

A visit from Sandy leaves students unable to visit their families

As Hurricane Sandy tore through the east coast from Sunday night into Tuesday, D.C. was one of the lucky ones suffering little damage. But for many students at American University, the devastation hits close to home.

With many students at AU hailing from states such as New York and New Jersey, where the hardest hit was felt, some have been left for days without contact with those back home.

Victoria Delcourt, a sophomore from Plainsboro, N.J. did not hear back from her family for three days after the storm hit her hometown, due to lack of cell reception. With no power and talk about losing their water in the near future, her family has moved to a hotel close by with her grandparents.

“My grandparents live in Point Pleasant, which was hit really hard,” Delcourt said. “They still have no idea if their house is still standing, and the uncertainty is the worst part. I’ve been going to AU for two years now and I’ve never felt this far from home.”

But Delcourt is not the only student feeling left feeling homesick in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

Steff Dazio, a senior from Middletown, NJ still has not spoken to her parents since the superstorm. With cell towers ruined by the storm, Dazio has only been able to text her family and relay information.

Through texts, she has learned that her family is scheduled to be without power until Nov. 14 and, with a tree running through their living room, her mother, father and sister are staying with neighbors. With no way of traveling home, Dazio has been left to sit and wait for updates via text message.

“My parents don’t really know what is going on, so it was up to me to tell them about how bad the devastation really was,” Dazio said. “It makes me feel really helpless not being able to go out there and help.”

Sharing in this helpless feeling, Jaqueline Schlossberg, a senior from Long Beach, NY, decided that if she cannot travel home to help, she would do something in D.C. to help relief efforts.

As a result of the superstorm, Schlossberg’s hometown was destroyed as well as her home and both family cars. With Schlossberg away at school, it has been up to her to contact insurance companies and FEMA in order to seek help for her family members back at home.

“I feel really helpless as my mom said not to come home because there is really nothing I can do,” Schlossberg said. “Instead, I organized a fundraiser here in D.C. and I am spreading the work to my friends.”

On Nov. 7, Schlossberg will be hosting a fundraiser at Z Burger, a local burger joint near AU's campus. Through this partnership, all proceeds from costumers who mention the relief fundraiser will go towards the American Red Cross.

"I am really upset about what happened to my hometown, but I know that my parents and neighbors are strong and will get through it," Schlossberg said. "I have a lot of hometown pride as a result of this hurricane and that is really what is getting me through the aftermath of this storm."