



Southern District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Recovery Update

Restoring Faith, Home, and Community to those affected by Disaster.

December 2007

Southern District
LCMS
Recovery
Assistance, Inc.
(RAI)

Inside This Issue

- A Letter from the RAI Director
- Caregivers Versus Curegivers
- Camp Restore Newbies & Boomerangs
- LINCNewOrleans Twenty-Something Ministry
- Blessings from Camp Biloxi
- K-9 Comfort Dogs

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“God At Work - - Again!”

“God must have wanted us to have these pews” said Sherry Bonura, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church - New Orleans when she saw how perfectly the donated pews fit into the sanctuary.

Because Celebration Lutheran Church of Seymour, Tennessee, was moving into a smaller building they no longer needed their pews. Instead of selling them, they decided to donate the pews to another Lutheran congregation. Through the “Ministry Recovery” arm of the Southern District Recovery Assistance, the connection was made between Celebration and Gloria Dei.

Next, Rev. Kevin Kieschnick of LINC New Orleans, another ministry of Southern District Recovery Assistance, asked his former parishioners Dave and Debbie Burrell of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Decatur, Alabama, if they would go to Tennessee to help load the pews. With servant hearts, they not only volunteered to load the pews, they loaded and delivered them to New Orleans.

When the Burrells arrived in Seymour, members of Grace Lutheran Church of Knoxville, Tennessee, were waiting to help load the two trucks. Once loaded, Dave and Jane headed to New Orleans, each driving a fully loaded truck, one with their car in tow.

In New Orleans, the Bonura family, grandchildren and all, were waiting at Gloria Dei to help their new friends unload the trucks. God did want Gloria Dei to have those pews, and He did it by creating a connection between several dozen of his children and three of His congregations - a fabulous story of sharing.

This story is only one of the many examples of how “Ministry Recovery” works to restore, support, and create congregational ministries among the churches recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Put your faith into action and touch the lives of those around you!



Samantha and Gabrielle

“Fishers of Men and FISH!” First Post-Katrina Lutheran Community Day



On a glorious fall day in New Orleans’ City Park, over 150 people from 15 New Orleans area Lutheran Congregations gathered for fishing, fellowship, Bible study, games, food and fun. Ministry Restoration Director Kathy Wendling led this first such event since Katrina (August 2005), with the purpose to join together the Lutheran community in New Orleans.



Kathy Wendling

In partnership with local churches, the Ministry Restoration department of RAI sponsored a “Fishing Rodeo”, a much loved activity for all ages. Some 75 people fished along the banks of bayou Metairie and caught over 1,000 Rio Grande Cichlids (a strain of fish new to the park since Katrina that Park Officials were glad to see go!). All the activity around the pond attracted onlookers who were invited to join in the fun. There was even a group of 16 college kids from Florida State who joined in and had a great time line dancing before they went to perform volunteer work in the community.

Everyone took a break from fishing for a brief group Bible Study on the topic of Fishers of Men. These groups were led by church members and area Pastors.

Many thanks to our Bible Study leaders; to Bobby Blackwell of Faith-Harahan for heading up the Fishing Rodeo; to Sennatta Paige of Bethel-New Orleans and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Department for their assistance and the donation of 40 rods and reels, and to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Trinity Lutheran Baton Rouge and Zapp’s Potato Chips for grants and “in-kind” donations. *Come drop a line in the bayou with us next year!*

A Letter from the RAI Director - Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance Inc.

Hurricane Katrina was recently rated “The largest ecological disaster in US history” because it killed over 32 million trees from Florida to Texas. This reminds us again of the magnitude Katrina and her legacy of destruction. It also reminds us of God’s magnitude, His unbounding mercy, and His legacy of grace. The good that He has brought forth from this destruction, especially the out pouring of human kindness, is undoubtedly the largest display of its kind in US history.

You have been a part of this display, and for this we thank you. We thank you for generously helping those affected by Katrina and Rita through your support of the Southern District’s Recovery Assistance Ministries. You’ve done this through prayer, volunteerism and giving. Your continued support and gifts are extremely valuable to us and the people we serve—especially as we move further away from the initial disaster response into long term recovery.

As 2007 draws to an end, I want to offer a gentle reminder that donations to Recovery Assistance help restore faith, home and community to victims of disaster, and they are potentially tax deductible. If you are a Thrivent Financial member, Thrivent may further supplement your donation. Please call us for more information.

May God continue to bless your incredible outpouring of generosity.

In His Service,
Dave Buss, Director



Rev. Dave Buss

“Caregivers Versus Curegivers”

Recently, disaster volunteers, local church members and various others gathered at Camp Restore for a REinstitute Forum to learn and share about disaster caregiving. The keynote speaker was Dr. Rick Armstrong from Lutheran Counseling Services of Florida.

REinstitute Director Kurtis Smith noted how valuable the forum was for participants, “As we serve people along the Gulf Coast who are suffering from the trauma of disaster, particularly from the catastrophic nature of the Katrina events, it is essential that we are healthy and wise in the ways we give care.” Smith continued, “Dr. Armstrong brought words of wisdom and experience that were extremely helpful to participants.”

Armstrong spoke about crisis and trauma recovery processes, teaching caregivers to recognize the phases of disaster and normal crisis reactions as well as tasks in the recovery process. Along with sharing psychological models, he connected forum participants to helpful passages of Scripture that give insight into recovery such as the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites, the suffering of Jesus, and words of Paul in his letter to the Romans. Through Scripture, Armstrong demonstrated his point that, “We are caregivers, not curegivers...Jesus is the curegiver.”

Small-group discussion opportunities provided attendees the chance to participate and share from their own experiences, often highlighting the need to care for caregivers too. Dr. Armstrong reminded everyone of Christian resiliency: “No matter what happens, I will be OK. I am safe in my relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.”

REinstitute is the outreach education arm of Southern District Recovery Assistance. For an audio CD of the REinstitute Disaster Caregiving Forum, go to www.reinstitute.org Audio is also available of REinstitute’s first Forum, “Jesus Among the Debris.”

Donations of \$10 per CD are requested to cover production and distribution costs. If you would like to have a REinstitute Forum at your church or ministry location, please contact REinstitute Director Kurtis Smith: Smith@REinstitute.org



“We are caregivers, not curegivers”



Dr. Rick Armstrong



As part of the caregiving process, Director of Christian Outreach Intern Steven Namanny (left) and REinstitute Director Kurtis Smith (right), along with other Recovery Assistance team members, regularly include disaster victims in prayer.

Many Thanks to Our Supporters and Volunteers



...and many other organizations, congregations, and individuals!

“Newbies and Boomerangs”

Newbies (pronounced newbees) and Boomerangs are terms of endearment used in some Disaster Response circles. Newbies are our first-time volunteers who have never experienced the thrill of victory (conquering the hurricane devastation) and the agony of “da-feet” (for those wearing brand new work boots). Boomerangs are the volunteers who have “been-here-done-this” before and have returned to continue the work. Camp make-up varies from week to week with usually around 50% of our volunteers being boomerangs. Loving hearts see the need and return as often as possible to help restore the hope of Jesus Christ to the people of the Greater New Orleans area.

Newbies for the week of November 5th through the 9th also have the distinction of being the first group from Louisiana to work a whole week at Camp Restore. The pastor and members of Trinity Lutheran in Algiers along with the pastor of Holy Cross/St. Matthews Lutheran joined volunteers from Arizona, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, New York, Iowa, and Michigan to work on 2 church buildings and 17 homes.

Boomerangs numbered half the camp with our featured team being from Bettendorf, Iowa. This was the third trip to the Gulf Coast for Our Savior Lutheran Church with another mission trip being planned for early 2008. EPIC Ministries (Experiential Partnerships In Christ) has put together 5 trips, partnering different churches with the common goal of restoring faith, home and community to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Returning volunteers love seeing progress made since the last visit.

Are you going to be a Newbie or a Boomerang? Either way, we look forward to your arrival here!



Boomerangs from Bettendorf, Iowa



*EPIC Boomerangs
Camp Restore*



*Pastor Aubrey Watson with
Trinity volunteers*

Camp Restore Contact Info:

P.O. Box 872668 • New Orleans, LA 70187

Phone: (504) 242-2636 • Fax: (504) 242-5885 • <http://www.camprestore.org>

LINCNew Orleans: “Twenty-Something” Ministry

LINCNewOrleans is busy strengthening New Orleans communities. Gloria Dei Lutheran Church has become the hub for a twenty-something ministry called LINKnola which “expands the Kingdom into culture and community through service, prayer and worship.” LINK worship, led by Vicar Billy Brath on Sunday nights, is a blend of ancient hymns and traditions with modern music and ambiance. DCE intern Alex LaChapelle leads prayer while DCE intern Suze Fogleman takes care of multi-media. (LINKnola.com)

Billy has also joined Rev. Dr. Craig Rinker as a campus minister at Tulane University. Pastor Rinker and the congregation at Zion Lutheran restarted Lutheran Campus Ministry when Tulane reopened. Besides Sunday worship and various informal events, a Tuesday night campus Bible study is followed by “Primetime”. Students watch an episode of a TV show (currently NBC’s Scrubs) and share a discussion that leads to Gospel truths.

LINC’s focus on community also led to “Men’s Night Out” on Mondays. Local Lutherans, volunteers from Camp Restore and other friends meet at the sports bar Cooter Browns to watch football, fellowship, and spark up conversations with patrons.

Other efforts include “cluster” meetings with Open Arms Institute, a Synod-wide movement to foster Gospel outreach through child care. Connections are being made with schools, women’s advocates, and leadership development programs to build relationships in diverse communities.

LINCNewOrleans thanks you for your prayers and investments in New Orleans. Interested in being a LINC connection? Check out our website (LINCNewOrleans.org) for more information. Listen, Learn, Love, and Link!



*Vicar Billy Brath,
LINC*



*DCE Intern
Alex LaChapelle*



*DCE Intern
Suze Fogleman*



CAMP RESTORE STATS: As of 10/01/06 – 11/01/07

Homes & Parks

Gutted and sprayed for mold	291+
Yards & Parks	569 +
Completed Cases	108
Active Homes	23
Active Churches	4
On hold for plumbing, electrical & HVAC	119
On file waiting to become active	630

Volunteers

People	3,499
Hours	101,945
Value of work (Per FEMA)	\$1,836,029

listen. learn. love. link.
LINC
New Orleans
lincneworleans.com

Blessings from Camp Biloxi



Camp Biloxi celebrates the completion of yet another rebuilt home in Gulfport Mississippi by asking God's blessing upon those who live inside. Upon completion of rebuilding a home, a "House Blessing" is performed by Camp Biloxi staff and volunteers. On this day, the blessing ceremony was led by our Spiritual and Emotional Care Director, Chaplain Ralph Buchhorn. The team fellowshiped with the homeowner and her family and presented her with a small remembrance of the occasion. The house blessing reminded one and all of God's presence as Camp Biloxi continues to serve the community of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



Camp Biloxi house blessing

CAMP BILOXI STATS: As of 10/01/06 – 11/01/07

Homes

Gutted and sprayed for mold	486
Roofs - Major	593
Home/Interior major rebuild (>\$1,000)	1,679
Home/Interior minor rebuild (<\$1,000)	879

Volunteers

People	15,585
Hours	838,580
Value of work (Per FEMA)	\$16,289,242

Camp Biloxi Contact Info:

1996 Pass Road • Biloxi, MS 39531
Phone: (228) 594-0008 • www.campbiloxi.com



*Rava Coyle and K9 Honey
Extra Mile Ministries*

Extra Mile Ministries' "K9 Comfort Dogs"

By: Steven Namanny, Director of Christian Outreach Intern

Using a unique outreach tool called, "K9 Comfort Dogs" Chaplain Ralph Buchhorn and the Extra Mile Ministries team provide spiritual and emotional care to people still suffering from the affects of Hurricane Katrina. The Extra Mile Ministries has been in the Gulf Coast since immediately after the storm working with Camp Biloxi and Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. Chaplain Buchhorn, a disaster response expert and founder of Extra Mile Ministries, has been using golden retrievers for four years.

Extra Mile has three dogs in the Southern District providing ongoing support to the victims of hurricane Katrina. The veteran "Comfort Dog" Georgie is trained in touch therapy and has traveled around the country responding to crisis and disaster. Second is Marley, whose handler Sally Rebol is stationed in Slidell, LA and the newest K9 is Honey, whose handler is Rava Coyle from the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and Camp Biloxi.

While in California acquiring Honey, Chaplain Ralph and Rava were able to utilize this new seven month old pup, in crisis response to the firefighters stationed at Camp Pendleton.

On October 1, 2007, Extra Mile Ministry formally joined the operations of the Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance Inc.(RAI) and has established a permanent operational office at Camp Biloxi. Extra Mile will support the ministry of Camp Biloxi, Camp Restore, and serve as a Southern District response team as needed for future disasters. The Extra Mile Response Team has already traveled to Enterprise Alabama after it was hit by a severe tornado and to Virginia Tech after the campus shootings in Blacksburg Virginia.



*K9 Georgie and
Chaplain Ralph Buchhorn
Extra Mile Ministries*