

Camp Restore

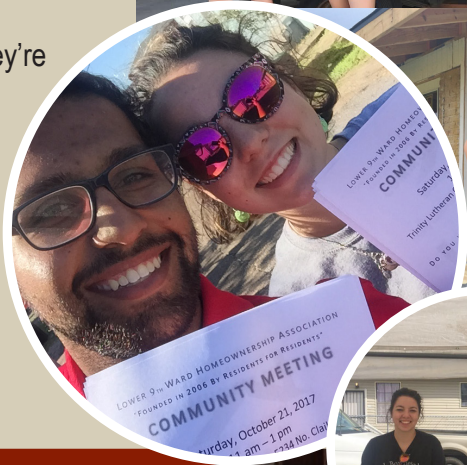
Restoring Faith, Home and Community

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We have been blessed over the past year with more than three thousand volunteers coming to New Orleans to work with us in restoring faith, home, and community in the name of Jesus. This year has also seen the Camp Restore name being shared with groups in Baton Rouge and in Detroit. All of us have first-hand knowledge of what people can do when reaching out into their communities and putting their skills to work.

MEET OUR NEW INTERNS

We continue to partner with the Soziale Dienste International e.V. as they have enabled interns from Germany to be with us again. If you come we hope you get the chance to meet Fabian and Sinan who are great additions to our team. We also have two interns from the Lutheran Young Adult Corps, a new initiative of the LCMS. Courtney and Madison are welcome additions to the support we have for volunteers and staff. They're all joining our second cohort of New Orleanian interns, Robert and Deante, who are part of our Young Men's Voices Have Power program made possible by the WK Kellogg Foundation. All of our interns bring freshness to the work that we share and a new perspective for us all. Search "New Interns" on our website to get to know them.



WELCOME TO KEN

We also welcome a new staff member who will begin with us in January from the cold regions of Minnesota. Ken Gramstad will be working as our construction supervisor. Many of you who have been here over the past couple of years know Ken and we are indeed very happy to have him along with his great people and construction skills to add to the work on rebuilding.





Thanks from Us

We have been surrounded by so many thoughtful people throughout the years here at Camp Restore. I want to extend thanks to you all for your continued support of our staff and community. This past year we grieved with the family of Ms. Lorraine, our chef, on the passing of her husband of decades, Turk. You could always find Turk chopping vegetables and giving Lorraine advice in the kitchen. We all miss him.

We saw an unprecedented number of powerful hurricanes hit the US this past year. There was devastation in Houston, along with other cities in Texas from Hurricane Harvey. Then Hurricane Irma went up the Florida peninsula causing damage all of the way. Right on its heels was Hurricane Maria that tore into Puerto Rico. They still are working on restoring power to the island. We put out the word online that Camp Restore would collect money to help in these areas, passing it all along to help in recovery work.

Between mail and online donations and our first local fish-fry fundraiser, we received more than \$30,000, 100% of which is being passed along to our partners working to help affected families. So far, among donor-designated Hurricane Harvey funds, \$10,000 went to the Texas District LCMS, \$10,000 to the Cajun Army, \$3,000 to Rev. Stephen DeMik and Cypress Chapel, and \$3,000 to LINC Houston. \$400 was sent to the Florida District LCMS for Hurricane Irma, and \$3,000 to American Baptist Missions in Puerto Rico.

We have reached out willing to share what expertise we have gained through the years to help in whatever ways that we can. The number of groups and people from Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico through the years who have helped us in New Orleans has been great. In return we want to support the recovery efforts in these areas in whatever way that we can. Your gifts have been a great start in doing that. Thank you.

BOARD ACTIONS

During the past few months the Board of Directors of RAI Ministries, which operates Camp Restore and the Senior Centers in the Lower Ninth Ward and New Orleans East, has been looking at the long-term positioning of our work. One of the strategic outcomes of their efforts has been the establishment of three new funds. First is the Walt Schmudlach Fund, which will provide materials assistance to homeowners who need some help in order to get work done on their homes. Second is a Capital Fund for capital projects at Camp Restore here in New Orleans. Finally, we have the Strategic Initiative Fund. This fund will allow us to help entities, such as Camp Restore - Baton Rouge and Camp Restore - Detroit, build their operations as they seek to address the challenges that their particular communities are given. It will especially be helpful to those who are just starting to reach out into their communities.

- Rev. David Goodine



WALT SCHMUDLACH

Walt Schmudlach has been a fixture at Camp Restore in New Orleans since the very early days of working on restoration from Hurricane Katrina. This past year, health concerns made it necessary for Walt and his wife Marilyn to return to their old stomping grounds in Wisconsin. We will miss Walt greatly. His calm, patient, and positive manner with everyone with whom he worked was so greatly appreciated by our volunteers and homeowners. We do hope and pray that Walt and Marilyn enjoy being closer to family and their friends in Wisconsin.

One of the actions of the Board of Directors of RAI at their last meeting was to establish the Walt Schmudlach Fund, to be used on an ongoing basis to help homeowners cover costs of materials and some of the work that we need licensed contractors to do. Walt was a wizard at finding the best deals and people to move the process of rebuilding homes and lives in the greater New Orleans area. If you would like to donate to that fund, we will continue working in our community remembering the many years of service that Walt and Marilyn gave to restoration here in the city and surrounding area.

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOUR FAMILY PLANNED A REUNION?

FAMILY.... Who do you consider your family? Spouses, children, grandchildren, parents, siblings, close friends, etc.? During the holidays, many families plan and coordinate gatherings, elaborate meals, travel schedules, worship services and any way they can celebrate their love of Christ and family. God places people on our path in many ways. We at Camp Restore have been blessed by thousands of God's servants and they feel like family to us.

The first Camp Restore family reunion is in the very early stages of planning and we invite you to be a part of this. Many of you have already expressed an interest in helping to plan this event. We think it is a great idea. So, like any family does, let's start the planning conversation. Please contact Kathy Wendling, krlw33@hotmail.com or Kurt Jostes, kurt@camprestore.org if you would like to be included in the planning conversation or you are interested in attending.



NOW OVER 150 COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

During the last year, we have continued to strengthen and increase our partnerships to over 150 ministries and non-profits throughout the New Orleans metropolitan area. These organizations address community needs in the areas of human care, environmental, social justice and more.

One of our newest partners is Bethel Colony Transformation Ministries, which provides Christian faith-based residential substance-abuse treatment programs for men and women struggling with alcoholism and drug addiction. Participants are given opportunities of employment through one of their many enterprises: a car wash, thrift shop, snowball stand, landscaping, construction, and janitorial services. We were thrilled to celebrate with them the opening of their newest enterprise, The Pontilly Coffee Shop. In addition to offering excellent coffees, teas, pastries and treats, the atmosphere is filled with God's love and mercy. We work to support their ministries through the work of our volunteers and interns.

Please keep all of our partnering ministries in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Kathy Wendling
Director of Community Service
and Development

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RESTORE





9301 Chef Menteur Hwy.
New Orleans, LA 70127
www.camprestore.org
504-242-2636

WK KELLOGG YMVP GRANT PROGRESS UPDATE

In 2015 RAI Ministries received a grant from the WK Kellogg Foundation's Young Men's Voices Have Power initiative. Over the past two years, four New Orleanian young men have teamed up with experts in the fields of film-making and storytelling who are coaching them as they develop film projects with a target release in Summer 2018. As part of their training, so far our interns have also contributed to collaborative film projects with three other local nonprofit programs: Evacuteer, Future Icons of NOLA and The Gumbo Project.



Alongside our interns' media projects, we've also spent the past two years conducting a survey exploring whether we can measure the positive effects of volunteering on volunteers themselves, with the help of a random sampling of our volunteer base. We hope to determine whether serving in our context has additional benefits to volunteers that were not previously measured or identified, beyond the many powerful anecdotes we've gathered over the years.

We completed the survey phase in August and are now processing the data, with support from graduate students from the University of New Orleans and Loyola University, New Orleans.

-Kurt Jostes, Deputy Director