



April 2008

Southern District
LCMS
Recovery
Assistance, Inc.
(RAI)

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Southern District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Recovery Update

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

Southern Cookin' With Love

The South is known for good cooking. People from the here say it's because their main ingredient is love.

Brenda Johnson and her sister, Lorraine Breaud, serve up love as cooks at Camp Restore in New Orleans. Their stories exemplify the exciting movement of God's love spreading across the Gulf Coast.

From a family of origin with ten children that were all affected by the Hurricane Katrina in one form or another, these two sisters now serve others too. Each day they prepare meals in the mobile kitchen provided by Orphan Grain Train for the often over 100 weekly volunteers that come from around the country to help with relief efforts.

Brenda had over five feet of water in her house and wasn't able to stay on the property until she received a FEMA trailer eight months later. She and her husband, Charles, worked to gut and renovate their home as best they could. Eventually, Brenda found a job as a cook at Camp Restore. Soon Brenda's sister, Lorraine, joined her in the kitchen.



Lorraine prepares cookies with chocolate chips and lots of love.



Brenda, far left, makes sure hungry workers are well fed.

Lorraine agrees with her sister that the volunteers are making a tremendous difference. "God has watched over us. I'm strong in my faith today because the people that come here show that God still loves me and my community...the volunteers are the best thing that could have happened to New Orleans."

Beyond cooking for those who volunteer at Camp Restore, Brenda is also heavily involved in starting a new outreach to battered women developed through LINC New Orleans, another ministry arm of Southern District Recovery Assistance. Her own experience as a battered spouse (her first husband is now deceased) helps her bring hope to women in similar scenarios.

Working at the camp brought Brenda hope. "Please don't forget us and we won't forget you" said Brenda, "When something happens in Minnesota, I'll sit on the floor of an Orphan Grain Train mobile kitchen trailer and ride up there to help because they cared when we were in need...I'm ready to go!"

— Kurtis Smith

www.lcmsrelief.org

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

“Prepare” is an often used word here at Recovery Assistance Inc. While our mission is to “Restore Faith, Home, and Community” to the people affected by Katrina and Rita, we also work to prepare for future storms and disasters. This includes preparing rapid response teams, like the ones that recently responded to the Prattville, Alabama tornado, and providing resources for individual and congregation preparedness and response.

The LCMS is also serious about being prepared for disaster. Through its World Relief and Human Care division, the LCMS has developed a National Readiness Plan that encourages the people of the LCMS to have a plan for disaster, and it trains regional teams to respond. RAI is honored to have its “Disaster Outreach” model adopted as the Evangelism piece of the National Readiness Plan. Our own REinstitute Director, Kurtis Smith, the developer of “Disaster Outreach,” will be a national trainer as WRHC trains teams all over the country how to prepare for and respond to disaster. Check out the REinstitute article for more information on this and other training programs.

As you read this issue of our newsletter, please note the many opportunities for ministry that God is placing before us. We invite you to be part of this ministry through your prayers, volunteering your time and skills, and through gifts that enable our work to continue.

I pray that God will continue to bless *our* work as well as *your* work in His Kingdom.

In His Service,
Dave Buss, Director



Rev. Dave Buss



What is LINCNewOrleans?

LINCNewOrleans is a movement dedicated to equipping leaders that develop socially active and diverse Christian communities.

There are thousands in our cities who are drawn to Jesus but, for whatever reasons, avoid the institutional church. The non-believing world sees “church” not as a place of hope and forgiveness, but rather a place of judgment and pretension. Many don’t see churches making a difference in their neighborhoods; they see people who “take care of their own.”

LINCNewOrleans hopes to change that. We spend time building relationships, seeking faithful leaders who are concerned about their communities and who want to make a difference. We encourage them to gather small Christian communities that share a common desire for change.

One typical LINCNewOrleans community is “Imago Dei” (Latin for “Image of God”). This group gathers together twice a month for worship (pictured). They celebrate the sacrament together as they lift one another up in fellowship. On the other two weeks Imago Dei partners with other grass-roots organizations who want to raise awareness of violent crime and its consequences to the families of our city.

LINCNewOrleans partners with similar groups that have a passion for diverse issues such as women and family, and the homeless. As these groups grow, the community sees that the people of God really do care, and desire to make a difference. In this way we are changing the face of church in the city to one that is both relevant and meaningful in the 21st century urban setting.

– Kevin & Christy Kieschnick



Many Thanks to Our Supporters and Volunteers



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

Recovery Assistance Camps Respond To Alabama Tornadoes

Six staff members and eight volunteers from Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore traveled to Prattville, AL on Thursday, February 21st, to lend assistance and to bring mercy and hope to residents trying to clean up the damage caused by a tornado that ravaged through the area on February 17th. The Camp Biloxi Team was prepared to provide and install tarps to cover damaged roofs and the Camp Restore Team was equipped to focus on tree and debris removal.



According to Jim Byard, mayor of Prattville, 864 homes were damaged, including everything from a shingle to total loss. Upon arrival in Prattville, the workers toured the area and were amazed at how much had already been done: tarps had been put on the roofs that needed them and much of the debris was already piled up on the curbs. According to the city's director for parks and recreation, "insurance agents were out assessing the damage on Sunday afternoon and by Monday morning, roofers and contractors had begun working."

Seeing the debris piled high on the curbs brought back memories of what the Gulf Coast looked like in the months following Hurricane Katrina. "It was hard to see how much damage the tornado left behind, but it helped to know that in some ways, I understood what these people were going through and could offer them hope, since I had been through similar devastation as a result of Katrina," said Corinna Hollar, whose house sustained major damage from Hurricane Katrina.

Homeowners talked to by the staff members were in good spirits. "I'm just glad that no lives were lost," one homeowner exclaimed. "My house can be replaced, but my neighbors and family members can't. It's a miracle that no lives were lost."

Before they left, the group was thanked for their contributions by city workers, homeowners and other recovery agencies.



- Corinna Hollar



Network the Restoration Online... at Facebook!

If you want to network with others who are passionate about restoring New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, or maybe you are thinking about making your first trip to serve, check out the "Camp Biloxi!" or "Camp Restore!" Facebook groups. When this was written, there were already 375 others connecting with us online...become a part of a group at www.facebook.com.



Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore – Statistics

		<u>Volunteers</u>	
		People	21,168
		Hours	1,026,956
FEMA Value of Volunteer Hours to the State's of LA and MS = \$18,495,478			
CAMP BILOXI STATS: 10-1-05 to date		CAMP RESTORE STATS: 9-1-06 to date	
Director: John Coyle		Director: Rev. Ed Brashier	
Homes gutted and sprayed for mold	567	Homes gutted and sprayed for mold	375+
Minor Jobs and/or Roofs	1680	Yards & Parks	642+
Major Rebuilds	1702	Completed Cases	162
Churches damaged by Hurricane Katrina		40	

Camp Restore Contact Info:

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

Camp Biloxi Contact Info:

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

REinstitute Partners with Agencies to Provide Preparedness Training

REinstitute and LCMS World Relief and Human Care Offer Training

REinstitute prepares and involves people for building Christian faith, home and community after disasters. In order to do this our staff works in partnership with district and synod entities including LCMS World Relief and Human Care (LCMS WR & HC). Since Hurricane Katrina, the LCMS WR & HC has endeavored to develop a disaster response initiative that is both comprehensive in scope and collaborative in nature with local agencies. Southern District Recovery Assistance is privileged to be involved in this collaboration.



The result of this LCMS WR & HC initiative is a disaster response plan that coordinates the capacity of districts and the Synod to bring immediate relief and long-term recovery to LCMS professional church workers and congregations in the aftermath of a disaster. This plan also enables local congregations to bring mercy effectively and efficiently to their communities when disaster strikes.

The Southern District Training is scheduled for April 29-30 at Camp Restore, covering the following topics:

- Developing Disaster Outreach Ministries
- Developing Lutheran Early Response Teams
- Developing Disaster Response Capacities
- Developing Disaster Funding Resources

Contact REinstitute at 504-242-2636 or info@reinstitute.org for more information or if you would like to attend this event – free, excluding housing and food costs.

– Kurtis Smith

Lutherans In Medical Missions & REinstitute To Host Workshop

The international mission group Lutherans in Medical Missions (LIMM) has announced a workshop for Lutheran medical professionals of the Florida-Georgia, Southern and Texas LCMS Districts to learn steps needed to be prepared to serve in future Gulf Coast disasters.

The one-day workshop will be held June 14, 2008 at Camp Restore in New Orleans and will be co-sponsored by Restoration Education (RE)institute. Keynote speaker will be Rev. John Nunes, President and CEO of Lutheran World Relief. Other speakers include Rick Armstrong, PhD, associate director of Lutheran Counseling Services, Orlando, FL; DCO Kurtis Smith, director of REinstitute; and Chaplain Ralph Buchhorn, executive director of Extra Mile Ministries.

Registration for the one-day event is \$50 and includes both lunch and dinner. For a complete schedule and to register, please go to www.limm.org or www.reinstitute.org or call Bobbie Lautenschlager at 314-503-4317 or Kurtis Smith at 985-774-1997.

*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.