

## **SENECA COUNTY YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK**

Thirty-five high school students from Seneca County will travel to Eustis, Florida to help rebuild/repair homes that were damaged when Hurricane Wilma swept through the town in 2005.

The grant funded Surge After School Program in Seneca County is sponsoring the week-long trip that will take place during the student's spring breaks, April 13 – April 18. This is the second year that Surge has offered Alternative Spring Break to high school students.

"We are so lucky to be able to work with such a giving group of Seneca County youth. These students sign on for Alternative Spring not knowing where we will be going or what kind of work we will be doing. They've done hours of local community service and fundraising to get ready for this trip, at a time when they could just be hanging out with friends or finding other things to do with their spare time. They give of themselves without asking for anything except the opportunity to help others," commented Jennifer George, Surge After School Program Coordinator.

The trip is being coordinated through National Relief Network, an organization with a mission to bring as many volunteers as possible into federal disaster areas to assist devastated families and communities while teaching the values of giving and enriching the lives of volunteers across America.

Amber McDonald, a junior at South Seneca who went on last year's trip to Tennessee, reflected on last year's trip. "Last year we met a local citizen who could not believe youth from an outside county were willing to give up their break and work for people that they never met before and may never see again. He was so moved by this that his eyes watered a little, which made me almost cry."

While in Florida, students will be putting up dry wall in homes, cleaning out yards, applying sealant to homes, and much more.

As spring break quickly approaches, McDonald and the other students are getting very excited. "This year I hope we have the same results as last year. I hope that someone's life is better because we came to their home and helped them get through that day of hard work," said McDonald.

For more information about Alternative Spring Break visit [www.uwseneca.org](http://www.uwseneca.org) or call Jennifer George at 315-539-1135.