Like most Americans, Tom and Classie Johnson will always remember how Sept. 11 devastated their lives. But instead of the Twin Towers in New York City, they will be remembering Hurricane Irma attacking their home.

Even though they lived 400 miles from the storm’s landfall, Jacksonville, FL was drowning. The Johnsons piled into their car and fled inland. When authorities allowed them to return home, they discovered all their belongings were ruined, and backed-up sewage had destroyed their home. In despair, Tom, Classie and their three kids – Jasmine, Jaylan and Joshua – got back in the car and started driving north.

“We didn’t know where we were going to go,” Classie says. “When we got to Atlanta, I googled places where we could get help, and MUST Ministries came up.”

“It was the sheer grace of God that we slipped in the shelter door,” Classie says. “We had nowhere to go. I just can’t explain how badly we needed it – to have some place my kids could lay down at night, some place we could take a shower.”

“We were just a normal family, married 20 years,” Tom explains. “The storm took everything we had, and MUST helped us with clothing, personal products, hot meals and a place to stay while we looked for jobs. It was the next best thing to being at your mama’s house!”
When Miguel Santiesteban moved to the US four years ago from Barranquilla, Colombia, he learned firsthand what it was like to be immersed in a culture that speaks a different language. But his godmother started bringing him to MUST when she came to volunteer. Miguel began giving back by translating for Spanish-speaking MUST clients.

Serving at MUST helped Miguel learn English, and when he turned 18, he started volunteering himself. A student at Kennesaw State University, Miguel works from time to time at the front desk at MUST’s Cherokee Program Center, answering questions for Spanish-speaking visitors and helping them fill out necessary forms.

Miguel says he loves helping others and knows how much of a difference it makes.

Spanish-speaking clients can open up about their needs when interacting with someone who speaks their language. It allows them to feel better about receiving help when they can be specific and elaborate beyond the few English words they know.

“You can be the bridge to help them understand the process and give them a light of hope,” Miguel says.

Miguel also helped pack lunches for the Summer Lunch program at North Metro Church in Marietta. He also interned at FOX 5 Atlanta, the television media sponsor for MUST Summer Lunch.

Make a meaningful difference in someone’s life by volunteering. To learn about the many places and ways to serve others, visit mustministries.org.
When “Naomi” left California, her husband was finally in jail and she wanted to get as far away as possible. Just before Christmas, she and her three children arrived in Cobb County.

She heard about the MUST Toy Shop that offers blankets, hats, scarves, gloves, underwear, socks, books and – of course – toys for children in need. And she was in need.

At registration, she was grateful to know MUST would take care of her family and even asked about finding a job through the Employment program. “I felt like I was in the right place at the right time,” Naomi said.

When she returned to select her toys a couple of weeks later, she had found a job and things were looking up. “On the way to Georgia, I told my three children that Santa may not find them this year.”

But he did.

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**Summer Lunch brings meals to hungry children in 7 counties**

Because of our donors and volunteers like you, 7,500 children will have a lunch every weekday during their summer vacation. For 23 years, MUST has provided a nutritious meal for children who rely on school lunches for their main meal of the day.

You can start to help now by coloring lunch bags, collecting books for our Friday book distributions, gathering non-perishables (brown lunch bags, juice boxes, peanut butter, Grape jelly, plastic bags, individually packaged pretzels/granola bars or individual fruit cups/applesauce.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Just drop off your items at the Donation Center Tuesday – Saturday, 9-5 at 1280 Field Parkway.

You can also give online, plan a lunch-packing party with your church, neighborhood, club or business. Host a supply drive. Ask your church to provide a mobile vacation Bible school. So many ways to help this important effort!

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**HELP FROM OVERSEAS**

Two dozen corporate volunteers pitched in Jan. 24 to build a deck and gazebo for families at the Elizabeth Inn. Many of the volunteers came from the United Kingdom through the CEDEP Brambles leadership development program, under the auspices of Splash Community Projects, a UK-based company that delivers experiential learning programs.

*Wouldn’t your company benefit from a team-building experience that helps your neighbors in need get back on their feet?*

To learn more, contact Don Crampton | dcrampton@mustministries.org.
TESTIMONIAL
“MUST Ministries not only saved my life, but also gave me necessary tools to help me re-establish my life. The staff was not only nice, but also qualified case managers helped with things such as housing placement/job search/AA meetings/church services/many other beneficial classes. Clients are assigned a case manager to assist with getting you back on your feet and they do a great job. I would have been out on the streets in the dead of winter with nothing if MUST MINISTRIES wasn't there to welcome me with caring hearts and open arms. This is truly a GREAT program and I HIGHLY recommend it!! Thank you to ALL the staff for what you did for me!! May GOD bless you ALL!”

- a grateful client

Join Us
AT THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

Volunteer to help, or send job seekers to any MUST location, M - F, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.