

WORLD HOPE

HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF UPDATE *One Year Later*

Looking Back...

It has been almost one year since Hurricane Katrina smashed into the Gulf Coast taking homes and lives. Over 1,800 people died and many are still unaccounted for. Damages are estimated at \$75 billion. For everyone living in the region, life was disrupted on August 29, 2005, and for most it has yet to return to normal.

The images that overwhelmed the media outlets are hard to forget: families stranded on rooftops waiting to be rescued, boats turned over on highways, crowded shelter facilities, homes destroyed, and lives forever changed. These powerful images stirred the hearts of people all over the US, prompting them to donate their time, resources, and money to help those in need.

World Hope International (WHI) has historically provided relief for disasters overseas, but when Hurricane Katrina hit with such force and destruction, WHI mobilized its resources to help in every way possible. WHI was able to deploy volunteers and distribute needed supplies through three key operational sites in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, as well as begin the hard work of cleanup and structural restoration.



Damaged home

STATISTICS

4,020
Volunteers

150
Churches and
Organizations

130
Trucks of
Supplies

On Site

In Gulfport, Mississippi, Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church was a hub of activity as WHI volunteers worked to clear over 1,300 fallen trees, tarp 500 damaged roofs, and distribute supplies to over 7,000 members of the community. Through a unique partnership with Holland Central Church in Holland, Michigan, thousands of people were assisted between September 2005 and April 2006. The church facility in Gulfport was transformed into a work camp, housing more than 50 volunteers each week. Over 2,327 men and women donated their time to work toward the restoration of Gulfport.



Tree clean up

From September to December 2005, World Hope International and Bayou La Batre Wesleyan Church in Irvington, Alabama, took on the enormous task of distributing supplies. Right after the hurricane hit, people all across the US scrambled to fill semi-trucks, U-hauls, pick-ups, and cars with needed supplies. WHI coordinated the delivery of over 130 truckloads of supplies to the Gulf Region, the majority of which went to Bayou La Batre. Hurricane victims came from far and wide to receive over 12,000 boxes of free bottled water, food, diapers, clothes, and personal hygiene products. The



Distribution site at Bayou La Batre

well-organized drive-through distribution took place three times a week. Cars lined up in the large church parking lot and down the highway as passengers waited for personalized supply boxes to be brought to each vehicle. This site also assisted 60 homeowners and 8 community churches with repairs and cleanup. Over 600 volunteers manned this site for four months, bringing relief and hope to the bayou.

Due to the failed levees and the fact that much of New Orleans is below sea level, flooding devastated over 80% of the city. Nearly 644,000 homes



Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church



Volunteers gather to pray

were flooded with storm water in the greater New Orleans area. The problem was quickly compounded when the stagnant water and high heat of September accelerated the growth of mold. If people didn't lose their homes to the storm itself, they ended up losing everything inside as the mold ruined all their belongings. In response to this community's huge need, a third disaster relief site opened at Family of Faith Community Church in Kenner, Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans. While 165 uninsured homes have already been refurbished, 600 more individuals have requested help. The church accommodates up to 25 volunteers weekly, putting them to work gutting homes, installing sheetrock and insulation, and restoring roofs. Priority is given to the homes of the elderly and handicapped. The work-site in New Orleans, which costs about \$16,000 to operate each month, is scheduled to continue through December 2006.

As horrible as disaster is, God used Hurricane Katrina as an opportunity for the Christian community to respond in His name. As His name is lifted up, there are signs of revival and a new awareness of God's presence in the Gulf Region. Teams of volunteers have departed the region with much more than they expected. They have left with a sense that God is doing something new: He is sending signs of His presence! Volunteers are not only giving of themselves—they are experiencing the presence of God. They are testifying to a renewal of God in their lives. They are returning to their churches and sharing a newness of God. The result of connecting gospel with deed is the miracle of changed lives. After helping in the Gulf Region, volunteers often return to serve again. The presence of God is still drawing volunteers to the region not only to help the hurting but to experience His presence in a new and fresh way.



Flooding in New Orleans

Looking Ahead Hurricane Katrina, the largest disaster to hit the US since the Great Depression, prompted WHI to rethink disaster preparedness and to produce a disaster relief training manual. Designed to train volunteers in emergency relief, recovery, and restoration, *Preparing for the Next Disaster* draws on the experience and expertise of disaster relief volunteers and trainers and addresses both mental and physical aspects of preparedness. In February 2006, WHI hosted a three-day training seminar for over 25 volunteers, certifying them in Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support and equipping them to recruit and train volunteers who will be both willing and able to respond to the next disaster. Disaster Relief Kits, which include personal hygiene items for adults and children, are being assembled and shipped to the WHI warehouse so they will be ready for distribution the next time a disaster hits.

To get involved with the relief efforts of WHI, visit www.worldhope.org.



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