right after disasters, this ethnographic study looks at long-term recovery assistance. Such extensive commitment results in beneficial consequences for survivors and their communities. For Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers, serving others reflects deeply upon their historic roots, cultural traditions, and theological belief system. In contrast to the corrosive blaming that erupted after hurricane Katrina, and feelings of neglect by those who experienced Rita and Ike, the arrival and long-term commitment of faith-based volunteers restored hope. This volume describes and explains how Mennonite Disaster Service organized efforts for the 2005 and 2008 Gulf Coast storms, following a well-established tradition of helping their neighbors. Based on deeply-ingrained religious beliefs, volunteers went to the coast for weeks, sometimes months, and often returned year after year. The quality of the construction work, coupled with the meaningful relationships they sought to build, generated trusting partnerships with communities struggling back from disaster. Based on five years of volunteer work by Mennonite Disaster Service, this volume demonstrates best practices for those who seek to do the same.

Mennonite Disaster Service brings to clear focus one of the most powerful examples of faith-based volunteer service to the survivors of hurricane Katrina and the other Gulf coast hurricanes of the first decade of the 21st century. This book is an important read because it provides detailed history and understanding of the work the particular group achieved but also enables us to appreciate the motivation, methods, and outcomes such committed groups demonstrate. (Shirley Laska, University of New Orleans) This book offers a rich and textured account of Mennonite Disaster Service. In describing this extraordinary organization, Dr. Phillips answers several fundamentally important questions, including: Why do people volunteer after disasters? What do faith-based organizations contribute to post-disaster recovery work? And, ultimately, how can communities rebuild to be stronger and better, even after the most catastrophic events? This is a fascinating read. (Lori Peek, Colorado State University) This is both an excellent academic study and a story a truly engaging one of people helping people in a very special way. This is a close up view of those who experienced the destruction of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Ike and those from the Mennonite Disaster Service who came to help. Together they built a classic therapeutic community. This important book is a valuable resource not only for students and academics who will find rich empirical support for many theoretical concepts, but for anyone who wants to understand and appreciate giving and receiving in disaster recovery. (Maureen Fordham, Northumbria University) This ethnography describes and explains how Mennonite Disaster Service, following a well-established tradition of helping their neighbors, organized volunteer efforts for the 2005 and 2008 Gulf Coast storms. In contrast to the corrosiveness observed after hurricane Katrina, this book reveals the deeply beneficial therapeutic communities created in the wake of natural catastrophes once faith-based volunteers arrive to restore living and working environments in the aftermath of natural disasters. About the Author Brenda Phillips is a full professor of sociology and associate dean at Ohio University Chillicothe. Her works include *Disaster Recovery, Qualitative Disaster Research, Women and Disasters: From Theory to Practice*, and *Social Vulnerability to Disasters*.