

ORTHODOX UNION

NCSY Goes to Boulder for Relief Work

OU Staff

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The story of Noah and the Flood came early for the inhabitants of the Boulder, Colorado area this year. In early September, just as the Jewish High Holy Days were about to start, the skies opened, and even if it didn't rain for 40 days and 40 nights, 17 inches of rain — half the year's annual total — fell in two days in neighboring, Lyons. (Parshat Noach was read October 5).

Once again after a natural disaster, New Jersey NCSY swung into action, with another in a continuing series of disaster relief missions – its 22nd student leadership mission in five years, beginning with Hurricane Katrina.

Rabbi Rael Blumenthal, director of the Bergen County NCSY chapter, led boys to Colorado from the Torah Academy of Bergen County (TABC) and local public schools such as Freehold Boro High School, Marlboro High School, and Teaneck High School. Rabbi Ethan Katz, Regional Director of New Jersey NCSY, coordinated the trip, the 22nd mission he has run.

Rabbi Blumenthal wrote on Sunday, “Our work site is a small house that has already been gutted to the extent that it is only a shell. Our job was to remove mud from under the floor beams (there is no floor) in order to recreate the crawl space needed to install new plumbing and electricity. The boys did an excellent job, and bucket after bucket of mud and debris was wheeled out onto the side of the road for collection.” While the boys were working, Rabbi Blumenthal added, it rained and then snowed.

Judah Stiefel of TABC said, “What we did was take a person with no house, no hope and no place to turn and gave him all three. With every shovel of mud and stroke of hammer we didn't just take a step towards the reconstruction of someone's home but also a step towards a rebuilding someone's life.”

Here is a photo essay of the work the NCSYers did in Lyons.

Police block the entry into Lyons to prevent looting while the town gets back on its feet.

NCSY and TABC students digging out the muddy floor of a shed that was destroyed by the flooding.

NCSY advisor Sammy Schaechter and TABC student Yosef Glatter empty out a wheel barrow filled with mud.

Debris piles up from a neighboring house.

Rabbi Josh Kahn (TABC) and Dan Hoeft of the NECHAMA disaster relief organization clearing debris from the yard.

Yosef Naor of TABC and Edan Kamara of Teaneck High School empty a bucket of mud and debris into the wheelbarrow.

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