



Southern District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Recovery Update

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

February 2008

Southern District
LCMS
Recovery
Assistance, Inc.
(RAI)

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LINCNewOrleans Sponsors “Leading Inside Out”

Fifteen people from RAI and the Southern District office support staff attended LINC’s first *Leading Inside Out* seminar November 8-9, 2007. *Leading Inside Out* is an eight-hour interactive personal development process incorporating leadership, values, motivations, purpose, vision, and next steps. Kevin and Christie Kieschnick, directors of LINCNewOrleans, adapted materials from a Pastoral Leadership Institute program to develop *Leading Inside Out*. After participating in the process with PLI, Kevin and Christie decided to make it an integral part of LINC Leadership Academy. Christie shares, “This process helped define who I am, my personal purpose and goals. I refer to key learnings frequently to help me focus on my priorities using my strengths.”

The group (pictured) enjoyed Bible study, large and small group discussions, written and hands-on activities, and individual reflection time at a beautiful house on City Park Avenue, owned by a LINCNewOrleans-Eracism connection.



What’s next for LINC? Twenty-something and campus ministries are connecting students to God and community. LINC’s domestic violence think-tank continues to explore volunteer opportunities. New Orleans East block-by-block involvement ideas are being developed. A new faith community, Imago Dei, is being formed. Connections continue with community leaders, area schools and the Open Arms Insitute.

Want to get involved or learn more about any of our ministries? Please contact us through lincneworleans.com.

– Christie Kieschnick



God Provides For Bethel and Prince of Peace Congregations

It is more than two years since the onslaught of Katrina which nearly destroyed the buildings housing Bethel and Prince of Peace congregations, and left Prince of Peace without a Pastor. But we serve a gracious God who has in his infinite wisdom orchestrated a mutual cohabitation which benefits both congregations. To the Prince of Peace campus, housing Camp Restore, we came with 30 members seeking a place where we could worship together with believing brothers and sisters of the faith.

We continue steadily growing in numbers. Each week we see new faces as we welcome them in the body of Christ to worship with us, and have had three persons with no church home join. We confirmed 7 children on September 30, 2007.

During the summer we had Camp Dixie conduct a five day camp for community kids. August 20-24, 2007, we had VBS (*Hallelujah Good Time*) which ended with a community food, fun and games day, and the distribution of over 200 back packs of school supplies for congregation and community kids.

God has blessed us with a Wednesday night Bible study @ 6:00 PM. In this New Year we are implementing a monthly prayer service beginning on February 9, 2008 @ 9:00AM.

We hope to have an operational computer lab established by early spring, and teach computer skills to those who desire to learn Microsoft Office Suite. We plan to offer tutoring to school age children in the community.

We desire to add many more ministries as God enables us.



Pastor Jerome Terry stands in front of Bethel Lutheran Church on Louisa St.

– Rev. Jerome N. Terry

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



Rev. Dave Buss

In our prayers for the recovery effort, we plead with God for His blessings upon His ministry here. Of course, we also pray for His guidance that all we do be according to His will and to His glory. His will be done! We are trying to be faithful with the resources He has provided, to the people He has sent us to serve, and to the people He has sent to serve with us. We often say that, "God is getting a lot of things done in spite of us!" To You O Lord be the Glory!

From all that we can see, He is blessing His ministry. Hundreds upon thousands of volunteers continue to come to help rebuild the Gulf Coast and to share the hope of Christ. We're especially excited that the locals are now volunteering in greater numbers. Amazingly, we have more volunteers on the books, and projecting more folks coming this year than last. What a blessing!

We see God's hand in all of this, from the small "coincidences" that happen daily, to His overwhelming presence at the house blessing ceremony of a family that has been away from their home for two plus years. We're especially grateful for the church communities that have come back "online" this past year, bringing His Word and Sacrament ministry to His people.

For 2008, we are asking for His guidance as we cast a vision for the future of the Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance Inc. (RAI). With so much yet to be done, we are making long-term plans to continue "Restoring Faith, Home, and Community" to those affected by disaster for years to come. Please continue to follow what He is doing through RAI in each issue of The Spirit of Southern, or on our website: www.lcmsrelief.org.

Please consider this an invitation to join us in prayer for His continued blessings, His guidance, and that His will be done. And if He moves you to do more than pray, He has answered another of our prayers!

God's Richest Blessings to You,
Dave Buss, Director

Are We Prepared?

This article is the first half of a two-part column on disaster preparedness in our district. On January 9-10 of this year, a Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS District Disaster Coordinator's conference was held by LCMS World Relief and Human Care to begin the organization of a new domestic disaster response strategy. Southern District President Kurtis Schultz, along with Recovery Assistance ministry team members, attended the gathering and shared their insights from Hurricane Katrina experiences. Please keep your eyes and ears open for more information from this group and BE PREPARED!

Many of us in the Southern District don't want to think about future disasters—we have enough to worry about concerning Hurricane Katrina restoration—but we all need to be prepared in the case of other disruptive events. The recent string of tornadoes in our region reminds us that disasters aren't only hurricanes or floods.

Are you and your congregation prepared for a disaster? Proper preparation can keep you and your people safe, sanitary and secure, and can sometimes be the difference between life and death. Also, your level of readiness can either positively or negatively impact the general public's perception of Jesus and his followers during and after critical incidents.

What is a critical incident? For the purposes of this article, we shall define a critical incident as any event outside the usual realm of human experience that is markedly distressing (e.g. evokes reactions of intense fear, helplessness, horror, etc.) and causes physical and/or psychiatric injury that undermines a person's actual or perceived safety, security and competency in the world. Such critical incidents evoke a response of compassion from disciples of Jesus and can range from a vehicle accident, to a rape, to tornadoes, terror attacks or hurricanes.

A ready response of Christian compassion to a critical incident helps people in need and can open doors for the verbal proclamation of the Gospel. Such a response is a natural outgrowth of compassionate action, offering spiritual as well as physical hope.

In order to be prepared for any critical incident impacting the Southern District, there are five levels of preparation that need to occur:

- 1) Individual Households (members)
- 2) Local Ministries (churches and schools)
- 3) Circuits (neighboring ministries)
- 4) District (Texas/Louisiana border through the Florida panhandle)
- 5) Synod (nation-wide)

In our next issue of Recovery Update, we'll go into details about what needs to occur at each level of preparation. Until then, call Recovery Assistance if you need help with a critical incident or click on www.lcmsrelief.org.



Kurtis Smith, left, director of REinstitute, discusses the ministry's disaster response model with Rev. Glenn Merritt, director of Disaster Response, LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

Work, Witness and Fellowship at Camp Restore



And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Luke 10:2



Carl Brul

It's 10:45 AM on Saturday, January 19, 2008. We have just finished another gratifying week at Camp Restore with a team of five from Minnesota and a large group of 102 representing 10 congregations in Illinois! The volunteers have gone home and we have a brief respite before next week's workers start arriving.

As guest camp director for the week, I continue to be amazed at the willingness of people to come south and do whatever needs to be done. This article is not about Camp Restore although it could be. It's not about the people who live and work here at the Camp although it could be. It's about expressing the love of Christ to the people we serve as we work to restore faith, home, and community.

We experience the love of God every time we send a team out to work on a home. We experience the love of God every time home owners, through their tears of gratitude, say thank you, thank you, thank you. We have no means of expressing through the written word the power of the love of God in the life of the people of the Gulf Coast.

While talking with one of the volunteers I asked her what one thing had impressed her in the experience of being here at Camp Restore. She said it was the spirit of cooperation between the volunteers. Many of them were from neighboring congregations in Illinois but had to come 1000 miles to the Gulf Coast to meet each other. She felt that the camaraderie they had developed here would be a keystone for fellowship, revitalization, and joint mission work when they went home.

It is by the grace of God that I am allowed to have a small part in the work going on at Camps Restore and Biloxi. Perhaps when you come to help we will meet. To HIM be the praise and glory, Amen.

– Carl Brul



Earl and Rosie Duverney of New Orleans are working with Camp Restore to get their home restored.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." Isaiah 6:8

Camp Restore Contact Info:

P.O. Box 872668 • New Orleans, LA 70187 • Phone: (504) 242-2636 • Fax: (504) 242-5885 • <http://www.camprestore.org>



Happy New Year from Camp Biloxi

2007 was a great year for Camp Biloxi and we have much for which we are thankful, first and foremost to God for the work He is doing to restore faith, home and community to the residents of the Gulf Coast.

We are also thankful for the volunteers who sacrificed so much to come here to be God's hands, feet and voice. We were blessed to welcome over 2,000 volunteers, several of whom were here for the second, third, or even fourth time. We even had a church group that came with its 12th team of volunteers! Through their hard work, we were able to complete 1,932 major and minor rebuilding projects. Since its inception, Camp Biloxi has made it possible for more than 700 families to move back into their hurricane damaged homes.

Camp Biloxi welcomed several new staff members in 2007 from the Gulf Coast, Iowa, Indiana, Georgia, and Michigan. Extra Mile Ministries, which specializes in providing spiritual and emotional care to people in disaster affected areas brought the love of Jesus to the people of Enterprise, AL following the tornado that devastated that town and to the Virginia Tech community in the wake of the deadly shootings there.

Camp Biloxi is excited about 2008. We look forward to expanding our partnership with Recovery Assistance ministries as well as celebrating the first of many house blessing ceremonies in the Forest Heights subdivision project.

With the joys and challenges that this new year brings, please prayerfully consider coming to Camp Biloxi or financially supporting its wonderful outreach ministry. The future of Camp Biloxi depends on your support as we not only rebuild homes, but also help to rebuild lives through spiritual and emotional care.



Camp Biloxi volunteer at work

– Corinna Malenke

Camp Biloxi Contact Info:

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

Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore – Statistics

Volunteers

People	20,480
Hours	977,991
FEMA value for 40 hours of volunteer labor	\$720.00

CAMP BILOXI STATS: October, 05 - December, 07

Director: John Coyle

Homes gutted and sprayed for mold	486
Roofs repaired and/or replaced	593
Completed interior (>\$1000) rebuilds	1,745
Completed interior (<\$1000) rebuilds	1,074

CAMP RESTORE STATS: October, 06 - December, 07

Director: Rev. Ed Brashier

Homes gutted and sprayed for mold	325+
Yards & Parks	590+
Churches being restored	4
Completed Cases	132
Churches damaged by Hurricane Katrina	40

Beauty Amidst Destruction

Standing before God in the presence of family and friends as they exchanged wedding vows, December 29, 2007 was no ordinary day for Sarah Collins and Nate Milan. However, the way in which this couple met was not ordinary either.

Sarah was an Elementary Education student at Concordia University, Ann Arbor, MI, when she heard about the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Like many Americans, Sarah prayed for the victims and sent money to aid relief efforts, but felt it wasn't enough. "I knew what I was capable of and what I was currently doing wasn't matching up." When Sarah learned about a group from her area with plans to volunteer on the Gulf Coast in December of 2006, she signed up for the trip.

During Sarah's first trip, she worked in the city of Waveland, MS, one of the places hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina. "This wasn't my first mission trip, but this was my first time working with people with so many immediate needs," she recalls.

After her first trip, Sarah was eager to return to the Gulf Coast, so during her spring break, she returned, this time staying at Camp Biloxi in Mississippi. Upon arrival, Sarah was pleased to learn that many other college students were at the camp that week. "It was an amazing opportunity to see college students spending their breaks volunteering instead of partying." It was during that week that Sarah met Nate. "We kept running into each other." Through these encounters, the two learned that they only lived 45 minutes from each other in Michigan. They also learned that they shared many of the same beliefs and values.

After returning to Michigan, Sarah and Nate kept in touch and built upon the relationship they started at Camp Biloxi. A year and a half later they returned, this time with their family and friends to volunteer and to get married at the place in which they met. In the days prior to the wedding, Nate and Sarah asked the entire wedding party to join them in volunteering to help some of the thousands of people still suffering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina. Rev. Eric Hollar, pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, located on the same grounds as Camp Biloxi, officiated at the ceremony.

After the wedding, Sarah and Nate moved to Columbus, MS, where Nate is serving as a fire fighter in the Air Force and Sarah is planning to substitute teach. While their single days are over, their volunteer days are not. Sarah and Nate are a shining example of beauty amidst destruction as they look forward to their next opportunity to come back and continue their ministry to hurricane victims on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



– Corinna Malenke

Many Thanks to Our Supporters and Volunteers



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

Congregational Restoration and Revitalization

As we re-store faith, home, and community from the destruction of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, are we trying to put everything back the way it was or are we rebuilding with an eye for improvement? The longing we all feel to have our lives and community back to just the way it was is still very strong, but is this best? Our churches are working hard trying to rebuild our buildings, school enrollments, and congregations. But this is the time for us to look outside of our church walls and share God's grace with our community. We must share the source of our strength with others so they too may know of God's power. Missional focused churches are vital to the disaster area recovery.

On January 7-9, 2008, a Revitalization of Congregations Conference was sponsored by Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LCMS) World Mission. President Kurt Schultz, Gene Menzel, and Kathy Wendling attended the conference and were excited by the possibilities of revitalized congregations throughout the Southern District. You can learn more about Church Revitalization by visiting the web site:
<http://www.missionrevitalization.org>.

*Kathy L. Wendling,
Director Congregational Restoration*



Christ, Chalmette, LA, shown following Katrina, is lovingly being restored by volunteers.

*Partner
for Hope*

*It's been said that humans can live approximately
60 days without food...
6 days without water...
6 minutes without air.*

It is said that humans cannot live at all without HOPE.

Recovery Assistance ministries provides HOPE by restoring faith, home, and community to victims of disaster. Please make your commitment today to become a long-term provider of hope by partnering with us:

- Yes! I commit to providing HOPE through regular prayer for Recovery Assistance ministries.
- Yes! I commit to providing HOPE through Recovery Assistance ministries with a...
- monthly gift annual gift
- one-time gift of... \$5000 \$1000 \$500 \$100 \$100 \$50 \$10 Other _____
- Please contact me about another type of HOPE I would like to give through Recovery Assistance ministries.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Send to: Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance; 9301 Chef Menteur Hwy., New Orleans, LA 70127 or go to www.lcmsrelief.org.