



NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley: A “Good Neighbor” to Many Staff Serves Up Food, Cleans the Beach, and Teaches Tornadoes in October 2013

Our staff never forgets who we serve. Every day of the year, we concentrate on providing life and livelihood protecting weather information for nearly 1.4 million residents and visitors to the Rio Grande Valley and Deep South Texas ranchers and farmers. On other occasions, we spend time outside of the office helping the area in many ways – weather-wise and otherwise! One of those occasions is National Week of Service, which occurs each year at the beginning of October. In 2012, we cooked and served meals at the [Ronald McDonald House in Harlingen](#).

On October 3, 2013, Meteorologist-in-Charge **Steve Drillette**, Electronics Systems Analyst **Paul Schaafsma**, Senior Forecasters **Geoffrey Bogorad** and **Mike Castillo**, and Forecasters **Maria Torres** and **Blair Scholl** (above) cooked a much larger meal for 110 temporary residents of the [Good Neighbor Settlement House](#) in Brownsville. The group prepared a feast of spaghetti with meat sauce and salad with cucumbers, and provided one bottle of water for each person. There was enough food for many to have seconds. “Everyone was very thankful with the meal, and some even said that was the best meal they ate in a long time!” said Ms. Torres.

On October 5th, 2013, Warning Coordination Meteorologist **Barry Goldsmith** participated in the 3rd Annual Bi-National Beach Cleanup, promoted by [Keep Brownsville Beautiful](#). The cleanup, which designated several locations on both sides of the border, including Isla Blanca Park and Boca Chica Beach stateside, and Playa Bagdad (Matamoros) and Playa Miramar (Tampico) in Mexico, brought children of all ages to the beach, armed with trash bags and trash “grabbers”. Goldsmith (below left)



covered Isla Blanca Park. Litter was few and far between, and only about half a standard lawn bag was filled. Organizers suspected tidal run-up from distant Tropical Storm Karen may have swept some of the litter into the Gulf during the overnight hours prior to the clean-up.

StormFury

Weather education took center stage on October 19th, as [StormFury](#) returned to the Rio Grande Valley at the Texas State Technical College’s Cultural Arts Center in Harlingen. More than 500 youngsters and their parents from Harlingen and surrounding areas, including many from Dr. Rodriguez Elementary School in Harlingen, played in our tornado chamber, watched hazardous weather videos, and took home hundreds of preparedness guides. Several of the children and a number of parents spoke with **Goldsmith** and Electronics/Computer Technician **Cesar Ochoa** (below, right) about tornadoes and weather in general, and dozens of them played “What’s That Cloud?”, by taking sky watcher cloud charts outside and matching the observed clouds with examples on the chart.

“StormFury is a highlight of our community outreach calendar each year,” said Goldsmith. “We greatly appreciate the partnership we have with the [Urban Science Initiative](#), which does a great job promoting the wonder of weather for residents across all of South Texas.”

