



Natural disasters represent defining moments in our lives. They test our character and reveal what we are capable of, but they also provide us with an opportunity to find out who we can really depend on.

My family and I are so very grateful for the recent assistance from the ALPA Emergency Relief Fund (AERF). At a time when we were scrambling to recover from damage to our house and receiving little or no aid from either the government or our insurance company, the AERF grant was truly an answer to our prayers.

The first week of June, much of the midwestern United States experienced record-breaking torrential rains. In central Indiana, rivers overflowed their banks and 39 counties were declared major disaster areas. Two nearby Lake Princess dams broke, devastating our town of Taylorsville. Our yard became a giant lake, and our finished basement remained under water for more than a week.

When the rains subsided, a hired clean-up crew looted our home, taking valuable household items. FEMA could do nothing about the looting because its resources were stretched, assisting uninsured area residents and confronting larger problems in the community. Area police were in no position to help us; they were overwhelmed as well. We were simply out of luck.

The baseboards in our kitchen began popping up, paint peeled from the excessive humidity, and the mold in our basement was so bad that we required a second clean-up crew. To make matters worse, my husband, Brian, was flying a military charter in the Middle East when this situation began. With a four-year-old son, Nicholas, to take care of and no one to turn to but our church, I was ready to scream.

In time, I reached Brian and explained the situation. He mentioned that he had recently learned about AERF from a Continental pilot and would explore this option. Brian accessed the ALPA website from a computer overseas and completed an online grant request. Amazingly, we received an AERF check in no time. I used the money to buy an air purifier to



## AERF Kept Us Afloat

By Maria Truex, wife of Capt. Brian Truex (Ryan)

help combat the mold. I also purchased a window air conditioner to replace our broken unit, as well as some basic necessities to help us get by.

Today, we are still waiting for a check from our insurance company. Although we are insured for flooding, our policy will not cover many of the related expenses we have accrued. We have hired an architect, and local zoning officials tell us we will need to add a second story to our house. We will never be able to refinish our basement again or add to the main floor, due to the flood risk, and our utilities will have to be relocated. We sleep in the room farthest from the basement because of the smell of mold and the cleaning emollients, and Brian continues to fly as much as possible because we need the extra money.

I recently sent a thank-you note to the pilots who oversee AERF, but I also want to thank the ALPA members and staff who have generously donated to this worthwhile fund. You cannot begin to fathom what it's like to face this situation until it happens to you. When it does, it's comforting to know that help is available.

Please keep Brian, Nicholas, and me in your thoughts and prayers as we put our lives back together, and thank you again for giving us a helping hand when we needed it most. And for the sake of the families who must endure future disasters, please consider giving to this program. Believe me, it really makes a difference. 🙏

## Pilots Helping Pilots



AERF is a special benefit available to ALPA members and their families who are victims of natural disasters or other large-scale catastrophes. This member resource is maintained as an entity separate from the Association and is funded primarily by contributions from ALPA members and staff. Donations are tax-deductible.

The AERF Board is currently exploring options to increase available grant totals while adhering to the laws governing tax-exempt charities.

Tragedy can strike at a moment's

notice, and regular insurance claims require time to process. AERF helps ALPA members and their dependents cover some of their immediate costs so that they can expedite the recovery process and return their lives to some semblance of normalcy.

To apply for assistance, sign on to [www.alpa.org](http://www.alpa.org) and click on Emergency Relief Fund at the top of the menu bar.

To contribute to AERF, please make your check payable to the ALPA Emergency Relief Fund, and send it to ALPA Emergency Relief Fund, Dept. 6035, Washington, D.C. 20042-6035. 🙏