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showing all of those people starving, people without a home, people looting, and people dead. I knew that I had to do something about it; I vowed to myself that I had to help because the trauma I was going through at the moment was minuscule compared to what they had on their shoulders. Before I left, somebody told me that I was a hero, and I thought to myself: "How can I be a hero when I have second thoughts about not even going?" I said, "I'm just your average guy going to do something to help. The people that endured that hurricane are the real heroes!"

The Director of Student Affairs, Andrea Christopher, The Business Club President, Mark Burnett, and the Volunteer Club President, Bub Stokes, all accompanied me as I went to the armory in Gettysburg. They dropped me off and from there, my journey began.

When I got to the armory, it was a "hurry up and wait" situation. We didn't know where we were going exactly, but we did know it was to the hurricane-stricken south. I didn't really believe I was leaving until I got on the bus departing for Louisiana. Once on the bus with the rest of my

platoon, I went into deep thought. I wondered what our mission would be, if we would be in New Orleans, and if so, I wanted to know how bad it was. I also wondered if I would have to shoot anyone. How would that affect that person and their family? I am highly qualified in shooting a weapon, but actually shooting a person would have been unimaginable to me.

I wasn't the only one thinking that though. The platoon had the same idea on their mind and that's why we always tried to keep our morale up. Jokes were common amongst us all, and that helped

ease some of the tension. While still on our way, the Reverend Jesse Jackson and award-winning rapper Kanye West gave their perspectives on how they thought everything was being handled. They said that the mishap with FEMA and others in New Orleans was because of race. Since I am the only African American in my platoon, and in the unit as well, many of the soldiers wanted my view on it. My opinion is that race really had nothing to do with the turmoil in New Orleans; it had to do with the socioeconomic status of the citizens. Of course, race was the first thing that popped into everyone's mind because it is the easiest thing to point out. If you look at the area as a whole, there is poverty with not only the African Americans but Caucasians and Latinos as well. African Americans are the majority though.

When we finally arrived in Slidell, LA we could see the damage instantly. We were also given "Rules of Force" stating what the proper procedure is should we encounter disgruntled citizens. Slidell was atrocious: trees uprooted, power lines down, and houses destroyed. No picture could convey how bad it was down

there. We left Slidell and traveled to Alexandria, Hammond, Bellechase, and then Harahan in Jefferson Parrish (a Parrish is equivalent to a county). In Harahan, there was no power, no running water, no nothing. In fact, the first few nights we slept outside. We ended up sleeping inside the gym of Riverdale High School. It wasn't the Hilton, but everyone was grateful.

As time progressed we were tasked with a mission. My battery (equivalent to two platoons) was put in charge of security operations for the perimeter of where the brigade was staying as well as being in charge of PODS (Point of Distribution) for food in Westwego, LA, and some other parts of Jefferson Parrish. For the most part, I pulled security for a while. Even though I would always hear the other soldiers talk about how the PODS and the people were, I had to go for myself and have the experience of meeting these people so I can know what they were going through. I finally did end up going one day and it was truly the highlight of my

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Learning About the Mont Alto Learning Center

Elizabeth S. Stiles

The campus learning center has benefited students on campus for years and it is the goal of new Director, Jack M. Ebersole, to continue that tradition.

Ebersole assumed his position in the learning center in June of this year. In an October 5 interview, he openly spoke of where the learning center has been, what services it offers now, and his intentions to continue forward with these services.

"When I came, and I talked to a number of different people, everyone was of the opinion that the Learning Center here at Mont Alto had a really good reputation; that it operated very professionally and proficiently; that the faculty were happy with what had happened here," Ebersole said. "Generally the services provided have worked."

So what services have been and are provided through the learning center? Its primary service is to provide tutors, both peer and professional, free of charge for students who need help in any discipline offered at Mont Alto.

The center also offers training in terms of study skills, strategies, time management, and the like through workshops and individual efforts of learning specialists.

As the director of the learning center, Ebersole also coordinates disability services for students with documented disabilities. These can include physical, learning, or any other type of disability.

The learning center can coordinate study groups, but does so on a limited basis currently. This is an area that Ebersole would like to see expand in the future.

In addition to these services, the learning center offers supplemental instructors to assist professors in class - especially labs - with students who need extra help.


One of the learning center's most successful programs is OWL (on-line writing lab). "Rather than you coming into the learning center face-to-face with your printed paper, you submit it on-line to the on-line writing lab," Ebersole explains. "The professional tutor makes

suggestions as to how you can improve this [paper]. It could be grammatically, it could be how it is organized, how the ideas are expressed - things such as that."

The learning center uses the aforementioned services to assist the faculty and staff in their teaching and to assist students in their educational efforts.

Twice each semester the learning center hosts exhibits in its Museum of Temporary Art. It is here that artists display their works. These exhibits are coordinated with the art department. There is usually a reception or "opening" for each exhibit, open to the campus and community at large, at which interested parties can explore the new exhibit, enjoy refreshments, and (often) meet the artist.

With a host of services available, the learning center is in place to promote the educational well-being of Mont Alto's students. Under the direction of Ebersole, the programs will continue to fulfill this role well into the future.



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