

Dear Lyvier and Gloria,

Thank you so much for thinking of us in American Samoa. What happened yesterday was so fast that people were not prepared for it. We only have ONE main road and it goes right next to the sea, and at 6:50am the islands were shaken by the earthquake for about 3mins, and by 7am the tsunami had reached our shores. There was a traffic jam and people just left their cars and took off to the closest mountain, but some couldn't make it. The cannery workers were spared by the building; the waves were slowed down by the walls of the plant, giving workers time to run to the mountain. Few minutes later, the sea went right through. Death number is rising every moment and families are still searching for missing loved ones.

Schools are cancelled for a whole week to give our people time to help their families. Reports from villages both East and West, some villages are wiped out to sea. School buildings are completely destroyed and a bridge on the east side is broken in half and vehicles can't bring injured ones to the hospital. American Samoa is under shock! We are used to hurricanes but not earthquake and tsunami. It is a new challenge and we have to handle the situation with wisdom and compassion.

This morning I met with my Dean of Academic Affairs to plan a Service Learning Outreach especially for our college students affected by the disaster. She wants to include other organization on campus so we can involve all levels - students, faculty, staff and administrators.

Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated by our people. We have a Samoan saying: "Many hands make the burden lighter". Your support lightens the sorrow and burden of our people.

Faafetai tele (Thank you so much)
Elisapeta Faalafi-Jones
Service Learning Coordinator
American Samoa Community College