



ROBERT BENTLEY
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALABAMA
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ZELIA BAUGH
COMMISSIONER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2012

Contact: Office of Public Information
334.242.3417



Camp Alabama Storm

CAMP ALABAMA STORM ART LINE PROJECT EXPRESSES FEELING OF GRATITUDE OF ALABAMA CHILDREN AFFECTED BY THE 2011 TORNADOES

MONTGOMERY – Volunteer experts in children’s emotional wellness are conducting therapeutic art workshops this April with elementary age students in communities hard hit by the April 27 tornadoes that devastated many areas of Alabama in 2011. Students from the Alabama communities of Concord, Hackleburg, Tuscaloosa and greater Birmingham are participating and contributing art work that expresses their feelings and honors the gratitude experienced by being helped and in helping others following the storm’s aftermath in this last year. The theme of the Camp Alabama Storm Art Line Project is “Helping Hands Across Alabama – Our Hearts and Hands Connect Us All.” The Camp Alabama Storm Art Line Project will include over 200 individual pieces of art by Alabama children who survived the 2011 tornadoes and will be on exhibit the weekend of April 27-29, 2012 in Linn Park at the annual Magic City Art Connection in downtown Birmingham. The Weather Channel is planning a photo essay with some of the art and messages of gratitude from the Camp Alabama Storm Art Line Project during the week of April 27, 2012, to mark the one-year anniversary of the storms in Alabama.

Children will be encouraged to tell their story around “who helped you this last year, and who did you help?” with a focus on looking at the present, “we made it,” “strong hands,” and “reaching out to others.” Each child will have a fabric flag/banner. We will help to place the child’s handprints on the banner. Fabric pens, markers and supplies will be used to personalize and tell each child’s story through art. The art created by each child will then be connected together to form an art line – a visual/physical representation of how we are all connected, and how the simple act of reaching out with our hands and with our hearts makes a positive difference and makes life better for all of us. Plans are to post images of the individual artwork and messages of gratitude made by the children on the Camp Alabama Storm Facebook page during April and May.

(cont.)



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Participating schools in Alabama include Concord Elementary School in Concord, Holt Elementary School in Tuscaloosa and Hackleburg Elementary School in Hackleburg. Camp Alabama Storm will also host an art workshop at the Magic City Art Connection for greater Birmingham students participating in the Imagination Festival on Friday, April 27, from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. The workshop will be open to the public from 2-4 p.m. Children are invited to come and contribute their art and messages of gratitude to the art line.

Camp Alabama Storm is contributing \$1,000 to each school participating in the art line to help in the rebuilding of the schools and communities. The Hackleburg Elementary School campus was totally destroyed, and Holt Elementary School in Tuscaloosa was severely damaged by the tornadoes. Both schools are operating out of temporary facilities at present. Concord Elementary is building a new school and needs financial support to build a playground. Anyone interested in making a donation to Camp Alabama Storm is encouraged to support these schools with a gift. Donation information is listed below:

Holt Elementary School (make checks payable to the school)
Attention: Principal Debbie Crawford
2300 26th Avenue
Northport, AL 35476

Hackleburg Elementary School (make checks payable to the school)
Attention: Charlotte Howell, School Counselor
541 Nix Road
Hackleburg, AL 35564

Concord Elementary School (make checks payable to the school)
Attention: Principal David Foster
Note on check for playground construction
6015 Warrior River Road
Bessemer, AL 35023

Camp Alabama Storm is the creation of volunteer experts in children's grief and trauma and is intended to be a fun, safe and supportive environment for children affected by the April 2011 tornados in Alabama. Camp Alabama Storm is made possible by Camp McDowell (our camp's charitable home) and generous donations from groups and private donors that include: The Birmingham Jewish Federation, Raymond and Kathryn Harbert, Charles and Lisa Miller, Southern Progress Corporation, St. Mary's On the Highlands Episcopal Church, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, The Birmingham Zoo and many individual supporters. The Camp Alabama Storm logo is the creation of children's book illustrator, Cyd Moore. Camp Alabama Storm is a community-driven effort, working in partnership with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Project Rebound as part of Governor Bentley's long-term community recovery efforts. ADMH initiated Project Rebound to provide counseling and assistance in the aftermath of a disaster in partnership with community organizations. It is currently serving those affected by the tornadoes and Gulf Coast oil spill.

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In November 2011, volunteer therapists hosted a free weekend healing camp for children ages 8-11 affected by the tornadoes. The camp session was held at Camp McDowell with 24 children attending from across Alabama. In order to reach more children affected by the storms, our therapists have designed a therapeutic art activity to take out to communities in a mini-camp style session in spring 2012 that promotes emotional healing, is supportive and focuses on gratitude for help given and help received in trying times.

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RESOURCES

For more information about Camp Alabama Storm, contact Judy Ault at 205-613-6761 or judyaultpr@gmail.com.

More information about Camp Alabama Storm can also be found at <http://campalabamastorm.wordpress.com>. In addition, updates about the camp can be found on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Camp-Alabama-Storm/150287401727786> and Twitter at <http://twitter.com/#!/campALstorm>.