

See **FAMILY**, Page 5A

...been spent sitting through
...not there at the time of the
...The hotel room James
...fire, is staying with family in
...now far away from her

See **FIRE**, Page 8A

Volunteers travel to Ohio for clean up efforts

By **JENNIFER TANGEMAN**
Staff Writer

A local man says in times of need he always hopes there are good people around willing to lend a hand.

A group of relief ministry volunteers from across the nation have proven that there

are.

"I just can't stress enough that these guys have left their homes, communities and even states to come help people and put people back in their homes and their communities," Bart Rinehart said. "What they're doing — you just don't see nowadays."

Rinehart's St. Marys home

was damaged from flooding Feb. 28. He said there was anywhere from 6 to 10 inches of standing water throughout the entire first floor of his home and more than a foot of water in his garage.

"Me and my wife have cleaned up from the flooding, and moved items out of our home," Rinehart said, "but

we're getting the run around between our bank and our flood insurance.

"These guys took the bank and the flood insurance out of the equation and are giving people what they need — help," he said.

Rinehart is referring to a

See **EFFORTS**, Page 7A



Staff photo/Jennifer Tangeman

Volunteers from a handful of states came to the region to provide flood relief.

INDEX

ODDS & ENDS

TIME CHANGES

group of volunteers who have traveled from Florida, New York, Virginia and Indiana to assist in flood relief efforts.

The group is coordinated by Curt Hencye, of Sarasota, Fla., who started Relief Ministries a handful of years ago.

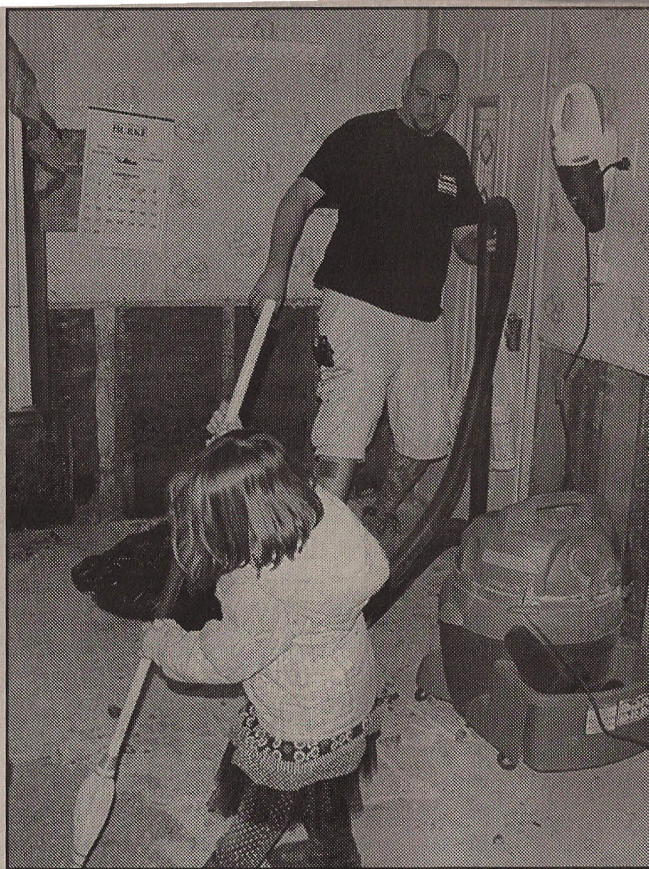
Hencye explained he and his wife, Mary Jo, started their mission work on a smaller scale in their home state. He said the hurricane season of 2004 "bombarded" Florida with several storms including Hurricane Charley.

"We just went out and started helping people, doing weekend warrior-type stuff and taking a few days off from full-time work," Hencye said.

In early 2007 tornadoes struck Central Florida and the couple again provided disaster relief. About that time, Hencye lost his job and decided to make his mission work full-time.

"I was feeling the Lord calling us to mission work," Hencye said. "We took a step of faith and started full time, and haven't looked back."

Since the creation of Relief Ministries, Hencye has orchestrated crews to help after floods in Florida, Georgia and Iowa, hurricanes in Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, a winter storm in Arkansas and a tornado in Tennessee. Crews have helped people in Peru, Honduras and Haiti, as



Staff photo/Jennifer Tangeman

Five-year-old Aaliyah Rinehart lends a hand sweeping while volunteers from out of state provide flood relief to her family and their home in St. Marys.

York City volunteered to join Hencye and his wife on the trip to Ohio, along with two people from Virginia and three from Indianapolis.

The group has been housed at the former St. Joseph Catholic School in Wapakoneta for the week and going door-to-door to find those in need of help.

That's how they came across Rinehart.

"We were at the neighbors' taking a break from cleaning and to let the kids warm up, and these

homes to government standards, have removed all of the flooring down to the subfloor in Rinehart's home. They've stripped the wall board and paneling up to four feet and have removed all cabinets from ground level. They cleaned the St. Marys home and used special chemicals that help prohibit the future growth of mold.

"You hope someone will be there when you're down on your luck," Rinehart said. "I don't know

in Tennessee. Crews have helped people in Peru, Honduras and Haiti, as well.

Hencye, who is a Mansfield native, recently received a call from a couple in Fryburg, looking for advice following the recent flooding.

Hencye has ties to the Fryburg couple, who wish to remain unnamed. He told them he would see what he could do to help.

"They told me there were a lot of people around here that needed a lot of help," Hencye said. "I put out an e-mail to 350 first responders, putting people on standby while I organized, and then I typically solicit for people or for things, whatever the need may be."

Eight men from the Bowery Mission in New

York are taking a break from cleaning and to let the kids warm up, and these guys came to the door," Rinehart said. "I said my hands are tied with the bank and with the insurance company, and they said they were ready to rock and roll."

Rinehart and his wife, Whitney, have a daughter, Aaliyah, 5, and a son, Jordan, 3. He said he wasn't sure if the crew of workers would actually contact him after they left.

"I had never met these people before," Rinehart said. "I received a call the next morning saying they were at my house before I even was, ready to get to work. I can't stress enough that this is such a blessing."

The volunteers, who are trained to repair

down on your luck," Rinehart said. "I don't know how to say this without sounding negative, but we live in a small community. People took pictures of the water levels near our house and they rummaged through the things we put at the curb when we were cleaning, but not a single person stopped to see if we needed help."

"It took people from New York, Virginia and Florida to go door-to-door and ask if people needed help," he said. "It took complete strangers. And they are doing it out of the kindness of their hearts."

Jennifer Tangeman
Staff Writer



419-739-3514
reporter3@wapakwdn.com