

# Volunteer work helps cure Ike hang-over

By Bill Shaw

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Into the second mile of a 4-miler Friday on an almost perfect day for an early morning run Friday, I revised my proposed route to turn east at the intersection of Highway 288 and Velasco Boulevard because the sun was a yellow-neon ball rising from a white cloud. I couldn't resist running toward the sunrise.

It's been difficult to get back to my regular routine since I evacuated to Houston for a couple of nights to escape Hurricane Ike. I have a hurricane hang-over after my four-day "hurrication" from Sept. 11-14. I also am experiencing some post-hurricane guilt because when my wife, my mother and I returned from Houston on Sept. 14, my house had electricity. My mother had to stay with us, however, for 11 days because Carriage Inn was without electricity and not ready for residents' return.

I have a friend in Cypress who, at this writing on Saturday, does not have electricity. I received an e-mail from another friend in south Houston who had her power restored on Friday, two weeks after Ike roared through her neighborhood.

I attempted to assuage my

guilt by volunteering to answer phone calls at the Freeport help center, by compiling assistance lists and by helping individuals complete applications for FEMA aid.

While I was out for a 5K Saturday morning, I thought about the importance of volunteer work in our community and throughout the world. Youth



baseball, soccer, football and a multitude of other athletic activities would not exist or flourish without selfless volunteers. Church activities would come to a halt.

All of us have an obligation to our communities to serve as volunteers whenever we can, and in whatever capacity we can.

In a local run, it can be as simple as calling out split times at mile markers, working at a water table or helping at the finish line and working on race results.

"Service to others," said Mohammed Ali, "is the payment you make for your space here on Earth."

"Volunteers," said Erma Bombeck, "are the only human beings on the face of the Earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience and just plain loving one another."

In the wake of Hurricane Ike, volunteers make a difference. Those in our community who are in desperate straits, those Surfside residents who are homeless, our citizens who are tempo-

rarily without income, even the displaced and abandoned pets, need help only volunteers can provide. Local, state and federal government agencies can't meet many of the needs in our community. Volunteers must step up and offer help and hope for the victims of Ike. Those less fortunate than we are need our time, our talents and our love to restore their lives.

When our area crisis is over, make a habit of volunteering for whatever your time and talents allow. "A candle loses nothing of its light when lighting another," said Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran. Make your life brighter and brighten the lives of others by volunteering.

Footnotes: Family Fitness canceled the 5K Run/Walk scheduled Sept. 13, when Ike roared in. Merie Abercrombie, race director, hopes to reschedule the contest in November.

The Brazosport Regional Health System rescheduled the 25th annual 5K/10K Run for Saturday, May 9, because of Hurricane Ike and the unsafe condition of the race route.

Despite damage to Surfside's Stahlman Park pavilion, the fifth annual Surfside Marathon/Half Marathon will be run on schedule.

For information and online registration, see [www.surfsidemarathon.com](http://www.surfsidemarathon.com).

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