

Habitat Hammer

NEWS. COMMUNITY. HOMES.



SUMMER 2011



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VOLUNTEERS: THE LIFELINE OF NEW ORLEANS HABITAT

When asked about volunteers who he would described as committed to the fight against poverty housing in New Orleans, NOAHH construction director Scott Pointer, without a moment's hesitation, began to name over 30 different groups and individuals off the top of his head. He continued naming groups, noting which members of his staff would know even more groups, and before long, it became clear that for NOAHH, committed volunteers were such a common occurrence that it would be impossible to even list them all. That these groups share NOAHH's dedication to the mission of providing safe, affordable housing in the New Orleans area is something for which the affiliate cannot express enough gratitude.



Many groups have been coming back since the storm.

Give Hope has come to New Orleans every year to volunteer since 2006. After Hurricane Katrina, one of Marnie Hade's students at Northwest High School in Jackson, Michigan, showed her the National Relief Network and convinced her that she and her students should take part in it. After seeing the devastation and working to raise money for the region, she gathered a group of over 100 students and spent a week on the Gulf Coast. Six months later, they returned, and they continued returning almost every year, eventually coming on their own as the group *Give Hope*. During their third year, they helped build Avis Fitte's home in Port Sulphur, and the NOAHH homeowner became such good friends with them that she's joined them volunteering in subsequent years.

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New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity — Summer 2011



the board...

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Jim Pate – *Executive Director*

Elizabeth Lisle – *Director of
Operations*

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans.”
— Peter Drucker

In the years following the failure of the levees and floodwalls after Katrina, we in Louisiana suffered from broken or poorly-filled promises from so many sources: FEMA, the Road Home program, dishonest contractors and suppliers and inept management from virtually every level of the public sector. As the months and years ground on, the hopes of so many were dashed or dimmed. It was the commitment of individuals, faith communities, volunteers and private donors from across the nation and around the world that offered hope, action and plans. Our organization, alone, recruited and deployed over 140,000 volunteers and countless others helped with other organizations.



After the Deluge, only four (later five) of our eleven pre-disaster staff returned; but others made the commitment to join those five committed staff members and we grew at an astounding rate. Faced with damage and destruction to their own homes and businesses, our Board members made their way back and, despite their personal woes, committed their time and talent to the Habitat ministry. Due to a lack of housing and basic services, our first volunteer numbers were modest; but, as faith communities gave over sanctuaries, halls and support buildings to volunteers and as we developed Camp Hope (spartan living conditions at best), committed volunteers came and came back . . . and back. Many groups (often with ever-shifting members) have returned five, six or more times. Many individual volunteers gave up weeks or months of their lives to help with the rebuilding of our precious city and region. Some of our most committed and talented personnel were the fantastic AmeriCorps members: “The best thing the federal government sent for the recovery came in a gray T-shirt with an AmeriCorps logo on the chest”. Despite the many short-comings of federal, state and local agencies, I would be remiss in not noting the commitment of those government employees – many of them facing their own personal tragedies – who tried valiantly to staff offices in temporary spaces with severely attenuated numbers and a severely damaged infrastructure.

And, finally, we must honor the commitment of our partner families. Most of them lost virtually every material thing and, often, friends and relatives as well. Dispersed over the entire country (and a couple of foreign nations), they remained committed to returning and to rebuilding this unique and wonderful place and to building new Habitat homes and new lives. There was promise and there was hope. But, most of all, there was the commitment from so many that let these families plan for a better, shining future.

Jim Pate
Executive Director

THANK YOU AMERICORPS



Katie Manning, Springfield, MA
Erin Boyd, Hanover, NH
Kevin McQueeney, Toms River, NJ
Elissa Trotman, Nags Head, NC
Kelsey McClure, Denver, CO
Nicole Bennett, Afton, MN
Matt Fox, Bethesda, MD



In August, NOAHH will say thanks and good wishes to six incredibly giving young people who served during the 2010-2011 AmeriCorps year as Direct Service volunteers.

“Their hard work is immeasurable to our affiliate,” stated Jim Pate, Executive Director of NOAHH. “They have put in long, hard hours to build homes for our partner families. We will treasure their friendship and support.”

NOAHH has received the support of over 100 Direct and Vista AmeriCorps since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

HELP NEW ORLEANS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
WIN \$25,000

During the month of *July*, go to
 www.facebook.com/homedepotfoundation
and vote daily for New Orleans Habitat for Humanity.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP
TO HELP OUR PARTNER FAMILIES.**

 **Habitat for Humanity®**

 **FOUNDATION**
Improving homes. Improving lives.



A SMILE LIKE NO OTHER

“With the help of the Good Lord, New Orleans Habitat for Humanity, and my willingness to partner, I returned to New Orleans to become a homeowner and once again our family can lay down roots here,” gushed Clorestine Haney, New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity partner family. “With all my family deciding to live in Baton Rouge and not return to New Orleans, I prayed and asked God to help me return to New Orleans and Habitat helped make it happen.”

Clorestine Haney along with her extended family has been successful in the Habitat program and has recently become a new homeowner in the Upper Ninth Ward.

Many volunteers who have worked side by side with Clorestine and her



children have been impacted by her generous spirit and shining smile. “I’ve never seen such a bright smile,” many volunteers have been heard saying about Clorestine.

partner family with New Orleans Habitat for Humanity.

“This process taught me how to care about people even more. It’s about having a caring spirit for people and for the city,” she said. “Homeownership is about keeping family together. It gives you responsibility and independence to help your family.”

“It’s just the best feeling to have volunteers working with me, side-by-side to build a home for my family,” Clorestine adds. “They are just the best.”

In February 2010, Clorestine moved into her new home with her daughter, son and nephew. Having learned how things come together in the building of a home and how to take care of something that’s hers was an important part of the program, but the best lesson, she said, was about community and family. “We are truly home.”

Clorestine has worked in the security industry in New Orleans for over 20 years. Currently she is employed in uniform distribution in the Louisiana Superdome. Clorestine evacuated to Baton Rouge following Hurricane Katrina and although most of her family plans to remain there, she was determined to stay true to her roots and return to New Orleans. She commuted from Baton Rouge each day until she applied and was accepted as a



NOAHH AMERICORPS BUILD IN MISSISSIPPI

For seven days in May, over 75 AmeriCorps members descended on the Gulf Coast to join in a 5-day AmeriCorps Build-a-Thon. New Orleans Habitat was represented by the most enthusiastic team of AmeriCorps members who helped to build three homes for the Gulf Coast Habitat for Humanity affiliate. The AmeriCorps Build-a-Thon is an annual event designed to celebrate the involvement of AmeriCorps with the Habitat for Humanity program and allow members to meet others in the AmeriCorps program from all over the country. This year's Build-a-Thon took place in 7 cities around the United States, with NOAHH's AmeriCorps participating in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.



MISSION COMPLETED



Construction on the much-anticipated Ellis Marsalis Center for Music has wrapped-up. The Center, named for Ellis Marsalis, head of the Marsalis clan, is a multi-functional performing arts hall and community center which is located in the heart of New Orleans Habitat's Musicians' Village. The 18,000 square foot building includes a 150-seat performance hall, classrooms, administrative offices, and a community room. Classes for young, aspiring musicians are scheduled to begin in the fall.

The Center for Music will hold a grand opening celebration in late August in conjunction with the 6th annual remembrance of Hurricane Katrina.

CORPORATE COMMITMENT



The Gap Foundation was started by retailers Gap, Inc. in order to invest in the communities where their stores were located. In New Orleans, the foundation has been responsible for bringing volunteers and sponsoring two homes with NOAHH post-Katrina fulfilling the foundation's motto of "Be What's Possible." Their support in neighborhoods on the West Bank and St. Roch is invaluable to NOAHH.



VOLUNTEERS: THE LIFELINE OF NEW ORLEANS HABITAT

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“We started out gutting houses in St. Bernard Parish and Biloxi, Mississippi,” Hade said. “Then we continued with construction. We’ve even started working on rebuilding gutted houses. It feels like we’ve come full circle.”

“Some of the students are on their second or third trip, and even students who have graduated come back as chaperones,” added Hade. By including tours and other outings during the trip, Hade teaches her students about the history and culture of New Orleans.

“The kids love it. You need to have the full cultural experience when you come. We stay nine or ten days, and on our off days, we go on tours. It’s always a history tour the first night,”

she said. “And the students who don’t make the return trip usually end up texting us while we’re here. We call it ‘trip remorse.’”

While Give Hope has come year after year, other organizations, like Rebuilding Hope in New Orleans (RHINO), have come not just year after year, but week after week. RHINO is a ministry of the St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, and through this ministry, they have sponsored many homes with NO-AHH, including most of the homes on Ferry Place, which was blighted land even before Hurricane Katrina. Hundreds of volunteers have come to NOAHH through RHINO’s program, and it’s rare that a week goes by when volunteers from RHINO are not on site. Through RHINO’s dedication to the city, they not only provided sponsorship for homes, but contributed to the construction of far more through their volunteer efforts.

These groups are only a small sample of the volunteers who have made helping NOAHH part of their yearly, monthly, or even weekly routine. Ma-



For companies like American Cotton Inc., Credit Suisse, and Maple Leaf Sports all regularly bring volunteers to New Orleans to do their part, and groups like the Association of Government Accountants and Go NOLA/Crossroads Church do their part year after year. The armed forces of the United States are commonly seen participating; especially the Navy and the Louisiana Air National Guard, and church groups are ubiquitous. Several schools join NOAHH for alternative spring break every year as well, and all this doesn’t even begin to scratch the surface of the volunteer groups and individuals who have come out time and again.

Without these dedicated volunteers, NOAHH would not have made as much progress on home building as has been made since Hurricane Katrina. Their dedication is invaluable as is their support for NOAHH’s mission.



TADLOCK’S NEW HOME



On Friday, May 27, 2011, NOAHH dedicated a new home at 3010 General Ogden in the Hollygrove

neighborhood for partner family member Sheneka Tadlock. The home was sponsored by Freeport McMoRan, who has also sponsored several homes in the St. Roch neighborhood and in Plaquemines Parish.

Homeowner Sheneka Tadlock is a single mother from the Lower Ninth Ward. Her friend and NOAHH homeowner Ashanti Avant told her about the program, and

Sheneka decided to apply after her daughter Serenity was born. She lost almost everything to Hurricane Katrina, but now she is moving into her new home. She currently works as a security officer and plans to continue her college education.



SPONSOR SNAPSHOT

Just a few of our generous partners



The Funding Individual Spiritual Health Foundation (**F.I.S.H.**) donated \$85,000 to sponsor one NOAHH home in the Hollygrove neighborhood, which was dedicated this June. F.I.S.H. Foundation supports groups who encourage spiritual growth.

BNP PARIBAS FINANCE AND TAX MANAGEMENT donated \$5,600 to NOAHH. They are a major world-wide firm offering banking and other financial advice.



MAPLE LEAF SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT, a major sports and media company, has given nearly

\$300,000 to NOAHH, sponsoring several homes and volunteering frequently.



Construction safety material company **PRO-BEL ENTERPRISES LIMITED** donated \$2,500 to NOAHH this May.



THE FRIENDS OF ALHAMBRA are a small church group in Alhambra, CA, who began having sales of donated items in December 2005 to raise money for non-profits like NOAHH. They have continued to raise money since they began and give several times a year.

GIBBS CONSTRUCTION CO donated 25 safety harnesses that provide an additional layer of safety for volunteers installing roofs.



COTTON INC. has extended their support of NOAHH by donating an additional 150,000 square feet of cotton insulation for new home construction.



THE ESTATE OF PEGGY YANCY bequeathed NOAHH over \$100,000 to support building activities throughout the metro New Orleans area.

REMEMBERING HABITAT IN YOUR WILL

Have you written your will? Does it truly represent the needs of your heirs? Or, your most favored community organization? Your church? Your University? Remember – writing a will is one of the most important elements of sound Estate Planning. Estate Planning is also wise and can create tax savings for you and your heirs.

New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity urges all of its friends to consider the many benefits of Estate Planning. As you consider your personal estate goals and your desire to leave a legacy that builds a stronger community, Habitat New Orleans would be pleased to meet with you and assist with sound tax-savings advice and counsel. Call Leah Whitmer, Development Director, and allow her the opportunity to make a free, personal and confidential presentation. She can be reached at 504-861-2077.





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