



**MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Donated MEMA Cottages Receive Helping Hand From Volunteers**

**PEARL** – Instead of soaking up sun rays on a faraway beach, a group of college students from across the country decided to spend their Spring break volunteering for the United Way in Ocean Springs. Armed with paint brushes and rollers, these college students opted for an alternative Spring break by helping put the finishing touches on a 75-unit Mississippi Cottage community called Highland Village on Gibson Rd, just north of U.S. Highway 90. The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency donated the cottages at no cost to Mercy Housing, a non-profit organization that is working with a local contractor, to provide more permanent, affordable housing to residents still trying to recover from Hurricane Katrina.

“The spirit of giving still being shown by volunteers from across the country to the Mississippi Gulf Coast almost five years after Katrina is heartwarming,” said MEMA Director Mike Womack. “The work of these young people brings us one step closer to recovery.”

The volunteers are painting fences that border each cottage in the 75-unit complex. Many of the volunteers are in Mississippi for the first time and able to see the devastating amount of damage Hurricane Katrina left behind.

“There are so many people wanting to help with Haiti and Chile, but there is plenty to do right here at home,” said Lauren Kinsey, a United Way worker from Alexandria, VA. “We were in New Orleans last week, but had no idea it was this bad in Mississippi.”

The Highland Village complex was created by Donovan Scruggs Town Planning and Consulting in partnership with Mercy Housing. Also involved in the project is Enterprise Community Partners, which provides funding and expertise.

Photographs taken at the complex are included on the following page of this news release.

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Media with questions can contact MEMA External Affairs at 866-920-MEMA (6362).

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