

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **ReCycle North YouthBuild Provides Relief to Katrina Victims**



### **PHOTOS:**

*Repairs had not started on many homes as of March 2006.*

*Ahmed Omar installs new insulation in a Gulfport home*

*Jillian Pellerin and Nick Vogt pose with the family who own the house they worked on. The family currently lives in a trailer.*

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Earlier this month a crew of eight YouthBuild students and three supervisors traveled from Burlington, Vermont to Gulfport, Mississippi for a week-long service learning project. Their mission? To join other YouthBuild crews from across the United States and use their construction skills to help rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. The results were impressive.

YouthBuild is a 9-month education and job-training program that targets at-risk youth (16-24 year olds) who have not completed high school. Each week YouthBuild participants, called partners, spend two days in the classroom working on their GED or high school diploma and two days at a jobsite learning construction skills by building affordable housing in their community. A fifth day each week is devoted to community service projects.

ReCycle North YouthBuild is one of more than 200 YouthBuild affiliates nationwide. The trip to Gulfport was a pilot program to determine if a more sustained Katrina relief effort is possible. According to Andrew Jope, program manager for ReCycle North YouthBuild, the project was a huge success. "The Katrina project has impacted our students on so many levels," explains Jope. "They got to travel to a new region of the country where they met, face to face, with Katrina victims and helped them rebuild their homes. They got to meet other YouthBuild students from all over the country and to form new friendships. YouthBuild hopes to become a major partner in the reconstruction of the Gulf, and our

students have represented themselves so professionally and done such quality work, that they may open up a lot of opportunities like this for YouthBuild students in the future.”

For YouthBuild partner Adam Fyfe, an 18-year old student from Colchester, the trip to Gulfport really opened his eyes. He recalled installing a new roof on one house while the neighbors all looked on hoping their roof might be next on the list. According to Adam, “It was good to use my skills to give something back and help people who really needed help. I’m so happy I went -- I just wish I could have done more.”

NickVogt is another 18-year old YouthBuild partner from Colchester who made the trip to Gulfport. Nick worked on everything from pulling out insulation to bleaching wood to hanging sheetrock. Despite the hard work, what he says he’ll remember most is how people stuck together. Nick documented his experience by creating a Power Point presentation using photos from the trip. This presentation will help him share his experience with others and will serve as his senior thesis, a graduation requirement at Colchester High School.

What’s next for the YouthBuild partners? ReCycle North just enrolled a new class (Crew E) at the end of February. They are currently completing a 4-week “mental toughening” segment before they are officially enrolled in the program. In the mean time, the other YouthBuild crewmembers are busy honing their construction skills by building garden sheds from used materials salvaged by ReCycle North’s Deconstruction Crew. The sheds will be available for sale at the ReCycle North Building Material Center at 339 Pine Street. Later this spring YouthBuild crews will begin work on a Habitat for Humanity home in Burlington.

ReCycle North is a non-profit organization with a 3-part mission to reduce waste, offer job-skills training, and provide poverty relief. The organization depends on community support to fulfill their mission. To learn more about ReCycle North YouthBuild or to make a donation to help support the program, please contact Andrew Jope at 658-4143 x39 or visit [www.recyclenorth.org](http://www.recyclenorth.org).

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