

Watershed: Service in the Wake of Disaster

Eric R. Riddle



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Watershed: Service in the Wake of Disaster was written with the help of many individuals who have the same goal of describing how Indiana was able to recover from devastating 2008 flooding and tornadoes. With three presidentially declared disasters, nearly every county in the state of Indiana was directly affected. A goal for the book is to help other communities prepare for and recover from disaster. Bartholomew County was not prepared for the flood. The majority of Watershed focuses on Columbus as a case study for coping with disaster without the benefit of a pre-established response and recovery plan. Columbus has learned and will be prepared for future disaster situations. The key learning from the flood recovery and improvements to our local community are also discussed. After failing to find available resources on the subject of local disaster recovery, I felt God call me to write Watershed. I was at a unique place in my life because my employer, Columbus Regional Hospital, was closed for four months due to the flood and allowed me to pursue my passion of flood recovery during that time. The research from the book includes extensive coverage from the Columbus newspaper The Republic, minutes that I took as Secretary of the Bartholomew County Long Term Flood Recovery Team, and over 40 recorded interviews. I interviewed flood-affected individuals, leaders of nonprofit agencies, and members of the Indiana Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (INVOAD). The book highlights 17 nonprofit leaders whose organizations played a key role in recovering from the 2008 disasters. From the proceeds of Watershed, I will donate 90% of the net profits to these organizations. The 17 essays in the book add variety and depth to a disaster recovery that requires more than one perspective to accurately convey the complexity of the experience.

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