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Residence Life Staff Member Helps with Oklahoma Tornado Clean-up Efforts

Winthrop University

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Residence Life Staff Member Helps with Oklahoma Tornado Clean-up Efforts

Quick Facts

- Jessica Martin, a Winthrop residential learning coordinator, volunteered July 3-7 to help with tornado clean-up efforts through offices at University of Oklahoma, her alma mater for her graduate degree.
- This is the first time Martin has volunteered for natural disaster assistance but it certainly is not her last. She has just started volunteering with the local chapter of the American Red Cross to respond to disasters and fires and has started online training in safety, preparedness, relationship building, etc.



Jessica Martin at one of the clean-up sites

ROCK HILL, S.C. – A Winthrop University **Residence Life** staff member recently joined the tornado clean-up efforts in Moore, Okla.

On May 20, a massive F5 tornado carved a 17-mile destructive path through the Oklahoma City suburbs, killing 23 people through the devastation caused by winds topping 200 miles per hour. Jessica Martin, a Winthrop residential learning coordinator, volunteered July 3-7 through offices at **University of Oklahoma**, her alma mater for her graduate degree.

Martin reported for work to help demolish the few small buildings that were still standing and drag debris to the street. She said **federal officials** hadn't been given

clearance yet to work on private property, so she and other volunteers from around the country were tasked to help with clean up.

"I have lived in tornado alley before," said Martin, a former Kansas resident. "But I was amazed at how different everything was after the tornado hit. We all quickly realized how much impact Mother Nature has on us."

On day one, Martin said she and three women were given a sledge hammer, a crowbar, a pair of gloves and an address. Their group had trouble initially finding the address because it and several houses in the neighborhood were destroyed.

"The house was gone but a wooden shed was left," Martin said. "We were asked to take down the shed because it had been condemned. It took us all afternoon to demolish the shed. After all, it had survived a tornado."

This is the first time Martin has volunteered for natural disaster assistance but it certainly is not her last. She has just started volunteering with the local chapter of the **American Red Cross** to respond to disasters and fires and has started online training in safety, preparedness, relationship building, etc.

"I'm just glad I was able to help," said Martin, who has worked for and volunteered with several non-profit groups since high school.

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