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“Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me ... And they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ So they strengthened their hands for this good work.”

Nehemiah 2:18

PARTNERING FOR DISASTER RESPONSE

Disaster Times

Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Camp Victor Rebuilds

Within days of Hurricane Katrina’s landing, Christus Victor Church became a disaster response center for communities all along the Gulf Coast. As the months unfolded, the church discovered that it did not have the room to accommodate all of the ongoing recovery efforts. Not only was Christus Victor trying to provide regular church services and activities, but also office space for case management and housing, as well as feeding the thousands of volunteers who were helping.

God saw to their needs as an old garment warehouse was located and converted into Camp Victor. The converted warehouse now has accommodations for more than 200 volunteers. The following

are available on-site to volunteers at Camp Victor:

- dorms and bunks
- 3 meals a day
- showers
- washer/dryer
- internet

Right now, Camp Victor is in the rebuilding stage and plans to rebuild 300 homes. Homes currently being rebuilt vary greatly in their phases from sheet rocking to roofing. While volunteers for construction are always needed in the rebuilding process, it is not the only work available. Every willing hand will have something to do as help at the camp is also needed in data entry, the distribution center and kitchen.

The volunteers of last year’s *Rise Up & Build* did a great deal of work, but there is seemingly an unending amount left to be done on the Gulf Coast. The dates for 2007’s *Rise Up & Build* as have been set. Volunteers will be going to Camp Victor on January 13-20, 20-27, 27-February 3, 3-10, 10-17 and 17-24. Camp Victor is located in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, about 25 miles and a 30 minute drive from Gulfport, Miss. Those planning to fly to the area will be arriving at the airport in Gulfport. If you would like more information about joining *Rise Up & Build*, call (800) 950-2901. For the latest details about the trips, visit www.ldrnd.org.

IF WE ARE THE BODY...

There is a great song by Casting Crowns that asks the questions, “If we are the body [of Christ], why aren’t his arms reaching? Why aren’t his feet going? Why aren’t his words healing?” Rise Up and Build responds to this in such a great way! This effort, spearheaded by Lutheran Disaster Response (programs of Lutheran Social Services ND, SD, and MT) takes people from all faith experiences to the Gulf Coast to help with the clean up and reconstruction needed after Hurricane Katrina devastated that part of our country. The second year of this effort begins Jan of 2007, taking groups for 1 week at a time, down to work in the Gulf.

So many churches gave in the ways they could, all valuable and worthwhile. The great thing about Rise Up and Build, though, is that it truly exemplifies Christ’s teaching. This ecumenical project says, that even though we belong to various Christian denominations, we are all one in Christ; we are all one body in our Lord and together – we can do more. We can work side by side in the face of great need and come together to be greater than any one of us, as individuals or independent denominations, could be on our own. Jesus’ life is lifted up and glorified best when we recognize that as a body of believers, we are so much stronger. To this end, the Presbytery

of the Northern Plains is a strong supporter the Rise Up and Build project.

Rise Up & Build is a collaborative effort of Lutherans, Presbyterians, United Methodists, United Church of Christ and Catholics, all working as God’s hands, serving our fellowman in need.





Rise Up & Build Opportunities

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SERVE

Volunteers are very important to the *Rise Up & Build* mission trips – for without volunteers, there would be no *Rise Up & Build*. Their time and dedication not only made last year's mission trips successful, but changed the lives of hurricane survivors and even the volunteers themselves. For those who want to help to make a difference, volunteering your time and energies to these mission trips is an opportunity you'll not want to miss!

Can't swing a hammer but still want to help? For those who are unable to pick up a hammer or serve in another capacity on-site, here's an exciting opportunity to make a difference. Sponsor creative fund-raising events to help offset costs for volunteers in your area or send the financial gifts to the *Rise Up & Build* fund, enabling others who are able to go to the Gulf Coast to serve on your behalf. Each volunteer is responsible for trip expenses of \$260 (if flying) or \$200 (if driving) plus airfare or other transportation costs. If you cannot go but would like to help, consider a donation or fundraiser to defray costs for others to go.

Contributions received by

Rise Up & Build will be set-up in a volunteer scholarship fund. This fund will be reserved for those who have the time to volunteer on the Gulf Coast, but not the resources to go. Volunteers needing assistance should apply for a scholarship that will cover a portion of their expenses on this mission trip. The number of scholarships and amounts awarded will depend on gifts given to the *Rise Up & Build* fund. Any funds left after scholarships are awarded will be donated to the recovery effort for building materials and other urgent needs.

Interested in the 2007 *Rise Up & Build* mission trips? Call your local state coordinator for the latest details or visit us on the web at www.ldrnd.org. To make a tax-deductible donation, mail a check to *Rise Up & Build* to your local state coordinator. Donations also may be made securely online at www.lssnd.org (note "Rise Up & Build" in the comments section to direct your donation).

RISE UP
& BUILD
North Dakota • South Dakota • Montana

Lead Volunteers

For one week in late January of this year, I was one of the 20,000 volunteers who have worked daily along the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. I responded to the organized mission of Lutheran Social Services and Lutheran Disaster Response of the Dakotas and Montana to "Rise Up and Build" in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Leaving my comfort zone, my motto became, "You can do anything for a week." Originally, I meant I could endure the inconveniences of living in Tent City for a week, in order to help in some small way. Now I realize that it is the time frame of one week that is important.

Residents of the Gulf Coast are struggling to rebuild lives broken by stress of loss and chaos. They face destruction day in and day out. Their hopes and dreams have been shattered. They are weary and weak.

It is indeed the strength of a fresh volunteer work force sharing just a few days out of their stable lives, bringing hope in the midst of despair that is invaluable in this rebuilding effort---week after week.

If it is in your heart, and if you are able, please consider being one of those 20,000 volunteers working daily to restore the Gulf Coast...for a week you can do anything.

Kathy Winterfeldt
Dimock, SD

TYPICAL DAY

Below is a typical daily schedule for volunteers at Camp Victor in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. It is important to keep in mind, however, that situations and needs change almost hourly. A volunteer's schedule could be different everyday of the week; flexibility is of the utmost importance, as well as the ability to adjust to the new schedule. Remembering that you are there to serve and keeping an open mind will go a long way.

Typical Daily schedule for the CAMP

6:00 a.m. Breakfast
7:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
7:15 a.m. Morning Meeting
Work team briefings, gear prep
12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Lunch
5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Dinner
6:00 p.m. Evening devotions
(if desired)

Groups are encouraged to find time as a group to meet, share, debrief, etc.

Every Monday and Thursday, we show the WLOX (local ABC affiliate) documentary specifically on the MS Gulf Coast. That takes place at 7:00 PM.

10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Camp quiet time

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

Come and join the team!

Come and join the team!

There are only a few openings left for the volunteer coordinator position of 2007's Rise Up & Build. This will be a great opportunity to take a leading role in helping others and making a difference on the Gulf Coast.

Volunteer coordinators will lead a team of Rise Up & Build volunteers in the rebuilding of homes of Katrina survivors. It is important to know that you will not be working alone! Those who become volunteer coordinators will be on-site for 2 weeks. The first week will be spent working collaboratively with the coordinator from the week before; the next week will be spent with a new coordinator, briefing and showing them around. The position of volunteer coordinator could also be handled by a couple that is participating in Rise Up & Build;

while one works with volunteers, the other could see to the logistics.

While work for all volunteers range from construction to data entry, distribution and kitchen work, the following would be helpful in a volunteer coordinator: a construction background or understanding of the rebuilding process, receptive to working closely with others and open to leading teams of volunteers.

Training for the position from an experienced volunteer leader is available by email, instant messenger and phone; for more information about this opportunity, call (800) 950-2901. To view job descriptions for the Volunteer Coordinator and Team Leaders, visit www.ldrnd.org. Come and join the team!

Logistics for Travel

While trip coordinators will be taking care of accommodations, meals, etc. in Ocean Springs, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to make their own travel plans to the Gulf Coast. **Please note that anyone going on a 2007 Rise Up & Build mission trip should contact their state coordinator BEFORE making any travel arrangements to reserve a place due to limited numbers per trip.**

For those who are flying to Gulfport, Northwest Airlines, only through Satrom Travel & Tours, will be offering a special discount to *Rise Up & Build* volunteers; 5% off when booked less than 30 days and 7% for bookings 30+ days in advance of flight. *The discounts are off the lowest applicable airfare at the time of booking.* In addition to airline costs, a fee of \$260 must accompany the registration which will pay for housing, meals, ground transportation and miscellaneous costs while in Ocean Springs.

For those volunteers who are driving to Ocean Springs, the fee will be \$200 for housing, meals and miscellaneous costs. Volunteers driving an RV should make special arrangements for parking ahead of time.

Regardless of travel method, all volunteers will need to register with their state coordinator to confirm space on that trip. They should arrive in Ocean Springs on Saturday of the week they are volunteering to allow all volunteers to be at the mandatory orientation, training and team building session on Sunday.

For an information packet on the 2007 Rise Up & Build mission trips to Ocean Springs, please call (800) 950-2901.

KATRINA, DESTRUCTION AND JOY

Jean Larson

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Seventeen church folks from three Missoula Lutheran congregations joined a dozen from Billings on the Gulf Coast February 11 – 18, 2006 as part of “Rise Up and Build,” an effort by Lutheran Social Services of Montana (and LSS ND and LSS SD) to lend a hand in Hurricane Katrina’s wake. Over one hundred others from all over the country joined us. We worked long days roofing, hauling, painting, distributing food and clothes, working at the medical clinic, or cooking up food for all the crews. But we’re making plans to go back next year, with more people, for the hope of it all.

Lutheran Disaster

Response has been hard at it since August 29, 2005 when the storm came ashore and took out 70% of Biloxi’s homes and businesses—90% a little further west at Pass Christian. They figure to be at it for the next 8 – 10 years. It’s easy to see why. Parts of the coast saw the storm surge reached 32 feet high.

But it’s the people who took our breath away. People like Sam and Evelyn Lindstrom, who came to Bethel Lutheran Church that first night of orientation. Sam picked up his guitar and serenaded us after dinner. We joined in on “Amazing Grace” and “I’ll Fly Away,” sung with down-home grit. And suffering. Sam and Evelyn’s daughter and son-in-law had been turned away from a full shelter the night of the 29th and drowned. But there they were, coming to the church, to encour-

age us.

Then there’s Ms. Shirley, whose home was one of our projects. A dispatcher for the Biloxi Police Department, she and her husband lived near downtown. When the waters started flooding their home, they took to the attic. When the waters got neck-high, they thought they were goners. Then the surge subsided. But Ms. Shirley’s husband got sick from bacteria in the water and died in October. She came over every day to visit the volunteers. “I’m not sure I can move back here, but I’m so deeply grateful for your help.” Then she hugged Shirley Wanberg, who protested because she was caked with dirt. “Never mind no dirt!” Ms. Shirley laughed. So they hugged tight and the rest of us hooted and clapped and cried, all at the same time.

In spite of the destruction, it was a surprisingly joyful week. To be sure, the people continue to suffer. Some live in tents in their front yards. Post-traumatic stress immobilizes others. Yet the people of the Gulf Coast humbled us with their resilience, courage, gumption, and faith. We went down there expecting to share our hope and love with the survivors, never dreaming we’d come home with way more than we delivered. Being in this human adventure together – volunteer and survivor alike – gave birth to an awesome community, one we believe is empowered by the Spirit of Christ. It will take years, this recovery, but in the face of such Spirit Power, Katrina’s destruction will be overcome. We’re going back. Join us.

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Lutheran Disaster Response are programs of



Website: www.lssnd.org

Mission: “Guided by God’s love and grace, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota brings healing, help and hope.”



Website: www.lssmt.org

Mission: “Lutheran Social Services of Montana is a ministry of caring people and congregations responding to God’s love in Jesus Christ by serving children, families and individuals through counseling, education, adoption, and specialized ministries.”



Website: www.lsssd.org

Mission: “Inspired by God’s love, we care for, support and strengthen individuals, families and communities.”