

# CAP Connection

A newsletter for volunteer alumni of the Christian Appalachian Project

Summer 2011



## Disaster relief volunteers have busy spring

*The flag in a Marshall County, Ala. tree hung upside down, a symbol of defeat.* Six of the nine homes in the neighborhood lay in heaps on the ground, obliterating any sign of the earth below. The devastated homeowners didn't know where to begin.

Then the caravan came into sight. Busses, trailers, heavy equipment.

One-hundred-and-thirty volunteers got out of the vehicles to survey the damage and Sherry Buresh, Director of

CAP's Disaster Relief Program, put them to work. The homeowner who had hung the flag watched it all then turned his flag right side up.

That's what disaster assis-

tance means to so many people whose lives have been turned upside down by tornadoes, fires, floods, earthquakes. The news spreads, the photos make it to television and often, people don't know how to help. Since 2004, CAP has been sending aid, gathering volunteers from its programs in Appalachia as well as anyone else who wants to assist.



The disaster crew shows up to be the hands and hearts that begin to restore hope to the people.

It was a busy spring for

Sherry and her crews beginning with that Alabama tornado disaster. As her program has become better organized and more well-known, increasing numbers of volunteers have responded. A total of 147 helped in Alabama.

Besides the totally devastated neighborhood, elsewhere the volunteers saw trees on top of homes, blocking drive-ways and covering yards. "There is no way of looking

*Continued on page 3*



*Ken Curtin, Maureen (Corcoran) Huerter and David Huerter reunited in Joplin, Mo. after 40 years. They volunteered in McKee in summer 1967. Maureen and Dave married the following summer, with Ken in the wedding party.*

### Alumni Highlight: Ken Curtin

### **Volunteers share values**

*When Ken Curtin, '68-'70, got on the bus at Sienna College headed for Kentucky in 1967, he didn't know CAP would have such an impact on his life.* Yet, one short-term volunteer experience led to a summer of volunteering. Ken returned to school in the fall, but remembers, "I couldn't think about college." So in January 1968, he left his home in New York City to serve in the mountains for two years. "The experience in Kentucky set the path for my life."

It's not difficult for Ken to remember that experience and his CAP friends because they've stayed in touch over the years. Just recently, he says, CAP has seemed to be even more on his mind as he visited with his volunteer friends and reconnected with CAP through his job as

*Continued on page 2*





## From Across the Mountains

**Cara (Sukolsky), '04-'06** and Geoff Rach welcomed Mathias William Rach into the world on March 24th. The family lives in the Pittsburgh area where Geoff serves as Associate Pastor at Canonsburg United Presbyterian Church in Canonsburg, Pa.



### **Alumni Highlight: Ken Curtin**

*Continued from cover*

Voluntary Agency Liaison with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

He met CAP's Director of Disaster Relief Sherry Buresh at a regional meeting. Although Ken has spent his career in disaster assistance, in the late 60s he was doing whatever needed to be done in Kentucky. "In 1967 it was like going into a time warp," he says about being in Jackson, Madison and Garrard Counties with Fr. Beiting. Although logging was the most fun activity volunteers did, he says making home visits was the most fulfilling. He also helped build a dairy barn and taught bible school. In two days, Jerry Purcell taught Ken to operate CAP's printing press and that became his job. He laughs as he remembers two days wasn't truly enough and he made plenty of mistakes on the

**Allen Hodges, '08-'09, and Jessica Soule, '08-'09,** were married April 2011 in Washington state. They celebrated the big day with CAP friends **Jordan Pierce, '08-'10, Jenny King, '08-'10, Dana Nevins, '08-'09, Jenna Boyd, '08-'09, Paul Stage, '08-'09 and Kim Rice, '08-'09.**



**Katie Bostiga, '08-'10** has recently moved from Boston to Paintsville. Her entrepreneurial spirit, as well as her love of service, encouraged her to start Bostiga Pediatric Therapy, a nonprofit that works with Kentucky's First Steps early intervention program.

**Nick Borninski, '09-'10 and Katie Alley, Camp AJ and short-term, 2009,** were married in May in Oregon. **Annie Steele, '10-'11** was Katie's Maid of Honor and **Kristen Lauer, '09-'10** also attended.



printing jobs that followed.

Ken also remembers being at St. William parish in Lancaster where he hosted a "Meet the Candidates" event during election season. Only candidates from the party who were out of power showed up. They revealed they wouldn't win because they didn't have enough money to buy the votes. So Ken and other volunteers started an anti-vote buying campaign. On voting day, they showed up at the polls when candidates were driving in carloads of people in the early morning darkness. Ken's crew took photos and discovered the voters were being paid \$60 to vote the ticket. Although the campaign caused quite a bit of local concern, Fr. Beiting stood behind what the volunteers were doing.

"He set an example for us," Ken says about Fr. Beiting. He saw CAP's founder as someone

who worked within a larger institution (the Catholic church) but didn't let its rules restrict his intentions. The lesson for Ken was: "You don't have to just get a job and take orders. You can create something new, even when working within an institution."

"There is not a college where you could get an experience as intense, rich and useful as what I had with CAP," Ken says. It was an experience of doing something substantive with friends who shared his values.

That's one reason so many of them are in touch today. There's **Maureen (Corcoran) Huerter, David Huerter, Joanne Sheehan, Charlie King, Pat Dillon, Joanne McGloin,** all of whom volunteered with Ken in the late 1960s. "We've kept in close touch," Ken says, noting that everyone went into public service or peace work.

*Continued on page 3*

## CAP's disaster volunteers

*Continued from cover*

at a picture on television and understanding what it's really like," Sherry says. Pictures don't engage all of the senses like being there. There are smells and sounds associated with every disaster and Sherry says no two situations are alike except for the gratitude of the people.

Besides clearing debris, the crews in Alabama covered houses with tarps, rebuilt wheelchair ramps, completed minor home repairs—anything they could to get people back into homes that were safe, secure and dry.

When remembering the

---

*Continued from page 2*

Ken left CAP believing that war and Christianity don't mix so he became a conscientious objector. He spent two years with Catholic Peace Fellowship. As alternative to military service during the Viet Nam War, he worked for the Red Cross which is how he began his career in disaster relief and now crosses paths with CAP in that realm. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and they have two sons in their twenties who are now going into the world, possibly to discover some of the same things their father did in Kentucky.



*Charlie King, '68, and Ken Curtin*



To add your name to CAP's disaster response database, contact Sherry at 606-308-9234 or [sburesh@chrisapp.org](mailto:sburesh@chrisapp.org).

You can view video from CAP's Alabama response at [youtube.com/ChrisAppProj](https://www.youtube.com/ChrisAppProj)

destroyed neighborhood, Sherry says the families there were at a loss about how to get started. "It was like walking into a mass junkyard." For a day-and-a-half the volunteers cleaned up debris. "When we completed it, it looked like a completely different place," she says.

It wasn't long after that experience when the tornado hit Joplin, Mo. CAP's disaster team serves the 13 Appalachian states, which doesn't include Missouri, though Missouri is included in Operation Sharing's service area. When the Catholic Action Center in Lexington, a ministry to the homeless, said they wanted to take some of the folks they serve to volunteer, Sherry spent the Memorial Day weekend training them. These folks who are usually on the receiving end of service embraced the opportunity to be the people who would be serving. "After being around them I got excited and wanted to help them all I could," she says. That's why Sherry decided to go with them to Joplin. CAP also loaned the group tools, a tool trailer, a response trailer, and a shower and laundry trailer.

Every bit of what they took was greatly needed. "Any disaster is bad but that disaster is totally devastating; all you could see for six to eight miles was destruction," she says. The volunteers helped pack belongings

of senior citizens who needed to move out of their residential facility so it could be repaired, they handed out supplies, ran the shower trailer, made phone calls and did whatever else had to be done. "When you respond, flexibility is your number one thing," she says. "The needs will change constantly."

"It was a great partnership," Sherry says, adding that it's not about who gets the credit for helping. "It's about getting the job done."

Even when Sherry is not responding to a disaster, she's attending meetings, going to trainings, doing whatever she can to make CAP's disaster assistance more effective. As she does that, the CAP disaster response trailer is ready to go on short notice. There are now approximately 600 volunteers in the emergency response database who Sherry can call on to see if they're available to help. If they say yes, she gives them the information about where to meet CAP in Kentucky for transportation, or where to meet CAP at the disaster site if they want to go directly there. Other than the initial transportation, there are no costs to volunteers.

Sherry says: "There's no better feeling than being able to help others especially when others are experiencing trauma and you can give them a glimmer of hope."

# Quick CAP News

Everyone at Camp AJ and Shawnee has enjoyed the newly renovated facilities this summer, and at AJ, perhaps no one more than Miss Nina, who has been enjoying cooking in the new kitchen. Some of the folks she's cooking for are second generation counselors who are following in the footsteps of their parents to make summer camp a memorable experience for all of the campers . . . **Down in McCreary County** the new volunteer house build continues to progress. We look forward to sharing a more detailed progress report and photos before the end of the year. . . **CAP commissioned** another group of volunteers July 9. See their photo below.



**CAP's website isn't just for prospective volunteers.** If you haven't recently visited the Volunteer Alumni Network page on the website (<http://christianapp.org/vol/alumni/>) remember to check it out. There you can find ways to stay connected with CAP, this newsletter, job and volunteer resources, a way to tell your CAP story and more. We want to stay connected after you leave. You'll also find us on Facebook.

Many of you completed the survey we included with the previous issue of the newsletter. Thank you! We're still tabulating the results and will share what we learn when the data is more complete. Congrats to **Chris McCracken, '08-'09** on winning the \$100 Visa gift card in our random drawing of survey respondents!

Have an update for us? Send it to [volunteer@chrisapp.org](mailto:volunteer@chrisapp.org).

**Thank you** **Bridget McCormack, '10-'11** for representing CAP at a career fair. Thanks also to the many alumni who helped at WorkFest, YouthFest, Ichthus and Summer Camp.

**CAP Connection** is published three times a year by the CAP Volunteer Program. If you have news to share or story ideas to suggest, please send them to one of the following:

**Beth Dotson Brown, '90 - '91**  
Contributing Editor

**Amy Schill, '03-'05**  
Coordinator of Recruitment / Alumni

**Kathy Kluesener, '73 - '80**  
Admissions Coordinator

**Kathleen Leavell, '76 - '78**  
Director of  
Volunteers/Christian Partners

[volunteer@chrisapp.org](mailto:volunteer@chrisapp.org)  
1-800-755-5322  
606-256-0973  
fax 606-256-5942  
[www.christianapp.org](http://www.christianapp.org)



**Volunteer Program**  
4192 North Wilderness Road  
Mt. Vernon, KY 40456

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Lexington, KY  
Permit # 850