

On September 18, 15 students met in the Jaeb Computer Center for Writing for Broadcast News.

Their task was to break into groups and interview someone they never talked to before.

A pair of girls interviewed each other about the moments that defined them as a person. One of them, Leah Burrows, discussed how she and her family lived through Hurricane Joaquin in 2015.

“I remember people not having anything,” Burrows said.

Hurricane Joaquin formed in the Atlantic on September 27 of 2015, near the middle of hurricane season, which typically runs from June to November. By the time it struck the Bahamas in October, it strengthened to a category four hurricane. When Joaquin made impact in the central Bahamas, especially Burrow’s hometown, the island suffered flooding from storm surge and torrential rain, according to the Weather Channel’s recap of the hurricane.

According to the National Hurricane Center, Burrow’s hometown of Long Island experienced massive flooding. Over two-thirds of the island remained inundated with four to six of water by October 7. The local fishing fleet in Clarence Town was destroyed.

“I remember not being able to, to travel to certain parts of the island because there was so much water in the road. You couldn’t get across the roads, you had to go by boat. You would have to get a boat to bring you from one side of the island to the next,” she said.

Burrows, a high school senior when Joaquin struck, recalls just how depressed her island in the Bahamas, Long Island, became in the wake of Joaquin’s destruction.

“I felt like we got affected in a way that we were wondering how the roof was going to be fixed, or like, who was going to help us? My mom doesn’t have a job,” Burrows recalled.

“Then like, my family came together in a kind of way; cause my parents are divorced and actually spoke to one another for the first time in years because it was just so bad.”

However, even three years removed from the tragic event, Burrows says there is still much to be done before the island is ever back to normal.

“I feel like people are just getting back on their feet. The Bahamian government just isn’t making that possible at all, with these taxes we just added. It’s just a very big issue. I just think we have not recovered”.

In the wake of devastation and destruction, a silver lining appears. Burrows, now a junior at the University of Tampa, discovered what career field she plans on going into, event planning.

“I was put in a situation where I had to take charge of my class and graduation planning, prom planning, and raising money so we could all graduate that year. Our teachers were just trying to get back on their feet, some lost everything. We had to do everything ourselves.”