

FLOOD OF 2019: YouthBuild Helps with Flood Relief Efforts in Downtown Alton

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GODFREY – A group of students from Lewis and Clark Community College's YouthBuild AmeriCorps program volunteered Friday, May 31, in Downtown Alton to help with flood relief efforts.

A total of 14 student volunteers filled more than 800 sandbags between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to help hold back historic flooding as the water levels continued to rise.

“We are extremely proud of their efforts to jump in and help when emergency situations, like the flooding we are experiencing now, arise,” said Director of Building Futures/YouthBuild Sabrina Davis. “Building Futures YouthBuild/AmeriCorps members have performed more than 45,000 hours of service in the community since 2016. Our students pledge out loud every morning to make our communities safer, stronger and healthier for everyone. They are AmeriCorps members, and they are called to serve.”

Construction Trainer Mitch Fletcher and full-time AmeriCorps member Spencer Hughes led the efforts that were organized by policy council members and students Parker Grassle, 19, and Zachary Cable, 18.

Davis said Lewis and Clark’s program participants perform 450 hours of community service each year, in addition to attending a service-learning course every Thursday. Together, they decide on a service-learning project each month.

Cable said they chose to help with flood relief efforts to give back to the community that’s helping them find their career paths. YouthBuild is housed at L&C’s Scott Bibb Center on Central Avenue in Alton.

“It was fun getting out there and working with the community,” Cable said. “It was a very good feeling to know what we were doing actually made an impact.”

Grassle echoed his sentiment.

“It was good to see the community get together for one goal – to fight the flood,” Grassle said.

It was also an opportunity to spread the word about what YouthBuild is and how it can help set others down the path to a rewarding career.

“We got to talk to several people from the community, and even let another person our age know about YouthBuild – and now, he’s planning to join,” Cable said.

Both students started in YouthBuild last January. Cable plans to take courses in L&C’s Drafting and Design program in the fall, and Grassle intends to follow a career path in construction through YouthBuild.

Sunday morning, the rising waters surpassed high water marks from 1844 (36.90 feet) and 1973 (36.89 feet). According to the National Weather Service, flood stage at Alton’

s Melvin Price Locks and Dam is 21 feet. As of 1 p.m., Tuesday, June 4, the water stood at 38.06 feet in Alton, a level second only to the Great Flood of 1993, when the water level reached a record 42.72 feet on Aug. 1, 1993.

The water isn't expected to crest until Wednesday or Thursday of this week, at a projected 39.2 feet.

YouthBuild AmeriCorps is a program designed to serve out of school youth, 16-24 years of age. The program is a unique contextualized career pathway program designed to prepare young adults to take the GED®/High School Equivalency (HSE) exam or complete their high school diploma while gaining skills in construction, information technology or CNA.

YouthBuild functions as an AmeriCorps network affiliate member. The AmeriCorps component of YouthBuild provides students with leadership opportunities while earning them money for education and developing an appreciation for citizenship through service-learning activities within the community.

To learn more, visit www.lc.edu/YouthBuild or contact Davis at (618) 468-4150 or sdavis@lc.edu.