

# Mercy students spend spring break as volunteers

BY SUE DUCK  
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A group of Mercy High School seniors took a trip during spring break far away from the fun of Cancun and returned with a new appreciation of the simpler things.

"Alternative Spring Break" in its fifth year, was started by former Mercy High student Teresa Franzinger.

"She just wanted to give back to the community," said Pat Atchinson, who organized the trip. "Being a volunteer at Mercy is a very important part of the curriculum."

The trip, which helped Habitat for Humanity, was one of charity and mercy in Beattyville, Ky, which has a population of about 3,000 people.

The hours the girls donated from March 31 to April 5 were over and above the 26 required

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during four years at Mercy High.

"They repaired a double-wide trailer for Mrs. Ruth Morrison," said Atchinson, who is the service learning coordinator for the community service program.

Morrison, 87 and "sharp as a tack," has no money. "We tore off gutters and worked on the outside of the house and updated it," said Bethel Mougou, a Mercy volunteer.

Morrison hoped all the work done on the house would make it easier to sell once she's gone, the girls explained.

The other students were: Danielle Bobor, Stephanie Yuhasz, Angie Trudeau, Mary Brady, Kaitlin Hayes, Rachel Spencer, Kaitlin Hehir, Liz Kuro, Angel Bolhouse, Anna Watkins.

Chaperones were Atchinson, Arpa Dhanke, a counselor, and Anne Marie Mondro, a religion teacher.

"We stayed in an old jail which was converted into a dormitory," Kuro said. The two showers, which didn't always provide hot water, gave the girls a look at a slice of life less than perfect.

Meeting "Miss Ruth," the tiny and sweet homeowner was a pleasurable experience for the teens. "She was grateful for everything we did," Brandy said.

Morrison was "everyone's Grandma," the girls agreed. Spencer enjoyed learning about the culture. "Everyone was so nice to us," she said.

# Hills police officer returns to military

BY PAUL R. PACE  
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Hills officer Michael Fluhart.

Farmington Hills Police Officer Michael Fluhart's future is uncertain, but he said volunteering for that uncertainty was the right thing to do.

Fluhart is going back to military duty to update his skills as a helicopter crewman for the Army. He re-enlisted in October after the events of Sept. 11.

"I was thinking about it before," he said, "but that made me think I needed to do something. This was my way."

He starts training next week as a mechanic on the Army's UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. He will be at the Army's transportation center in Fort Eustis, Va., until sometime in July.

It's not known whether he will be immediately deployed to a mission outside the United States.

"I don't know what will happen," he said. "I could be called back to duty or come home."

He admitted as time approaches to leave, he is a little nervous, but said deep down, he's glad he's doing it. And it wouldn't be the first time he's encountered danger in the line of duty.

acting as door gunner in the helicopter's defense, and he is designated as the airship's crew chief. His past unit assignments were with the 364th Medical Detachment, known as Medivac, and as part of the Air Cavalry.

Soldiers of his unit are regularly deployed to areas of combat and security around the globe when not training and providing military law enforcement and homeland security at home.

When he finished his last tour of duty from 1986-1994, it was as a mechanic on the Army's UH-1 helicopter known as the Huey.

Fluhart started in law enforcement in 1989, following in the footsteps of his father who retired from the Novi Police Department in 1990.

He is currently assigned as a traffic investigator and has served in both patrol and traffic assignments.

He has received 12 citations including for valorous conduct, life saving and as police officer of the year.

Police Chief William Dwyer, said "It's not easy to give up an excellent member of an organization for an extended leave, but we know the importance of keeping our nation safe, particularly after Sept. 11."

Hills officer Michael Fluhart.

Fluhart is recovering from injuries he sustained in March when he fell off his police motorcycle after the brakes malfunctioned. He had one more physical therapy session to attend this week.

"I'm feeling pretty good," the 37-year-old said.

A member of the Michigan Army National Guard assigned to the aviation unit at Grand Ledge near Lansing, the officer said being a helicopter mechanic is a great job.

"I love the flying," he said.

New duties

Fluhart's duties include

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