



Westbury High School

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Contact: Carlete Metoyer

Phone: 713-723-6015 ext. 435

Email: cmetoye1@houstonisd.org

WESTBURY'S HURRICANE HEROES

When Hurricane Ike blew through our city, Westbury High School athletes and cheerleaders were ready to respond. Organized by baseball coach Derrick Taylor, approximately 70 students volunteered to assist area residents with clean-up. Divided into teams, they spent every Sunday afternoon in October cutting limbs, tearing down damaged fences and roofs, raking leaves, and mowing lawns for Westbury area homeowners who responded to their fliers. In return, they received credit toward the 100 hours of community service required for graduation.

“We want to motivate our athletes for life and teach them to give back to the community,” Coach Taylor said. Baseball players John Montgomery, a freshman, and Stepheleon Whitfield, a sophomore, each worked a total of ten hours. Montgomery said, “The neighborhood houses looked a lot nicer when we were finished.” Whitfield added, “We got a lot of thanks.”

The first house to be fixed belonged to Westbury High School senior Kortney Smith, baseball manager and cheerleader, and her mother. Volunteers removed a tree that had fallen on the deck, as well as tearing down a broken fence and mowing the lawn. “Afterward, it didn’t even look like Ike had come through,” Smith reported. She hopes that neighbors will appreciate the efforts of the athletes and, in turn, support them by coming out to baseball games. As Smith looks forward to graduation and college, studying biology and eventually medicine, she says, “Thank you, Coach Taylor and Westbury athletes!”

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Photographs available upon request.