

12-Year-Old Boy Saves Eternal Lives Post-Sandy

In the midst of the chaos, a 12-year-old boy may have saved all their lives.

Not physically from **Hurricane Sandy**, but from an eternal perspective. A blue-eyed, black-haired boy named Josh used his multi-talented language skills to help communicate God's saving love to his parents and neighbors.

How Josh, his hearing-impaired parents, his four Hispanic neighbors and a Rapid Response Team chaplain ended up all together in the hallway of a New Jersey church that night was surely an act of God.

Samaritan's Purse had come to Josh's parents house in Bergen County to help with repairs from Sandy's devastating storm. The chaplains came shortly after to see if anyone needed **prayer**, or simply someone to talk to, and found Josh's parents were hearing-impaired.

No worries. Josh would interpret.

"He's very **charismatic** and very intelligent," chaplain coordinator Judy Tefft said about Josh. "When you look at him, there's something unique about him."

At the end of the conversation, the chaplains invited Josh and his parents to camp that night for a meal and share time with the Samaritan's Purse and Rapid Response Team volunteers.

Not only did Josh's family take the chaplains up on their offer, they also brought their four neighbors—a mother who only speaks Spanish, and her three elementary children who speak both Spanish and English.

As share time began, Josh was in full interpreting mode,

helping to communicate to his parents through sign language and his neighbor who didn't understand English.

"He's not only signing for his parents, he's also speaking Spanish," Judy said. "Between breaths he's speaking Spanish and his hands were flying a mile a minute.

"It was amazing to watch this."

After everyone had a chance to share, one of the children wanted a second turn.

Only this time, instead of a typical kid story, she started to talk serious about the night that Sandy came through.

"She begins to tell the story about the night of the flood," Judy said. "How the water started coming in and she was so scared. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. It was gut-wrenching. She began to cry and went back to her mother."

The mother and daughter wanted to be alone, so they went out into the hallway. The other children followed, and soon after Josh and his parents went out too.

Judy, a retired schoolteacher, was sitting on a bench in the hallway outside a Sunday school room with colorfully painted walls. When Judy saw the group, especially the daughter who was crying, she began to share about Jesus, using the "Steps to Peace with God" booklet.

All seven were huddled around, with Josh again being the voice for his parents and neighbors.

"I began to share with them about Jesus, just like you would in Sunday school—old-school style," Judy said. "As we went page by page, we talked about Jesus and who He is and what He did. And what it means to be saved."

Finally, Judy asked each one in the group if they would like to accept Jesus into their life.

“They all said yes,” said Judy, who confirmed with each one around the circle. “We had seven salvations right there. We all prayed in unison.”

The night in the church hallway has been a highlight for Judy, who along with her husband, Bob, has been ministering in New Jersey for over a week now. The damage is severe – “the biggest thing is the loss of their vehicles,”—but only recently have the Teffts felt a vulnerability of the human spirit.

“They can’t get the help,” Judy said. “The people are starting to break down.”

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