

December 2008

Southern District  
LCMS  
Recovery  
Assistance, Inc.  
(RAI)

Rev. Dave Buss  
Director

John Coyle  
COO

*Inside This Issue*

- She Has Her Heavenly Home
- LINCNewOrleans “By the Numbers”
- Camp Restore - Baton Rouge
- RAI Goes to Texas

*Merry Christmas  
Everyone!*



9301 Chef Menteur Hwy.  
New Orleans, LA 70127

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

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

**A Note from the Director: Thank You Pastor Ed!**

Back in September of 2005, volunteers were coming out of the woodwork from all over the country to help after Katrina. One particularly useful volunteer was a tree surgeon from Alabama. He was a master with a chainsaw, and could keep a crew of six people (maybe even 10!) busy just picking up after him. That man’s name was Ed Brashier, and it is to him that I dedicate this space, and for him and his family that I give thanks.



*Rev. Dave Buss*

On the third anniversary of Katrina, and after three years of faithful service, Pastor Ed returned to Alabama with his wife, Susan, and their daughters, Olivia, Christina, and Rebecca. Susan served as Volunteer Coordinator at Camp Restore, helping Mission Teams from around the country plan their trip to New Orleans. The kids even helped with food service and keeping the Camp clean.

As Director of Camp Restore, Pastor Ed, along with Susan, welcomed literally thousands of volunteers to New Orleans. Alongside a great ministry team, they managed the restoration of hundreds of family homes and many Lutheran churches damaged by Hurricane Katrina. As Camp Chaplain, Pastor Ed was forever smiling, always ready with an encouraging word, a willing ear, and a servant’s heart.

Pastor Ed and Susan, Thank You for your faithfulness and for your service. May God bless you and the girls richly and forever.

*- Rev. Dave Buss , Director, RAI Ministries*

PS – The Brashiers have returned to their home in Kimberly, Alabama. Pastor Ed recently completed the LCMS “Intentional Interim” Training for pastors in St. Louis and is looking forward to returning to parish ministry. They can be contacted at [shepherdsheartministry@yahoo.com](mailto:shepherdsheartministry@yahoo.com).

**“She Has Her Heavenly Home”**

Barbara Trufant died October 11, just seven days before her New Orleans’ house dedication and her 75th birthday. Trufant’s Katrina-flooded house was rebuilt by volunteers and staff of Camp Restore. While her family and friends grieve her loss, Barbara’s is a story of hope and thanksgiving.



A volunteer from Minnesota, Cindi Jo Trahms, worked with Ms. Barbara and remembers her fondly, “Barbara, like so many of the wonderful people we have met these last three years, was truly one of those sisters in Christ.”

Barbara impacted the RAI Ministries staff as well as volunteers. “Barbara was a friend and sister in Christ,” said Jason McCoy of Camp Restore, “I could talk to her about just about anything, and often did.”

*(continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1)

“Even with so much joy, being cooped up in her FEMA trailer, all she wanted to do was get back in her home and take a nice, hot bath,” said McCoy. “She picked out a special tub and when we put it in, that’s all she would talk about—get the house done so she could get into the tub. Later we learned that she passed from a heart attack while in that new tub.”

As a faithful member of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church and leader in the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML), Barbara was featured in the Lutheran Women’s Quarterly after Hurricane Katrina. She told of how she found her LWML Mite Box™ in her moldy, flood-damaged bedroom, “...and it even had my mites in it!” she exclaimed.

The house was finished for several months and Barbara had already moved in, but she wanted to wait until her 75th birthday for the dedication celebration. The dedication took place without her physically there—her granddaughter now lives in the house—but the good memories of Barbara continue to be present. Her Christian witness lives on in people’s hearts across the country today.

Earthly houses are important but Barbara always showed us that heaven is where we find our ultimate home. God builds those residences—and He shares the keys through people like Barbara and volunteers from around the nation.

As you come together in your home this season, please remember the more than 3000 other households that we have on our RAI “In Need of Assistance” lists. Barbara’s home is in heaven but many others’ homes still need restoration.

Restore hope for eternity through RAI Ministries.

- Kurtis Smith

## LINCNewOrleans “By the Numbers”

“How many people have you helped?” “How many agencies have you met with?” “How many kids have you fed?” “How many live in poverty?” “How many churches have you planted?”

LINCNewOrleans envisions stronger communities - communities that experience less crime and poverty, less depression and divorce, higher employment rates and educational expectations, and greater opportunities for all. We don’t believe we can change communities ourselves, but we can support, encourage, and empower people that have gifts and passion to make a difference in their own communities. Our goal is simple - we are connecting a network of Christian leaders that work for justice and empowerment in their communities.

But sometimes people just want to hear about the numbers. So, here’s what LINCNewOrleans is doing “by the numbers”:

- ◆ Volunteer in 2 local public schools at least 4 days a week, or 9 hours a week
- ◆ Spend time with over 120 students in 5 different public classroom settings
- ◆ Spend 6-8 hours a week with 25 Lutheran school children in an after-care setting
- ◆ Host 50 foster parents and their 25-35 foster children 2 times each month
- ◆ Connect 70 foster and public school kids with 6 congregations for Christmas gift project
- ◆ Attend 4 different neighborhood improvement association meetings per month
- ◆ Gather with 5 women committed to women’s issues 2 times a month
- ◆ Gather 8 local domestic violence-related agencies empowering survivors to mentor victims
- ◆ Spend 5 hours each week volunteering at a local hospice-care facility for 25 people with HIV/AIDS
- ◆ Spend 2 hours each week at peaceful demonstrations against violent crime in the city

listen. learn. love. link.  
**LINC**  
New Orleans  
lincneworleans.com



(continued on page 3)



P.O. Box 872668  
New Orleans, LA 70187  
504-242-2636  
www.camprestore.org

**Go Figure  
Thru November, 2008**

**24,180**

Number of volunteers at  
both Camp Biloxi and  
Camp Restore

**\$20,472,417**

Approximate value of the  
1,114,838 hours worked  
by camp volunteers

**900+**

Houses gutted and  
sprayed for mold by  
camp volunteers

**2773**

Number of major  
(>\$1000) home repairs  
completed by our camps

**1947**

Number of minor  
(<\$1000) home repairs  
completed by our camps

**3000+**

Homeowners still on our  
camp lists and...

**Needing YOUR assistance**



1996 Pass Road  
Biloxi, MS 39531  
228-594-0008  
www.campbiloxi.com

(continued from page 2)

We know it might seem like a bunch of meaningless numbers that don't matter much at the end of the day. But we don't see it that way because one of those "numbers" is a little boy named Jemone, a fifth-grader, who spends evenings at home by himself because his Mom is in and out of jail. Another of those "numbers" is Miranda, a woman who's finally found the courage to take her two sons and leave the man who's been abusing her for years. Two of those "numbers" are Corshinda and Kewania, 3 year old twins who are in foster care and hoping for a permanent home. We can tell lots of stories, but every story is just a number. Or we can share lots of numbers, but every number is a story. Every story is about a person loved by God, and when you add everything together - every number, every story, every person, is us.

- Peace from LINCNewOrleans "by the numbers".

- Kevin Kieschnick

## Camp Restore – Baton Rouge!

Trinity Lutheran Church in Baton Rouge partnered with RAI Ministries to form "Camp Restore Baton Rouge" after the worst storm in Baton Rouge's history. On September 1st, Hurricane Gustav brought 90+ MPH winds which caused massive tree and home damage, flooding and power outages to Baton Rouge.

Senior Pastor Scott Schmieding mobilized Trinity members and staff to provide ice and supplies to thousands of Baton Rouge residents. Trinity then partnered with RAI to use the "Big House" at Trinity's new site as a volunteer center for dispatching crews to remove trees and to repair wind damaged homes. "Camp Restore Baton Rouge," a satellite to RAI's Camp Restore and Camp Biloxi, helped manage the efforts of local volunteers and out of state volunteers from Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Nevada, Georgia, Missouri, Mississippi, Texas and others. Over 50 families from the Baton Rouge area were helped. Volunteer teams removed 50+ large trees and tons of debris, repaired downed fences,

rebuilt a destroyed chimney and shared Christ's hope in many other ways.

Trinity's food outreach team, God's Gumbo Gang, also prepared hundreds of jambalaya meals for Red Cross workers in Houma, FEMA employees stationed in Baton Rouge, volunteers assisting with clean up, and various victims of Gustav.

Trinity members Lacey Bahr and Mandy Roggow served as volunteer coordinators for Camp Restore Baton Rouge – making sure that the volunteers had everything they needed from pillows to a place to work. Pastor Schmieding said of the Gustav Response, "I am so proud of the people at Trinity and their response to Gustav. It is incredible to see people sharing Christ's mercy and love in such tangible ways in response to tragedy." RAI, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, and many generous individuals provided funding for this wonderful response to human need.

- Rev. Scott Schmieding, Sr. Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church  
Rev. Dave Buss, RAI Director



RAI Board member, Woody Keim (serving), and other members of God's Gumbo Gang from Trinity Lutheran in Baton Rouge, prepare jambalaya for 300+ FEMA workers.



## Many Thanks to Our Supporters and Volunteers



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

# RAI Goes to Texas

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Ike, RAI's Dave Buss took a trailer load of equipment and supplies to Houston where he assisted the Rev. Mark Junkans of the Texas District in organizing early relief efforts.

On September 18, 2009 Dave contacted RAI Board Chairman Carl Brul to ask if he could go to Beaumont to assist with setting up a volunteer camp there. Brul agreed and on the 19th he readied the Orphan Grain Train's travel trailer for use in Texas. On the 20th Dave arrived at Holy Cross Lutheran in Port Arthur where he teamed up with volunteers Jason Weber and Cathy and Mike Mieritz.

On the 21st the group moved to St John Lutheran in Beaumont where the new volunteer camp would be located. The camp quickly began to take shape as shipping containers, bunk beds, and a shower trailer began to arrive, having been arranged for shipment by Dave Buss and John Coyle, RAI's COO. True to form, the Orphan Grain Train was also on hand moving equipment and delivering supplies.

With the help of a crew of willing retirees from St John, the bunk beds were installed, mattresses disinfected and shelving was installed in one of the containers. The shower trailer was cleaned and repaired, and was functional by the 24th. The camp was open for business in time to receive the first volunteers on September 27th. Rev. Junkans expressed his enthusiastic appreciation to RAI for our willingness to come to Texas without waiting for an invitation and for the help we provided in setting up the camp.

- Carl Brul, Chairman, RAI Board of Directors



St. John, Beaumont, volunteers.



Jason Weber, Cathy & Mike Mieritz.



RAI on the move!



*"In this Season of Hope,  
provide hope for others."*

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.