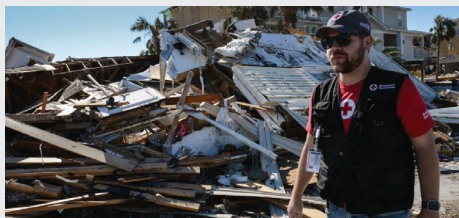


# Hurricane Michael Survivors Share Their *Stories*



## *Your Help is Needed!*



Donna Hayes turned 56 the day Hurricane Michael struck Panama City. "I heard the tornadoes. I wrote my last name on my arm and I began to pray."

Donna, shown with Red Cross worker Chuck Parker, took refuge at a shelter, but found herself in a dire situation when the generator failed. She requires the use of an oxygen concentrator, which must constantly be connected to a power source. When Chuck was made aware of the emergency, he rushed Donna to his truck, which had a 110-volt socket, quickly plugged in her machine and turned on the air conditioning. "He saved my life," Donna said.



Rakiea and her 15-month-old son Cavaughn sought safety at an evacuation center as Hurricane Michael roared toward the Florida Panhandle on October 11. The refuge they found provided comfort amid the uncertainty of disaster.

"We are being fed and have a safe place to stay. All of our basic needs are being met," Rakiea said. While she knew that the roof had been blown off their apartment building, Rakiea was unsure how much damage Michael had inflicted on their home, or when they would be able to return.

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Shelter resident Rochelle Brown shared her experience of living in a shelter along with her three service dogs and hundreds of other shelter residents.

"I was scared, even in this shelter with its concrete block walls. You could hear the trees coming down all around." Rochelle went on to describe how during the hurricane Red Cross workers were calmly walking around, talking to the shelter residents. "We are with you," was the message she said they conveyed.

When her service dog, Wicked, alerted her that her blood sugar was low, Red Cross medical personnel took care of her. "They still come around and check my blood sugar," she said.



After learning that Hurricane Michael was packing winds over 130 mph as it threatened the Florida Panhandle, Richard Berndt and his daughter, Rebecca Ando, decided they would be safer in a shelter. Once there, they were impressed by how well the staff met the needs of residents who had fled their homes ahead of the storm. "The Red Cross crew [in the shelter] has taken care of anything that needs to be done," said Rebecca. "They just find a way to do it, and lots of people here need medical attention." They also found a sense of community. "We've made friends here," said Richard.



Panama City resident Teresa Peterson decided to hunker down in her home to ride out Hurricane Michael's landfall on October 11, 2018. She soon regretted the decision.

"The house shook like it was alive," she said. "I was scared, but I have faith, and I have a 16-year-old son, so I did not allow myself to go there," Teresa replied, when asked if she feared they would not make it out alive. "I didn't think it would be so bad, and then it got bad so quickly," she said. "I'll never do that again."

*Help those affected by Hurricane Michael*  
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