

The Big Clean-up at The North Spencer Christian Academy

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 17 June 2015 17:02 - Last Updated Wednesday, 17 June 2015 17:13

Spencer, NY – When a roiling mass of a debris and troubled waters slammed into the ill-designed bridge at Route 34/96 and started a catastrophic pile-up near Hulbert Hollow Creek Road, the adjacent North Spencer Baptist Church and Christian Academy took the brunt of it. An Ark was needed to handle to storm surge. Up to four inches of rain fell in less than two hours on Sunday, saturating the Town of Newfield, the hills of 34/96, and source of the creek, which empties in Spencer Lake. Although listed as a "dry, intermittent stream" by the NYS State Dept. of Transportation Region 9, this not the first time the bridge at Hulbert Hollow has failed to handle heavy weather. As a tributary in the Susquehanna River Watershed, it is a sleeper creek capable of turning into a white water nightmare in extreme, almost tropical downpours.

During Sunday's storm, thousands of gallons of muddy water crest the banks and fanned outward swallowing the land and bursting through a window in the building's lower level. Once inside, it quickly rose to its own level, maxing out at than 5-feet in the deepest areas, filling the space with logs, branches and muck. The entire western side of the academy, the side that faces the highway, was in ruins. The academy's cafeteria, classrooms and an entire gymnasium were a total loss.

On Monday morning and through today, =a volunteer contingent of more than 100 people, church members and community members, folks from a local rehab, and a van load of Calvary Baptist Church members from Ithaca, threw themselves into the muck and mire: In two days, they cleared-out the worst of the mess.

The gym floor was pried manually with cat's claws and wrenching bars, board by board, clear down to the concrete base. Whether or not you are a believer, it was an amazing response to a disaster that closed the school down for the summer; officials are hoping to have it restored in time for September classes. The academy currently serves 75 students, from Pre-K to Senior and is a registered NYS school. Eight NSCA seniors will be taking their Regents exams in the Spencer Van Etten High School and a kindergarten graduation was relocated to a nearby church.

We put this slideshow together in honor of the folks who turned out to help and as our tribute to their endurance: In 2004, a similar flood destroyed most of the building in much the same way.

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A state DOT "improvement" project on the bridge turns out to be a lesson in flawed design and residents have sought in vain for help from the state government to get the highway trafficked bridge rebuilt so this doesn't happen again. We wish them all, God speed.

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