

HURRICANE HARVEY COMES TO TEXAS

As the Texas Gulf Coast braced for Hurricane Harvey's arrival in late August of 2017, no one could imagine the impact he would have on the residents in general, and students at some schools in particular. Through the years the Texas Coast has experienced hurricanes of every kind, but Harvey brought new meaning to rainfall, flooding and endurance. Texans have had storms of higher intensity, but never as much rain. Over less than a week's time the Houston area experienced an average of 50 inches of rain with all suburbs, getting at least 30 inches with Nederland topping the list at 60 inches! The result was massive flooding in neighborhoods that had been safe in the past. Neighborhoods mean schools, and while many were driven from their homes, school classes and activities were cancelled as work began to adjust and rebuild.

In the Corpus Christi area, the storm had 130 MPH winds and flooding, doing the most damage to the Rockport ISD and Port Aransas ISD. All schools up and down the coast were delayed anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 months as 219 schools were hit hardest. When the water began to recede, those 2 Corpus Christi area school districts were forced to start classes in the neighboring Gregory-Portland and Flour Bluff schools because the damage would take months to repair. In the Houston ISD area, 53 schools were damaged enough to move their activities and classes to other schools within their district where split schedules allowed 2 student bodies to use one campus. The worst situation was Kingwood HS where their students shared the campus of Summer Creek HS. But, Kingwood's damage was so severe that they will not get back into their building until the start of the 2018-19 school year, at the earliest.

To add a new angle to the storm damage, over 300 flights in Houston's 2 biggest airports were cancelled, stranding many people from across the nation and worldwide. Both airports were closed for 3 days forcing travelers to seek alternate means. But, that was impossible because all major freeways and toll roads through Houston were underwater in numerous places making travel from one side of the city to the other impossible.

College and high school football games were cancelled (unheard of in Texas) and even the Houston Astros major league baseball team moved a 3-game series to St Petersburg Florida. The Astros World Series Championship came at the perfect time to lift the spirits of many Texans when it was needed most. Many Houstonians, without a place to live, are proudly wearing their Astros tee shirts and team jerseys.

As homes and schools are slowly repaired and rebuilt, many are getting back into normal schedules. The football playoffs are in full swing and basketball has begun on all levels. The good news of the story is that a tragic event like Hurricane Harvey brought out the good in people. As the damage occurred and people found themselves in trouble, strangers came to the rescue. People from Dallas, San Antonio, Louisiana and Colorado came with boats, food, supplies and helped people they had never met. Friends and family members bonded closer together as we all strive to get back to normal. It has been heart-warming to watch the news and see story after story of everyday heroes and small acts of love and concern for our fellow man.

Disasters have followed in Florida and California and they will always be a part of our lives. Let us be reminded that whether we are the helper or the victim, we can get through anything if we stick together. Hopefully that is the main lesson we are teaching our basketball players as we strive to make athletics a practice session for our challenges in life.

Good luck to all this season. Thanks for your concern, your thoughts and your prayers for all of us here in Texas. Let's continue to improve the game of basketball. But as we do our part, let us continue to make the world a better place on the good days as well as the tough times.