



*Madison Hofmann*

## My Most Vivid Memory Concerning Water

I remember vividly when the roads around our farm were completely flooded. Living in a rural area, we were used to the peace and quiet of the countryside, but this disaster showed us how vulnerable our roads can be. The floods turned our reliable dirt and gravel roads into rivers of water, cutting off access to all roadways from our farm. This experience taught me about the challenges of rural life and the importance of community support during difficult times.

The flooding was bad, and every attempt to leave the farm felt like navigating through a maze of water. The roads that connected us to essential services were underwater, as farmers this made it hard to move equipment and continue to farm. For rural communities like ours, where resources are limited and emergency services are far away, disasters like this can be very tough.

My parents, both active in our community and township, stepped up as leaders during this crisis. They knew that fixing the roads was crucial for reconnecting our community. However, getting help was not easy. The process of getting funding from FEMA was slow and complicated, requiring detailed reports and coordination with state and federal agencies. In rural areas, where professional staff is often lacking, these tasks can be overwhelming. I remember my parents spending late nights at the kitchen table, poring over maps and paperwork while strategizing their next steps.

One of the biggest challenges was getting equipment to pump out the water. Without easy access, getting these pumps delivered was a logistical nightmare. Even when pumps arrived, they needed fuel or electricity, resources that were scarce during the disaster. Watching my parents work tirelessly to organize deliveries and coordinate with neighbors left a lasting impression on me.

Moments that still stand out clearly in my memory are when my parents returned home after meetings. Their faces showed both exhaustion and hope after contacting FEMA over and over there was finally some hope.. It was a small victory in what felt like an endless struggle, but it gave our township the motivation to keep pushing forward. Soon after, crews arrived with heavy equipment to repair the roads, and portable pumps helped clear out much of the standing water.

This experience taught me important lessons about resilience in rural life. It showed me how disasters can bring communities together but also highlighted how much harder recovery is for areas like ours compared to cities with more resources. Watching my parents navigate this crisis taught me that perseverance and teamwork are key to overcoming challenges. It also deepened my appreciation for infrastructure's role in supporting rural communities, roads aren't just pathways; they're lifelines.

In conclusion, this memory is not just about water, it is about strength, hope, and unity in adversity. The flooded roads may have temporarily isolated us, but they ultimately brought us closer together as the township worked toward rebuilding what had been lost. My parents' efforts inspired me to value hard work and community service while reminding me of how vital it is to invest in rural infrastructure so future generations can face these incidents with greater resilience.