

**October 2009**

**Southern District  
 LCMS  
 Recovery  
 Assistance, Inc.  
 (RAI)**

**Rev. Dave Buss  
 Director**

**John Coyle  
 COO**

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9301 Chef Menteur Hwy.  
 New Orleans, LA 70127

To Donate Go To:  
[www.RAIministries.org](http://www.RAIministries.org)

Phone:  
 1-888-248-2636  
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 1-504-242-5885

**Director's Letter**

God continues working through thousands of volunteers who travel thousands of miles to help thousands of people in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, and through many great local folks as well!

Recently we've seen a boost in volunteer group bookings from this fall through next summer, and we're already nearing capacity at both Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore for the first months of 2010. We thank God for their dedication and continued involvement!

In addition to the bright volunteer outlook, RAI is now one of the largest case-management providers on the Gulf Coast with the addition of a new program in Louisiana.

We have many reasons to be optimistic about the future of our ministry and what it means for the people we serve and the Southern District of the LCMS. We are especially excited about the tremendous response to K4 Restoration Sunday, and invite churches across the country to participate with their own Restoration Sundays throughout the year (more information can be found under myRAI at [www.raiministries.org](http://www.raiministries.org)).

We thank God for the ministry opportunities He has provided thus far, and we look forward to what He will provide in the future.

Yours in Christ,  
*Pastor Dave Buss, Director, RAI Ministries*



*RAI Ministries Director Dave Buss welcomes everyone to the K-4 Men's NetWork Retreat.*

**Thank You Tour/Awareness Campaign is Working**

God's Gumbo Gang and RAI Staff traveled to Norfolk, Nebraska to say "Thank You" to the Orphan Grain Train, the Lutheran organization that has shipped over one hundred semi-truck loads of relief supplies and equipment to the Gulf Coast since Katrina and Rita.



Chef Woody Keim led the team in preparing red beans and rice, seafood gumbo and jambalaya. Dottie Calmes also prepared 400 helpings of bread pudding and rum sauce. The Gumbo Gang fed the 400 convention participants in 35 minutes on September 18th. Many of the Midwesterners in attendance were unfamiliar with Cajun cuisine, but most of them were converts by the end of the feast.

Additionally, RAI Director Dave Buss, Advancement Director Kurt Jostes, Rev. Scott Schmieding, and Trinity member Dottie Calmes presented the "State of RAI" address and "Thank You!" to the convention. Orphan Grain Train has provided the dormitory units, restroom and shower units, and much of the construction equipment used by Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore. [www.OGT.org](http://www.OGT.org)

# RAI wins Case Management Contract in Louisiana and Contract Extension in Mississippi

The Case Management pilot program that RAI has been working in Mississippi with the Mississippi Case Management Consortium, has just been extended through March of 2010. Case management is the social work that connects people with the resources of the recovery community. RAI has been working with MCMC since May of 2008 to provide "Recovery Plans" to families living in FEMA assisted housing, including FEMA trailers. The purpose of these recovery plans is to get families back into their homes damaged by Katrina.

RAI recently won a similar contract in Louisiana to perform case management with the Louisiana Recovery Authority for 1017 families living in FEMA assisted housing. This award makes RAI one of the largest case management providers on the Gulf Coast.

## Volunteers Keep Coming! Bookings up for 2009 and 2010

Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore are experiencing increased volunteer interest! After a sleepy August and September, Camps Biloxi and Restore are bracing for a surge of volunteers this fall and winter. A year ago Hurricane Gustav caused an evacuation of Camp Restore, and decimated the year end volunteer season for our camps. This year, volunteer interest and group bookings are dramatically increased. We are amazed by the continued national interest and desire to help in this unprecedented recovery effort. God is good.



*K-4 Men's Retreat volunteers paint recently restored home.*

## The Grateful Stranger

One day in late July, seven volunteers from Plymouth, WI helped pass out flyers for an upcoming VBS at Christ Lutheran church in Chalmette.

Afterward, they went to Armand's in St. Bernard Parish for sandwiches and Po-Boys, all wearing matching shirts that said "Jesus = cool." At the restaurant, everything seemed normal - they ordered, ate and asked for the check.

However, when they received it, the check said "taken care of." The volunteers went up to the register to thank the restaurant, but when they sat back down their waitress corrected them.

Pointing, she said "the man who sat at that table over there paid for you. He wanted to leave before you got your check so you wouldn't know who it was."

The group stared at each other in surprise, until they realized their T-shirts had given them away to the grateful stranger. He was not the first person to express his appreciation to RAI's volunteers. Locals frequently offer friendly waves, greetings and tokens of gratitude. The nation's kindness has certainly made an impact, but people of the Gulf Coast have made their own impression on the volunteers.

## Miss America Coming to Camp Restore

Miss America 2009, Katie Stam, will be visiting Camp Restore October 7, 2009. Miss Stam is an LCMS Lutheran from Seymour Indiana, and an alumna of the LCMS school system.

Pastor Scott Schmieding of Trinity-Baton Rouge has arranged for Miss Stam to visit Baton Rouge and New Orleans to highlight Lutheran Schools in the Southern District and to bring awareness of the continuing needs of the people of the Gulf Coast still in recovery four years after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

## Many Thanks to Our Supporters and Volunteers



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

## Congregations Nationwide hold K4 Restoration Sunday

Hundreds of congregations from all over the country, including the U.S. Virgin islands, have helped us commemorate the fourth anniversary of Katrina and celebrate our recovery thus far. As part of the RAI "Thank You" Awareness campaign and tour, RAI Staff and Volunteers went to 37 conventions this past summer to say "Thank You" and to invite churches and volunteer groups to continue to support the recovery effort with prayer, volunteers, and financial support. Over 100 congregations have informed us that they were planning to hold a K4 Restoration Sunday during August. The responses and donations are still coming in!



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## K4 Men's NetWork Retreat

Lutheran Hour Ministries Men's NetWork and RAI hosted the first Restoration Men's Retreat at Camp Restore on the fourth anniversary of Hurricane making landfall in Louisiana and Mississippi. 55 Men from 14 Lutheran congregations enjoyed manly fellowship, food, and service.

Service projects included setting up a tent for Craig Elementary School which asked Camp Restore to help provide shade for recovery school district kids to play under. Another service group painted the home of a family working to rebuild after Katrina.

The Village Church of LaComb, Louisiana won the Jambalaya Cook Off that showcased four cooking teams from Atonement Lutheran Church of Metairie, St. James of Gonzales, and Trinity Baton Rouge. The retreat weekend culminated at the K4 Worship Service held at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, which has provided its campus to be home of Camp Restore.



## K4 Restoration All Southern District Worship Service

Over 20 area congregations were represented at the All Southern District Worship Service that marked the 4th Anniversary of Katrina and thanked God for 4 years of recovery from Hurricane Katrina. Pastors Aubrey Watson and Dave Buss led the worship service with music leader Kim Jovanovich providing an incredible musical offering of brass and pipes.

Rev. Matt Harrison, Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, delivered a powerful message of Christ's love in the midst of adversity. LCMS World Relief and Human Care provides mercy and compassion in the Name of Jesus on behalf of the members and congregations of the Missouri Synod to people in need around the world.

## Is Your Youth Group Attending the National LCMS Youth Gathering??

If so, please think about extending your trip to NOLA with a few days before or after the Gathering at Camp Restore or Camp Biloxi. As many of you already know, there is still a lot of recovery work to be done along the Gulf Coast. Along with construction, your youth can work alongside hurricane survivors working to rebuild the community through organizations, agencies, and Christian ministries.

Over 700 youth volunteers worked in the New Orleans area this past summer helping to restore the wetlands and public parks, assisting the homeless and the elderly, and prayer walking the streets of NOLA. God has blessed this recovery work with faithful Christians boldly spreading the Gospel to His people.

Help your youth put their "Faith in Action" by extending their service on the Gulf Coast and then continuing in their own communities. For information about Camp Biloxi contact Rava Coyle at [Rava.Coyle@raimin.org](mailto:Rava.Coyle@raimin.org) or 228-594-0008. For more information about Camp Restore contact Michelle Steffan at 504-242-2636 or [Blessedmom75@hotmail.com](mailto:Blessedmom75@hotmail.com). Both camps can be reached at 1-888-248-2636.



*Kathy Wendling*



*Partner  
for 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 volunteer opportunities at  Camp Biloxi, MS    Camp Restore – New Orleans.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Send to RAI Ministries Inc., 9301 Chef Mentour Hwy., New Orleans, LA 70127 or go to [www.RAiministries.org](http://www.RAiministries.org).  
RAI Ministries is a Recognized Service Organization of the Southern District LCMS.