

# One Volunteer's Story of Service

**“Go and do what you can; you will have such a wonderful time. They will teach you what to do.”**

**Ruth Stump**

**Right: Brethren Disaster Ministries Volunteer Ruth Stump on the job at a project site  
(File photo)**



Ruth Stump grew up in Luray, Virginia, and calls herself, “Just a farm girl.” Being a farm girl was good training for her future volunteer career with the Brethren Disaster Ministries rebuilding projects. The work ethic and skills she learned early in life are fundamental in support of the District's disaster ministry. Those skills are often employed in sweeping and vacuuming, sanding, hanging siding and installing flooring. She enjoys the hard work and is grateful that at age 87 God has given her the strength to continue helping others.

After showing up on projects as a regular helper over the years, the other volunteers decided Stump had the interest and ability to tackle bigger jobs. On one project site years ago, Buddy Harrison asked her to help with framing. He laid out several two-by-fours and told her to make a mark on them every two inches. That was her first lesson in framing. Later, she learned how to grout floor tiles with Jeff Bruins. She said that was one of the funniest adventures she had experienced. “What you don’t know, they will teach you,” she noted.

Stump was not only a student, but she also taught Doug Houff the finer points of drywall sanding while on a project in Ohio a few years back. Houff said in an earlier interview that he was especially appreciative of the instruction from Stump, who was his ‘boss’ for sanding drywall that week. “She did not allow any shortcuts when it came to sanding,” he said.

Shenandoah District Disaster Ministries Coordinator Jerry Ruff organizes the project trips each year. Stump asserts, “Jerry Ruff doesn’t ask, he just signs me up for every trip and I tell him if I can’t go. He knows I will go if I can.” Stump has been so many times that she has lost count but recalls canceling only once for a medical issue.

The number of times she has gone out on trips is not as important to her as the opportunity to help others and get to see people from other areas that she has worked with in the past. “I have a lot of good friends from a lot of different places,” she reminisced. Those warm memories of serving together with so many different people over the years are priceless to her and motivate her to continue to serve for as long as she is able. “I have met so many nice people doing this,” she reflected.

Although the District Disaster Ministries teams have traveled to numerous states, Stump has also served within the Shenandoah District, as well. She recalled that she has been to West Virginia several times, and last year she served on the home restoration project in Columbia Furnace, which was supported by the Community Mission congregation.

One might initially assume that women who volunteer are there to prepare meals for the project team, but Stump says she doesn’t do the cooking. “One time, they needed a cook, and I told them to call Catherine Lantz,” she laughed.

When asked what she would tell someone considering going on a trip, she said, “Go and do what you can; you will have such a wonderful time. They will teach you what to do.”

Stump detests receiving credit or recognition for simply doing what she is able to do for others whose lives have been turned upside down by a disaster. She emphasizes that the important thing is giving God the glory for everything. It is for His honor that people like Stump serve in humble ways that are making a difference for hurting people, near and far.

When not out serving on a project site, Stump enjoys her family. She has three

grown children and five grandchildren. Some members of her family have followed in her footsteps and have been on project trips. Her grandson, Christopher, is planning to go again this year.

Teams of volunteers from the Shenandoah District make several trips to Brethren Disaster Ministries project sites each year to help rebuild communities damaged by hurricanes, floods and fires. Occasionally, additional work projects are set up within the District.

All expenses are paid for the volunteer crew members and transportation is provided. The teams generally leave on Sundays, put in a week's work, and return home on Saturdays. Proceeds from the Shenandoah District Disaster Auction and Sale, held annually on the third Friday and Saturday in May at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds near Harrisonburg, help support this ministry. The auction will take place on May 19-20, [2023].

Visit [shencob.org/disaster-auction-and-sale/](https://shencob.org/disaster-auction-and-sale/) to learn more about the auction and [shencob.org/disaster-ministries/](https://shencob.org/disaster-ministries/) to see the work project schedule. To support the auction or disaster ministry financially, visit [shencob.org](https://shencob.org) or mail checks to the Shenandoah District Church of the Brethren, P.O. Box 67, Weyers Cave, Virginia 24486, using the memo line to direct the donation to the desired account. To inquire about the credit card sponsored by F&M Bank, which benefits the disaster ministry of the District, [click here](#).

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