



Southern District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

# Recovery Update

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

October 2007

Southern District  
LCMS  
Recovery  
Assistance, Inc.  
(RAI)

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## Camp Biloxi Joins RAI (Recovery Assistance Inc.)



Camp Biloxi joined RAI as a Southern District LCMS volunteer camp as of September 1, 2007. Camp Biloxi is a ministry of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church LCMS of Biloxi, Mississippi and home to Extra Mile Ministry crisis response team.

"We at Camp Biloxi look forward to this partnership with the Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance. We pray that all of us at Camp Restore and Camp Biloxi will always keep focused on our mission, which is the same now as it was before Katrina: Sharing Christ's Love!" says John Coyle, Director of Camp Biloxi and Head Elder of Good Shepherd, who has directed Camp Biloxi since its inception in September of 2005.

Created by the people of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with the help of then Disaster Coordinator Rev. Dave Lewis and District President Kurtis Schultz, Camp Biloxi has been a Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) volunteer camp for almost two years. Under the new arrangement, LDR will continue to manage the construction element of Camp Biloxi, while RAI will manage the volunteer hospitality portion of the camp. Coyle will continue to serve as Director.

Camp Biloxi can house up to 180 volunteers in portable air-conditioned dormitories and hygiene facilities constructed by Orphan Grain Train of Norfolk, Nebraska.

*Volunteers in front of the Biloxi Lighthouse.*

Corinna Hollar, of Camp Biloxi, writes of an example of the power of the ministry there. During the last week in September, a group of volunteers from Pennsylvania were rebuilding homes in a minority neighborhood.

Late in the week, an African American lady came up to the group and said, "All my life I have hated white people - not because of anything they've done to me - but because of things my friends have been through. But after seeing that ya'll have left your families and jobs to come down here and help us rebuild our homes, I realize that I was wrong. I've asked Jesus to forgive me and now I'm asking you."

What powerful words! Through these volunteers and the power of the Holy Spirit, this woman was able to let go of a lifetime of hatred. It is our prayer that through continued support of this ministry we will have many more life-changing stories like this to share.



*John Coyle*

### CAMP BILOXI STATS: As of 9/01/05 – 9/01/07

#### Homes Restored

Gutted and sprayed for mold	486
Roofs – Major	593
Home/Interior major rebuild (>\$1000)	1,632
Home/Interior minor rebuild (<\$1000)	734

#### Camp Biloxi Volunteers

People	15,248
Hours	825,100
Value of work (Per FEMA)	\$16,027,396



### Camp Biloxi Contact Info:

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

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

Two years after Katrina and Rita, life here is still far from normal. Thousands of people have yet to return to their homes. Thousands more may not return. And even for those who are back in their homes, normalcy is a bygone notion.

From this, I have concluded that God doesn't want us to be normal.

The thousands of people who have made the trek to the Gulf Coast and New Orleans to "Give a hand," are not normal people. They have sacrificed their vacations, their time, and their money to be volunteers. Not normal.

The same can be said for the staff of Southern District Recovery Assistance. They have come from Oregon, Chicago, Michigan, Maryland, Alabama, and Wisconsin to live in RV trailers at our camps and wake up every morning deep in the disaster zone - ready to help the people and to tell people about Jesus with their hands and feet, and with their words. Not normal.

And finally, the same can be said for the people of Gulf Coast. They are a resilient people. They have survived the worst catastrophe of our time. While many have found it difficult to be the recipients of such awesome charity, there is a spirit here of hope which every day we see replace the despair.

One life, one house, one church, one community at a time is how this recovery is taking place. God is at work. He is not normal.

In His Service,  
*Dave Buss, Director*



*Rev. Dave Buss*

## "Jesus Among the Debris" Forum Gathers Outreach Leaders



REinstitute, the disaster outreach training arm of the Southern District Recovery Assistance Inc., held its first ever forum, "Jesus Among the Debris" on September 6th. Participants from across the Gulf Coast gathered to hear and discuss "the Great Commission in a post-Katrina context." Keynote speakers were Rev. Scott Snow, National Director of Outreach/Evangelism for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and Rev. Jesus Gonzales, Pastor of Monte de Los Olivos Church in Greater New Orleans.

"We plan to hold monthly events that will provide insights into and training for disaster outreach (i.e. Restoration Education)," said Kurtis Smith, the director of REinstitute. "The people who participated in our first event gave very positive feedback!"

Smith looks forward to future events as well, "Our next mini-conference is tentatively scheduled for the evening of October 25 and will feature Dr. Rick Armstrong of Lutheran Counseling Services - Florida, to discuss 'Care for the Caregiver.'"

Based at Camp Restore in New Orleans, REinstitute offers a curriculum for "Restoration Evangelism," a holistic approach that trains people for both physical service and Gospel proclamation to help those affected by disasters, temporally and eternally.

Learn more about REinstitute at <http://www.reinstitute.org/>



*DCO, Kurtis Smith*



*Rev. Scott Snow*



*Rev. Jesus Gonzales*



*Jesus among the debris.*

## Many Thanks to Our Supporters and Volunteers



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

## LINCNewOrleans Network Under Construction

New Orleans natives Kevin and Christie Kieschnick lead LINCNew Orleans (*Lutheran Inter-City Network Coalition*) with a mission to seek, identify and equip leaders that will develop socially active and diverse communities of faith.

Currently in the “seek” phase, the Kieschnicks and their energized staff of 2 DCE interns from Concordia Chicago and a vicar from Concordia St. Louis connect with the New Orleans community, its churches, and its social action groups to build relationships and a network of



Kevin and Christie Kieschnick

leaders. They can be found frequenting local gathering places (coffee shops, schools, events, etc.) and doing “prayer walks” striking up conversations that they hope will lead to identifying leaders who can be equipped to develop and lead faith communities.

LINC New Orleans has already identified several potential leaders and is “linked” with Mayor Ray Nagin’s Pastoral Council, CURE (Churches United for Revitalization and Evangelism), Eracism, New Orleans Outreach and the Christian Community Development Association. Additionally, they have established a special LINC relationship with Pastor Jerome Terry and the members of Bethel Lutheran Church, who worship at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and School.



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## A Letter from Rev. Gary J. Faith - Southern District LCMS Executive Assistant for Parish Ministries

*“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now.” Philippians 1: 3-5*

One of the big post-Katrina blessings I have enjoyed is the partnership the Southern District Missions Committee, **Recovery Assistance Inc.** and I share. From the very beginning under the leadership of Pastor David Lewis and now under the leadership of Pastor David Buss, **Recovery Assistance Inc.** has included the Missions Committee in the planning process of how to best help with the healing process.

To be sure, it is a work in progress, but progress is definitely being made. Homes are being rebuilt, hurts are being mended and hope is being restored. Volunteers from all over are being trained to be agents of healing and they are taking that training home and becoming the salt that is seasoning the church in a positive way. Critical events are being recorded because the Gospel is being proclaimed. New ministries are being planned and developed.

It is only the Gospel that can drive all of the above. It is the message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen for you, for me and for those who do not yet know Him, that enables and empowers all of the positive work at **Recovery Assistance Inc.**

So yes, I am thankful for our partnership in the Gospel and I am “*confident of this that he, who began a good work in you, will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 1:6).



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## God Working Through the Storm - Director of Congregational Recovery

Kathy Wendling, a retired special education school teacher, is the RAI Director of Ministry Recovery and member of Christ Lutheran Church in Chalmette, Louisiana (Christ church was flooded by Katrina and is being rebuilt through volunteers and Laborers for Christ from Camp Restore).

Kathy’s job is to connect the resources that are so generously pouring into the Southern District to the congregations and ministries where they can do the most good.

“Each day we get requests for help and we get offers for assistance. I am blessed to be the person who matches the requests with the offers,” says Kathy. “Here’s an example of how God works here in the middle of the disaster recovery: Yolanda Prevost of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in New Orleans asked me if we had any school supplies for the community children attending Vacation Bible School at Mt. Zion. I told her that a year ago we had thousands of book bags; but we had given them all away. Now, we had none. I prayed for help with Yolanda’s need.

Later that day, as I played my cell phone messages I heard the voice of Maria Brovick, DCE at Redeemer Lutheran Church of Spokane say, ‘Kathy, I was wondering if you can use about 1,000 book bags filled with school supplies.’

Redeemer Lutheran sent the book bags filled with supplies, AND a team of youth to distribute them at Mt. Zion. God is good - All the Time!”



Kathy Wendling

For Christmas ‘05 and Easter ‘06 the Disaster Recovery Office distributed gift boxes to lift the spirits of Southern District LCMS church members affected by the storms. Over 8,000 boxes were distributed in churches and mailed across the country to displaced members. In spite of our best efforts, we are aware that some of our members did not receive a gift box. If you know of any members who did not receive either the Christmas or Easter box, please contact Kathy Wendling at krlw33@hotmail.com or 504-248-2636.

# Camp Restore Celebrates One Year of Service

Camp Restore celebrates its first anniversary boasting over 3,000 volunteers. Located on the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and School campus, the New Orleans East camp is truly helping to restore faith, home, and community.

Camp restore owes its beginning to Laborers for Christ, a ministry of Lutheran Church Extension Fund. It now serves as headquarters for the Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance Inc. [RAI] and continues to house and coordinate volunteers coming to New Orleans to help people rebuild their lives, homes, churches and communities.

The camp's greatest need is skilled volunteers. Pastor Ed Brashier, Camp Restore's Director/Chaplain says, "The volunteers who have been here understand the need. They are ambassadors for the people of the New Orleans and the Gulf Coast area. We urge them not to let America forget us. As the two year remembrance of the disaster has just passed so has the media coverage. You probably won't see the rebuild efforts on the national news until the three year remembrance. But the people of the Gulf Coast need you now. They need you not to forget. Help restore hope. Remember us in your prayers, your giving, and your mission planning. Recruit some craftsmen and get some construction training.

**Get ready! Get set! Rebuild!"**



*Ed Brashier,  
Camp Restore's  
Director/Chaplain*

## CAMP RESTORE STATS: As of 10/01/06 – 9/01/07

### Homes & Parks

Gutted and sprayed for mold	285+
Yards & Parks	558 +
Completed Cases	85
Active Homes	23
Active Churches	4
On hold for plumbing, electrical & HVAC	126
On file waiting to become active	592

### Volunteers

People	3,319
Hours	90,790
Value of work (Per FEMA)	\$1,623,325

## Camp Restore Contact Info:

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



**Blessings from Ohio**

*Truck load from Tallmadge Lutheran Church in Ohio.*



## Camp Dixie comes to Camp Restore



*LDR sponsors VBS lead by Camp Dixie counselors.*

## A Word from Marilyn - a Volunteer

*By: Steven Namanny, Director of Christian Outreach Intern*

"The experiences and stories you hear strengthen your faith because you really can see God working," says Marilyn Schmudlach, referring to the volunteers that come back from a hard day's work in New Orleans. A long term volunteer herself, Marilyn and her husband, Walt, have lived at Camp Restore for nine months – part of their retirement plan to travel around the country volunteering.

When she arrived in New Orleans, Marilyn was overwhelmed by the destruction from the storm. She could not believe that people were still living in such dismal conditions. "It can be very depressing to see the way people are still living." Even though we wish the improvement came faster, Marilyn sees Camp Restore having a big impact in the community because of the enthusiasm and cooperation of the volunteers.

A typical day for Marilyn involves personal devotions followed by helping out around the kitchen or straightening up around the camp. She is a great encourager for the volunteers. They love to tell her about their day and she loves finding out what they got done and what they saw.

While she wishes the improvement would come faster, her heart goes out to those that have experienced losses and she believes she needs to learn patience throughout the recovery. Volunteering here at Camp Restore has increased Marilyn's faith. She says, "The experiences and stories you hear strengthen your faith because you really can see God working."



*Marilyn & Walt Schmudlach*