

Five UW-La Crosse students were silent as they drove into the neighborhoods of Tuscaloosa, Ala. earlier this May. They saw leveled homes, roofs stripped from buildings and uprooted trees. UW-L student Emily Masters said it looked like a house was put in a blender and dumped back out and the destruction was unlike anything I'd ever seen".

The five took a road trip May 16th-21st to Tuscaloosa to help with relief efforts after the city was struck by a mile-wide tornado April 27th — one of many southern cities to suffer destruction and death from the storms. Student Hannah Mixdorf had the idea and connections to Tuscaloosa from previous service work in the city.

Throughout the week they helped with distribution of goods at a church and warehouse; and helped clean up damaged neighborhoods.

The students had just wrapped up classes and hadn't yet started summer jobs. Student Betsy Collins had planned to return home to Janesville, but changed her mind when she heard a fellow student talking about helping out tornado-ravaged Tuscaloosa.

The students say seeing that type of destruction puts things in perspective.