

August 2009

Southern District
 LCMS
 Recovery
 Assistance, Inc.
 (RAI)

Rev. Dave Buss
 Director

John Coyle
 COO

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To Donate Go To:
www.RAIministries.org

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

RAI Thank You Tour

RAI staff members are on a nationwide "Thank You" tour that so far has been to 37 conventions, including 33 LCMS district conventions, the LWML and the LLL conventions. RAI is saying "Thank You" to the people who have assisted in our recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on behalf of the Southern District and the people of the Gulf Coast.

The "Thank You" tour is also providing a forum for us to tell about the huge amount of work yet to be done, to encourage folks to help us keep the story alive, to invite them to come back, and to ask them to help us fund this mission so that we can together, restore faith, home, and community to the survivors of Katrina.

RAI is also very thankful to the people of the Southern District who have been extremely supportive of our ministry. Pictured are District President Kurtis Schultz and RAI Director Dave Buss holding up the Thank You banner at the Southern District Convention. A special "Thank You" to the members of Good Shepherd in Biloxi and Prince of Peace in New Orleans East who have provided the sites for Camps Biloxi and Restore. May God Bless you for your sacrifice and hospitality!

- Rev. Dave Buss



Letter from the Director

The "Thank You" tour has been extremely well-received across the country. It has been hugely gratifying to us that people from Washington State to New York know about Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore and what we're doing here on the Gulf Coast. What's better is that they truly "own" our mission: Restoring Faith, Home, and Community to the survivors of Katrina in the Name of Jesus.

We are beginning to see an increase in volunteer groups booking for the coming year, which encourages us that our "K4 - Restoration Sunday" campaign will be a success as well. We are asking every LC-MS Lutheran church to choose a Sunday in August, and call it "Restoration Sunday," and then do four things so that we can continue to help people far into the future:

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- Lift up the people still recovering from Katrina in prayer
- Help us keep the story alive that there's lots of work to be done
- Encourage people to come down and volunteer
- Help fund the mission by asking for a door offering to support RAI

We're praying that a thousand or two churches will give a hundred or two dollars to help us help people in need for a long time to come.

Will you please help by praying, telling, encouraging, and/or giving?

Thank you for your consideration! God Bless you!

- Rev. Dave Buss, RAI Director



Rev. Dave Buss

Lutheran Hour Ministries Donor Helps Share God's Love Along the Gulf Coast

Because of the generosity of a Lutheran Hour Ministries donor, the Gulf District of the International Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL)/Lutheran Hour Ministries donated \$21,000 to Recovery Assistance Incorporated (RAI).

On May 16, Lutheran Hour Ministries staff member Bervin Mirtsching and LLL Gulf District President Dennis Florreich presented the check to Pastor Dave Buss, RAI Executive Director, and John Coyle, Chief Operating Officer for Camp Biloxi.

Even though the devastation of Hurricane Katrina hit nearly four years ago, there is still work to be done to re-build the Gulf Coast. People are still without homes and jobs. Many feel that their situation is hopeless and are desperate for a new start. According to Florreich, the gift will help share Christ with those who need Him while helping to meet some of their material needs.

Through Lutheran Hour Ministries' new Men's NetWork, men's groups from all over the United States will gather at Camp Restore Aug. 28-30, 2009 for food, fellowship, service, and worship.

- Dennis Florreich



L-R: Bervin Mirtsching, Dennis Florreich, Dave Buss, John Coyle.



K4 Men's Retreat

Come join us at Camp Restore August 28-30, 2009 for a weekend of Men's NetWorking as we put the capstone on the K4 commemoration and recovery celebration. This retreat is open to all men and hosted by RAI and The Southern District Men's NetWork Coalition (Men's NetWork Groups from the Southern District).

The retreat begins Friday evening at Camp Restore with devotions led by Lutheran Hour Ministries, and a time of fellowship and manly activities. On Saturday, there will be a Jazz Breakfast, devotions, service projects, a Jambalaya cook-off and community Jambalaya feed topped off with a city-wide "K4 Worship Service" (see article on page 3). Participants are welcome to stay over Saturday or head on home after worship.

To register for the retreat online go to www.RAIAministries.org; "Book a Group," and enter "Men's NetWork" for your Group/Church.

To learn more about Lutheran Hour Ministries Men's NetWork go to www.lhmmen.org.

Many Thanks to Our Supporters and Volunteers



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

K4 Worship Service

Please join us! Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in New Orleans East will host an All-New Orleans worship event, "K4: Giving Thanks for Four Years of Recovery" to be held August 29th, 2009 at 6:00 PM. Reverend Matt Harrison, Director of LC-MS World Relief and Human Care, whose leadership has been instrumental in the LCMS response to Katrina, will be the preacher. Organist, and long-time member of Prince of Peace, Dr. Kim Jovanovich, will provide the musical offering on one of New Orleans largest and most beautiful pipe organs. Worship event and Jambalaya Supper (starting at 5:00) open to all.

Community Partnerships Make Day Camp Possible

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church partnered with a number of community people and organizations to host a summer camp for the children of their Broadmoor neighborhood. Vicar Kyle Mietzner and Deaconess Intern Ellee Mietzner, working with LINCNewOrleans, organized the four-week long event with the theme "Love Your Neighbor". Over 80 neighborhood kids from age 5 to 16 registered for the event! The camp was an overwhelming success, which exceeded the expectations of all.

Some of the partnerships included:

- Broadmoor Improvement Association which donated significant funds as well as T-Shirts, guest speakers and two field trips to the Aquarium and Insectarium.
- United for Peace in New Orleans which used art classes to give a message of peace and non-violence, leading a peace march headed by a local brass band.
- Camp Restore provided volunteer counselors from around the country each day of the event.
- Camp Dixie Youth Counselors assisted with a two week VBS experience.
- Local Christian rapper Dee One performed in concert and shared a positive message of hope in times of trouble and conflict.
- Neighbors from around the church donated time and money to make the event a success.
- Pastor Aubrey Watson of Holy Cross, N.O. was there to share a message of "Love Your Neighbor" with the kids.
- Members of other local Lutheran churches also shared their time and energy.
 - Southern District and Synodical mission leaders donated funds for the event.
 - Feed the Children came to share information about Hurricane preparedness.



The violent crime rate in New Orleans is shocking. What is less known is the amount of hunger which exists here. We served over 1600 meals to kids and shared the Gospel with many who had not heard it before!

Listed are only a few of the people and organizations who made this event possible. It was a great month of relationship building and sharing the love of Jesus with our neighborhood. These relationships continue to grow as Gloria Dei hosts bi-monthly community picnics in the park across the street! We look forward to continuing this service to the neighborhood all throughout the year, as well as with another camp next summer. All Glory to God!

- Rev. Kevin Kieschnick, Vicar Kyle Mietzner, Kathy Wendling

Bingo and Hurricane Recovery

Some recovery does not involve brick and mortar at all, but connecting the threads that once formed the fabric of our community. RAIMinistries volunteers, in addition to restoring homes, are calling Bingo games at nursing homes, harvesting grass along Bayou St. John, and tilling vegetable gardens at homeless centers. We have partnered with agencies, ministries, and organizations to join in their efforts to rebuild the area. It has provided incredible opportunities to witness and expand God's Kingdom. We have service opportunities for all of your God given gifts.

- Kathy Wendling, Director of Ministry Recovery



Volunteers clear brush and debris near City Park.

An Eye-Opening Experience



Brenda Schmidt

I didn't know what God planned for me this summer. Visiting New Orleans for three months seemed random at first, since I had never been there and didn't realize how much work still had to be done. However, God led me to RAI Ministries and I have learned a lot in my time here.

RAI Ministries has given me a wide variety of valuable experiences during my internship. One of the first striking experiences I had was a house blessing for a homeowner whose home was completely renovated. My job was to take pictures and video of the event, but when I arrived I knew it was going to be much more significant than I anticipated.

Almost four years after Katrina, this woman's house was finally finished, but I knew there was much more work that needed to be done. Some people have not even begun to restore their homes. I saw how grateful she was to be back, and I realized that I often take my own basic blessings for granted. I also appreciate how strong the survivors of Katrina are, and how much courage it takes to return.



District youth serving the hungry.

About a month ago Camp Restore hosted the Southern District youth gathering, and I had the opportunity to be a project manager for a house that needed insulation and sheetrock. I worked with a group of young boys – 14 and 15 years old – who worked harder than I could have imagined. The house wasn't air conditioned, and I always wanted a break, but they persevered. Meanwhile another group of from the gathering was busy unloading food from trucks and helping feed hungry people at the New Orleans Mission.

During that event, I realized that the volunteers are strong, too. They give up their vacation time in order to work and help others, and stay positive despite any problems they might encounter.

What started as a business internship transformed into an eye-opening experience. There is still a lot of work to be done, but God is restoring faith, home, and community through RAI Ministries and I am blessed to be a part of it.

- Brenda Schmidt, Development Intern



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.
RAI Ministries is a Recognized Service Organization of the Southern District LCMS.