



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 20, 2014

## Inspiring Moments Come out of Ferguson, Missouri

Despite the violence that has characterized Ferguson, Missouri, since Michael Brown was shot and killed by a police officer, there remain some moments of inspiration there: Volunteers have been doing their best to restore some normalcy to the area.

Erma Dupree, for example, has been driving to Ferguson from her home in St. Louis every day to help sweep up the broken glass and shell casings.



"I clean up the streets for about three hours during the day," Dupree says. "I don't want to be around that area at night because of the tear gas being fired at the riots." She added that she and several others have banded together. "We don't even know each other. We just took several brooms, got together, and started sweeping together," she explained.

Dupree also had some advice for the protesters who used the riots to loot stores. "I want to tell them: 'Remember, karma goes around and comes back around,'" Dupree said. "What they are doing is not fair to the Brown family."

Local churches have been producing volunteers to help clean up the streets as well. Gary Park, who lives near where Brown was killed and is a member of the Passage Community Church in Florissant, joined with others for clean-up detail.

"I needed to come out today just to get some stability," Park told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. "I wanted some encouragement. It's an opportunity for me to invest and really become part of the community."

Another volunteer, Jameila White, who also lives in St. Louis County, has been walking a mile each day to provide water to protesters. To assist those who were hit with tear gas, White has also brought bottles full of milk to help wash the gas from people's eyes.

Residents of the Canfield Green apartments, located near the spot where Brown was killed, have consequently had a difficult time getting in and out of their homes, and many were left without food and other necessities. So volunteers have stepped up and done their best to help by dropping off free groceries.

Other volunteers have grilled hundreds of hot dogs and handed them out to anyone who wants one, including police officers.

According to Ferguson Committeewoman Patricia Bynes, a local Domino's even handed out pizzas to protesters.

Young people have also come out to help.

Ferguson resident Larry Fellows, 28, and his group of friends have been walking the streets offering water, snacks, and cleaning supplies. He also reported that he offered supplies to police, but they declined.

Good Samaritans have also been providing free rides to people who have been unable to get back to



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their vehicles or find a way home because of the chaos in the evenings.

And besides the stalwart store owners who have guarded their businesses with firearms, some residents have stood outside shops to protect them from looters. CNN writes, "Some in the crowd of protestors locked arms in solidarity in order to block those who wanted to cause havoc."

Fox 2 Detroit reporter Charlie LeDuff captured a dramatic confrontation on video between one man who stood in front of a crowd of looters.

The young black man told looters, "Michael Brown don't want this. He don't want everybody looting and robbing stores in the same place I gotta live and my son gotta live and everybody else gotta live."

The looters then accused him of being "for the white man." "I'm for everybody," he replied.

Later, when some protesters tried to attack Fox reporter Charlie LeDuff, one man stepped in and escorted him out of range.

Some residents have opened up their homes to strangers to provide them a safe place, and to offer food.

And while rabble-rousers have done their best to instigate violence, other community leaders have pleaded with the protesters for peace.

Schools have been closed in Ferguson since the violence began. But teachers, joined by volunteers, have stood outside the Ferguson Public Library with signs reading, "Teachers Here to Teach" and "Students Welcome." At the library, teachers set up various tables where different subjects were taught, including math, science, and art. The St. Louis *Riverfront Times* reported that the effort was spearheaded by art teacher Carrie Pace.

"We're trying to provide a positive and productive place for students. A place for them to come and do something educational and meet up with other students," she said.

Volunteer Derrick Spencer of St. Louis has turned to the Bible to inspire the residents of Ferguson. He placed a sign in his truck's windshield that reads, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Spencer said the violent protesters are doing a disservice to Michael Brown. "We can't take justice into our own hands," he asserted.

Michael Williams of St. Louis told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that he wanted to be in the crowd to show that not everyone is in support of the rioting and destruction. He added that he knows that there are good cops in the force. "Most of us believe in doing the right thing," he said, "but this came to a boiling point."

Though it can be disheartening to witness the rioting, looting, and destruction in Ferguson, encouragement comes out of these stories of kindness and charity.

"There's something remarkable going on," Ferguson Committeewoman Patricia Bynes observed. "I'm not surprised because I live here, and I know that we have great people here. So during times like this, this is when those people just step up and just fill the need."

*Photo of a nine-year-old-girl placing roses along a street in Ferguson: AP Images*



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