On Monday, Aug. 10, straight-line winds ripped through central Iowa, leaving behind widespread damage, debris and downed powerlines. According to the National Weather Service, some of the strongest winds hit Newton.

“While many faced personal challenges in their own homes, our colleagues did not hesitate to serve those in need and help their communities rebound,” said MercyOne Central Iowa President Karl Keeler. “This selfless work was performed in a less than optimal environment, under hot conditions and high patient volumes, with grace and patience.”

To meet immediate needs, MercyOne Newton Medical Center colleagues set up showers, charging stations and laundry service, and organized grab and go meals for their coworkers to take home when meal preparation was not an option. After their shifts, many then volunteered to help clean up lawns and clear branches.

Above: Colleagues helped clear debris from the parking lots, including Michele Tharp, Radiology (pictured).
MaskUp, MercyOne

We all play a part in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) – especially a face mask – is proven to be one of the most effective tactics. By wearing a mask, you are protecting yourself and the health of others, while helping with economic recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MercyOne colleagues can set a good example by wearing masks in public settings and when around people who don’t live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

“The power to turn the tide against COVID-19 is within each of us,” said MercyOne Chief Infection Prevention Officer Dr. Ravi Vemuri. “If we mind the ‘three Ws’ – wear a mask, watch your distance, wash your hands often and well – we can see a positive change in five to eight weeks.”

Share a photo of you “masking up” outside of work on social media using the hashtag #MaskUpMercyOne to encourage others to wear their masks. Print and share for whom you mask using this customizable flyer. You can see your photo, and those of your colleagues, on the MercyOne System COVID-19 Colleague Hub.

Spread the word

MercyOne Central Iowa has also joined the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Polk County Health and the Des Moines medical community in “Mask Up DSM.” As part of the initiative, the Partnership is sharing a variety of timely educational resources, such as videos, infographics and flyers. MercyOne provided information for this program, including masking tips and a COVID-19 toolkit for schools, as classes prepare to resume this month.

Paying it forward

In the wake of the Aug. 10 derecho, facilities for Senior Services of Polk County were impacted, including daily meal sites that serve adults age 60 and older. In response, the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Food and Nutrition team stepped up to prepare hot meals for three days, or 1,100 meals each day. MercyOne was proud to “pay it forward” by supporting this much-needed community resource during a crisis, just as the community came together to support MercyOne throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Food and Nutrition team for using this opportunity to enhance Team Engagement and Be ONE!