

Ministry Center continued from page 5

Bishop Bainbridge, chair of ERD's board, commended the diocese for its dedication to Katrina survivors and talked about the signs of a new day. "What is before us is a new day of hope. We are committed to standing with our brothers and sisters as you work out what the future will be," he said.

Members of ERD's board decided to meet in New Orleans to have the opportunity to witness first-hand the impact of the work of the diocese and ERD's recovery programs on survivors and devastated communities.

"When I look at the church in New Orleans, I see the church at its best. I believe our witness to the gospel is directly connected to our willingness to embrace suffering," said Bishop Robert J. O'Neill of Colorado, newly elected member of ERD's board. "ERD's partnership with communities invites us to do just that."

Sandra Reed, co-director of the Central City Renaissance Alliance spoke passionately about the work of the Episcopal Church, while offering a challenge to the audience.

"I appreciate the church for coming into an urban neighborhood and working with us -I'm proud to say that you are my neighbor," said Reed. "But, there is a lot more to be done."

"I need you to partner with my community as we reinvest in the educational system, housing and crime prevention," she said. "I hope those of you who have relationships and resources have come to say 'yes' to New Orleans, but I want you to think very carefully about your next step."

As the brass band closed the ceremony, guests enjoyed New Orleans' authentic music and local cuisine.

Providing Critical Services For People

Eighteen months after the storm, evacuees are slowly returning. Unfortunately, they are met with inadequate transitional housing and many families still live in the temporary shelters provided by FEMA.

As the city continues to rebuild its infrastructure, people grapple with other challenges in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The storm exposed a divided New Orleans, a city suffering from years of inferior education, economic exclusion and racism for most of its African American residents.

City officials are struggling to find the best way to address the needs of returning evacuees. According to Archdeacon Dennis McManis, operations director for the diocesan Office for Disaster Response, in the last census taken before Hurricane Katrina there were approximately 487,000 people living in New Orleans. Recent figures suggest that there are close to 200,000 residents now, he said.

"Many people are having a hard time coming back to the city because they've lost their jobs, they don't have a place to stay and they don't have childcare options," he said. McManis' office and ERD are serving the needs of survivors in and around New Orleans with a particular emphasis on the poor, elderly, marginalized and uninsured.

Through long-term recovery programs, they are focusing on livelihood and housing renewal, psychosocial counseling, health care and distribution of critical goods. Committing over \$10 million to date, ERD has served over 194,000 individuals and families in the past 18 months and has joined with the diocesan office to donate additional funding for volunteer support of residents who are in the process of rebuilding their homes. Tens of thousands of homes are still in need of major construction, McManis said.

"Over 3,330 people have volunteered with ODR, helping survivors gut out their homes and salvage belongings. So far, they have gutted out over 700 homes," he said. "Since it costs \$6,000 to work on each house, we've donated roughly \$4.2 million to help people gut out their homes."

Among the various programs supported by ERD are the St. Paul's and St. Luke's Welcome Home Centers for returning residents, Trinity Counseling and Training Center for psychosocial support, three separate Mobile Ministry Units, and the Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative, the first affordable housing program in New Orleans to receive 50 adjudicated properties under the City of New Orleans Targeted Neighborhood Development Project.

"There are many challenges to why Katrina survivors cannot return to New Orleans," said McManis. "Many people don't have the resources, there is no transitional living accommodation, commerce fully hasn't returned and our infrastructure is still being rebuilt."

Through the Jericho Road program, the organizations are helping to provide affordable housing while giving people the opportunity to own their own homes. The Jericho Road program has received title for the first four properties and plans to construct 500 affordable houses, and enroll families in homeowner education programs to help them qualify for homes with low-interest loans over the next five to seven years.

"Eighty percent of our health care specialists left the city in the wake of Katrina," said McManis. "We believe that it is not only vital to our mission, but to our programs that we cater to the needs of the uninsured and others who have not been able to seek treatment because of changes in the medical and mental healthcare systems."

The organizations also have mobile units that are driven to various parts of the city to distribute meals and canned goods, donate cleaning supplies and clothes. The partnership with St. George's and the Mobile Loaves and Fishes unit is delivering food to more than 2,500 families each month in low-income neighborhoods.

"Through a mobile respite unit, people in the Lower Ninth Ward are receiving critical assistance and pastoral care. Additionally, a mobile medical unit provides on-site medical treatment to residents working on damaged homes," said Richard Ohlsen, ERD's director of Domestic Disaster Preparedness and Response.

"We are being transformed by our ministry# God is changing us," exclaimed Bishop Jenkins. "I am proud to be working with everyday heroes and people doing tremendous things."

The Office of Disaster Response is seeking volunteers to help with house gutting and other rebuilding efforts. To volunteer, please send an email to sfoto@edola.org or call (504) 895-4304 or visit the ERD website or the Diocese of Louisiana website www.edola.org.



Naples, Florida Volunteers working on houses.

Photo by Ben Jenkins

Volunteers Continue To Impact Our Efforts Our Efforts Continue To Impact Volunteers

by Susan Foto, Volunteer Coordinator
Office of Disaster Response

The Office of Disaster Response (ODR) continues to organize the trips of amazing volunteers with a lot of heart from all across the United States. Since October 2005, the ODR has facilitated over 490 groups of all backgrounds, races and religions have given their time and talent to the people of New Orleans. This is a recent letter from a volunteer about his experience:

"I know it has been about a week and a half since we were there, but I wanted to share a few thoughts with you. I would like to extend another warm felt thanks to you and the people of Lakeview. I honestly could not have spent my Spring Break doing anything better. I didn't know what to expect when I signed up. Dr. Ender said prepare for the worst. I was looking for an experience that would give me a better understanding of people from an area different from my own (I hail from the small town of Humbolt, AZ) and to see some of the effects of a natural disaster. I have been fortunate enough to have never been in one myself.

I don't mean to sound negative, but I have always considered myself a pessimist. I look for the worst in everything in order to prepare myself for it. I think realistically, not idealistically. If I expect for the worst to happen, and it does, then there is no surprise. If it turns out better than I expected, then I can be happy for it. When I look at the world, I see all bad things. I compare American society now with America of the past and I am disappointed. I see a loss of discipline, respect, and morals. It makes me angry. It makes me sad. So what does this have to do with anything? Well, to counteract my pessimism, I am in a continuous search for the good things that I believe to be out there. Some of the things I look for are acts of kindness and for what I consider to be genuinely good people, as evidenced by their actions and attitudes. This is where I find my hope in humanity. Sounds a little dramatic, but it's true.

The people I encountered on this trip, amazing. Never have I been introduced to an entire community that cares so much for one another, and even for complete strangers. Never have I met people who have been through a disaster, lost everything, yet come back and fight for what they want. They don't just want their old lives back; they want better lives for themselves and everyone and everyone. They are exhausted, yet each day they wake up and jump back into the fight. I am talking about incredible people. I am talking about everyday heroes in real life. These are the type of people I am in search for. These are the people that I admire and respect. These are the people that reside in the community of Lakeview.

So, what I mean to say is thank you. You helped me more than I helped you, at least in my eyes (could be a little biased). I love to help people. It makes it all the more rewarding when people are appreciative. I am grateful for what you did for me and all of us. The experience will not be forgotten. Please keep in touch."

SUMMER MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Our office receives countless diverse letters about what a gratifying experience it was to come to Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. They take home with them more than they felt they gave. With each letter comes a different reflection, but in the end it's always the same. The volunteers leave feeling blessed and filled with love in their hearts. One can feel in their words and stories that they truly believe this.

With summer fast approaching, numerous youth groups will be making the trip into New Orleans to donate their time. While some come by their own choice, many come after persistent and strong encouragement from their parents. It is this youth that experiences amazing changes in their lives. I take such pleasure in reading the youth group's essays once they have finished their volunteer time. It is obvious to everyone what a profound change it can make in someone's life. It can open up the possibility of a new career opportunity or their experience can be seen as a new challenge. The spirit that young volunteers bring to a project is truly energizing.

Family Mission Trips can make an unforgettable difference in the lives involved. They can be a "vacation with significance" and an excellent setting for family's to serve, grow and play. Parents should be reminded everyday that children learn by example.

As the Volunteer Coordinator I look forward to coming to work everyday and working with all the wonderful people I come in contact with. They inspire me with their enthusiasm and dedication for helping others. I will never tire of hearing their stories before their trip or after they return home. God has truly blessed me with a job in which coworkers are supportive and that I care a great deal about.

If you are interested, contact Susan Foto, Volunteer Coordinator for ODR at sfoto@edola.org.



Jericho Road

Episcopal Housing Initiative



by Jerry Hames

Episcopal News Service] At the end of another week of frustration and hostility directed at city and state governments for their inability to resolve the housing crisis since Hurricane Katrina laid waste to much of New Orleans, an Episcopal initiative to build new, affordable housing in the Central City neighborhood was celebrated with the opening of its first homes.

A street party on February 24 with a brass band, food and outdoor festivities, including speeches from black evangelical pastors and civic leaders, marked the occasion.

Neighborhood residents toured one of the three new "Jericho Road" houses after a ribbon cutting ceremony by Louisiana Bishop Charles Jenkins. The three-bedroom,



two-bath modular houses, with large front porches, are 18 feet wide and 70 feet long. The \$115,000 price includes carpeting, central air conditioning and appliances, including washer and dryer.

The Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative, incorporated less than a year ago, is a cooperative effort of the Diocese of Louisiana and Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) to build new housing in an area slow to return to normal after Hurricane Katrina flooded large sections of the city 18 months ago.

Just 48 hours before the Jericho Road celebration, U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), chair of the congressional subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, convened a hearing at the city's Dillard University to hear testimony from Louisiana's governor, the city's mayor, representatives of churches and public housing advocates. The congressional panel heard repeatedly that many residents are still stuck in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) housing trailers, sharing homes and apartments, or commuting from out-of-town accommodations while they wait for the state's "The Road Home" recovery program to hit full stride.

Mayor Ray Nagin charged that the Road Home program, in which the state is authorized to distribute federal grants to those who lost their homes in the disaster, is not working. "It is overwhelmed, understaffed and technically flawed," he said, seeking control of the program by the city.

Of 108,751 applications received by the Road Home contractor, only 782 have received final payments, the panel was told.

In stark contrast, the Episcopal diocese, although it too is hampered by government red tape, according to Jenkins, is moving forward with great strides by working ecumenically in housing initiatives and at the same time partnering with Central City black pastors to try to put an end to street violence that last week alone claimed four lives.

Rebuilding neighborhoods

In its first phase, Jericho Road expects to develop 55 properties clustered near churches and businesses. While it still waits for the city to award it property upon which to build, the diocese purchased three lots for the first houses.

At the February 23 opening, Brad Powers, executive director of Jericho Road, announced that the housing initiative will be the first to receive available lots under the city's adjudicated land program. "The next step in the next 12 to 18 months is to build 50 more houses," he said. Cheering greeted his announcement.

Donations to ERD have provided the initial funding totaling \$2.3 million, which is being used for administrative management, property acquisition and construction. The funding from ERD, combined with planned financing from various community development corporations will result in an investment in the Central City neighborhood of more than \$20 million, Powers said.

"This initiative is about community," Jenkins said to those who gathered for the celebration. "It could be an act of those who have means, but that is not what Jericho Road is about. We don't want it to be seen as a sense of power over those who have no power. We want this to be a community offering. We are not simply building homes for people, but transforming lives and changing neighborhoods."

He said the name "Jericho Road" was taken from the sermon, "Beyond Vietnam," given by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at New York's Riverside Church in 1967. "True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar," King said. "It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

"Hurricane Katrina laid bare years of racism, economic exclusion and inferior education," Jenkins said. "All were exposed by that flood."

To assure it was a true community partnership, the bishop, who is the corporate head of Jericho Road, named to the board of directors some of the area's black evangelical pastors. "We're putting up the money; they are putting up the soul," he said.

Obstacles to goal

In an interview in his office February 22, Jenkins said the biggest obstacle has encountered have been "the state of Louisiana and the city of New Orleans." He said the fact that neither government was prepared to advance "soft second mortgages" to low-income families meant that the affordable housing that Jericho Road builds will be available to only 20 percent of low income people.

"We want them to be available to 60 percent of people," he said.

Two days later, at the house opening, Jenkins said he learned that the city move to advance soft second mortgages to low income families.

More people in New Orleans are reduced to renting homes or apartments than many other American cities. In pre-Katrina New Orleans, about 54 percent of city's residents were paying rent instead of a mortgage, the congressional panel was told, so the issue of public housing and low income rentals is paramount. The city, which had 5,100 families living in public housing before Katrina, now has roughly 1,200.

The decision by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development in June to close the city's four largest public housing developments and demolish them in order to develop mixed market-rate rentals and subsidized housing incenses Jenkins.

"The federal government has closed housing when we have hundreds of thousands of people who want to come home," he said. "There is no place for them to go. One told me I couldn't go back to my house."

Many agree with the bishop's assessment of the situation.

"This is, by far, the toughest environment I've ever had to work in," said Stephen C. Richards, a former FEMA official and now chief executive officer of American Renaissance Homes, builder of the modular houses that the diocese has purchased for its Jericho Road initiative.

"You're dealing with people's emotions, all of the fear, anxiety, discouragement and emotional trauma that people are going through. I hope what you see here," he said, standing in the front room of the new Jericho Road home, "is just the beginning of a recovery."



DISASTER RECOVERY EFFORTS

DRAGON CAFE' NEW ORLEANS

The Dragon Cafe at St. George's in New Orleans has been a very effective ministry since we opened our doors in December of 2005. Every Thursday and Friday we offer free meals from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Through the grace of God, we have had the help of volunteers from within the parish, from throughout the Diocese, and from churches around the country. We have also been blessed with financial donations from individuals, churches, and especially the Diocese of Louisiana and Episcopal Relief and Development.

In the early months, we served meals and provided music and a lively hospitality ministry to members of our own congregation, neighborhood residents, individuals and families trying to return to their homes, short term recovery workers, people who received our flyers at the Mobile van in the 9th Ward, etc. In recent months this has changed somewhat, and we are serving primarily a large and very needy homeless population. Some of these individuals have a variety of social, spiritual, mental health and physical needs. Some may have been homeless prior to Katrina; we suspect that many were not but have simply fallen through the cracks in the last year. I don't need to tell you about the toll the storm's aftermath continues to take on all of us; some people are simply overwhelmed.

From the beginning of the cafe, a group of truly dedicated volunteers and one or two paid staff people have formed the backbone of this ministry. In recent months, however, many of our stalwarts have had to leave the area, or have returned to jobs which do not give them as much time to volunteer.

We are continuing to do a great job of providing nourishing meals to all who walk through our doors on Thursdays and Fridays, but we are increasingly aware of a couple of new and urgent needs. Accordingly, we will be hiring security guards to be present during our operating hours. Another component, however, is one that we sincerely hope YOU will be able to assist us with.

We want to have an active and inviting ministry of hospitality, a ministry to welcome the marginalized, refer them to agencies which may be able to help them, and perhaps most importantly to provide listening, prayer, and other pastoral care to our visitors. It is our hope that the deacons, deacon candidates, and perhaps some of our priests can find the time to come to the cafe and help us in this aspect of our ministry. Deacon Quin Bates has already volunteered, and I am in the process of setting up a roster for those who can come once or twice a month. If you feel moved to get involved in this wonderful ministry, please email me or call me at (504) 301-6935.



Serving and receiving food at the Dragon Cafe



Musicians playing for evening diners.

Photos by Ben Jenkins

BISHOP JENKINS BLESSES EPISCOPAL URBAN MINISTRY CENTER FEBRUARY 26

Many of you will recognize the Episcopal Urban Ministry Center (EUMC) as the house that sits next to the Noland Center on 7th Street in New Orleans. The former breakfast was purchased by the diocese, in partnership with Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD), after Katrina and will be the seat of the diocese's recovery efforts in New Orleans.

Bishop Jenkins will be joined by Dr. Robert Radtke, President of ERD, the ERD board, City pastors, clergy and other members of the church community for the ceremony on February 26.

"Our Board of Directors will be in New Orleans to witness the implementation of long-term rebuilding programs on individuals and devastated communities after Hurricane Katrina," Radtke said.

"These recovery efforts demonstrate the incredible resilience and courage of the people of Louisiana. In partnership with the diocese, the generosity of Episcopalians has allowed Episcopal Relief and Development to commit more than \$10 million to restore lives through psychosocial counseling, healthcare, livelihood renewal and housing," Radtke continued.

The EUMC will host volunteers in town for house gutting and rebuilding, case management, the Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative and other personnel within the diocese's Office of Disaster Response.



The Diocese of Louisiana is, by grace, a vital community, reborn in the wake of tragedy, forging a new and prophetic environment of healing, trust and empowerment as servants of Jesus Christ.

PROGRAMS AT ADVENT HOUSE

Linda Nelson
Executive Director Advent House

A couple of new groups starting at Advent House this month. The Book Club will gather from 1 to noon on Wednesdays starting Wednesday, February 28. We will read and discuss the book *Natural Spirituality* by Joyce Rockwood Hudson.

This book is meant to help individuals articulate and claim for themselves the spirit of God that comes to them every day and night through the meaningful events of their waking lives and through their dreams. Something new for those who want to participate in a lively faith based discussion without study preparation... a new discussion group will meet Monday evenings beginning Monday, February 26 from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. Topics will include but not be limited to: Ideals, Sacraments, Evangelism, Practical Relationships, Christian Community, Community Action and Choices.

Both groups listed above are open to all and will meet at Advent House, 707 Poydras Street (on the corner of 7th and Carondelet Streets behind the Cathedral).

Questions, comments or concerns? Call Linda Nelson at 504-895-0553 or email Linda.Nelson@aristotle.net.

MINISTRY BY THE NUMBERS

Denis McManis
Arch Deacon

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana's Office of Disaster Response is committed to serve our community by living into the commission given to us by our Lord and Savior, "to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, care for the sick, welcome the stranger..." We do so through our various ministries of distributing basic provision, feeding, pastoral listening, gutting homes and individual family Case Management. We are committed to our mission and are constantly trying to build our capacity to meet the unmet needs of any person or family that comes to us regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status. To date we have served:

	10/05 - 12/06	01/07	Total to Date
Number of persons/families	184,709	9,462	194,171
Through distribution of goods (Cathedral, Annunciation, Holy Comforter)	84,310	3,432	87,742
Mobile Respite Unit (Dist. Goods and pastoral listening)	58,557	2,580	61,137
Feeding-(St. Georges and Mobile Loaves and Fishes)	35,837	2,480	38,317
House Gutting (510 x \$6,000=\$3.06M value)	565	35	600
Case Management-LaPlace	484	25	509
Case Management-New Orleans		49	49
Mobile Medical Unit	4,086	323	4,409
Suicide Intervention/Counseling North Shore	588	64	652
St. Luke's Welcome Home Center	247	429	676
St. Paul's Welcome Home Center	35	45	90
Number of Volunteers Housed and Coordinated	2,990	340	3,330



OFFICE OF DISASTER RESPONSE

Ministry by the Numbers April 2007

Archdeacon Dennis McManis

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana's Office of Disaster Response is committed to serve our community by living into the commission given to us by our Lord and Savior, "to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, care for the sick, welcome the stranger..." We do so through our various ministries of distributing basic provision, feeding, pastoral listening, gutting homes and individual family Case Management. We are committed to our mission and are constantly trying to build our capacity to meet the unmet needs of any person or family that comes to us regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status. To date we have served:

	<u>Total to Date</u>
Number of persons/families	219,051
Through distribution of goods (Cathedral, Annunciation, Holy Comforter)	94,601
Mobile Respite Unit (Dist. Goods and pastoral listening)	69,007
Feeding (St. Georges and Mobile Loaves & Fishes)	44,184
House Gutting (770 X \$6000 = \$4.62 M value)	770
House Refurbishing	735
Case Management - LaPlace	569
Case Management - New Orleans	147
Mobile Medical Unit	5,047
Suicide Intervention/Counseling (No. Shore)	763
St. Luke's Welcome Home Center	1,156
St. Paul's Welcome Home Center	2,711
Number of Volunteers Housed and Coordinated	3,770

EPISCOPAL URBAN MINISTRY CENTER FEBRUARY GRAND OPENING

by Malaika Kamunanwire

[Episcopal News Service] The bishop of Louisiana diocese joined hands with the president of Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) to open another new initiative in New Orleans on February 26 with the dedication of the Episcopal Urban Ministry Center adjacent to the diocesan offices. The ministry center will be the new headquarters of the comprehensive humanitarian services for post-Katrina rebuilding programs.

"The opening and dedication of this ministry center represents our partnership with ERD and our commitment to the recovery and rebuilding of New Orleans," said Bishop Charles E. Jenkins.

Located in the Center City neighborhood, the ministry center will help to meet the needs of people now living in New Orleans and those who are returning. It will house a community room, case management services, housing for volunteer workers and offices for the Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative.

A brass band, composed of high school students, opened the dedication ceremony at the center's headquarters on Seventh Street between Carondelet Street and St. Charles Avenue. Participants and guests included of community leaders, clergy and diocesan staff and ERD's Board of Directors.

A testimony to commitment

After an introduction by Bishop Jenkins, speakers included Pastor John E. Pierre of Living Witness Church in Central City; Sandra Reed, co-director of the Central City Renaissance Alliance, Bishop Harry Bainbridge, chair of ERD's Board of Directors; and Robert W. Radtke, ERD president. Radtke acknowledged the resilience of New Orleanians for "showing us the power of faith - how it transforms people to overcome enormous obstacles.

"The Episcopal Urban Ministry Center is a wonderful testimony to the commitment of the Episcopal Church in Louisiana and the people of this city," he said. "This center will be a sanctuary to help people heal and access critical services such as pastoral care, counseling, housing and many others so they can rebuild their lives.

"These recovery efforts demonstrate the incredible resilience and courage of the Diocese of Louisiana. In partnership with the diocese, the generosity of Episcopalians has enabled Episcopal Relief and Development to commit over \$10 million to impact 200,000 people through psychosocial counseling, health care, livelihood renewal and housing," Radtke said.

Continued page 7

Ann Ball Awarded Top Honor By Episcopal Communicators

By Pat McCaughan April 26, 2007

Recently retired and beloved Churchwork editor (and current case manager for the Office of Disaster Response) Ann Ball was awarded the top honor at the annual Episcopal Communicators conference held April 25-28 in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



"This is the highest and most prestigious award we give," said Episcopal Communicators president Laurie Wozniak during presentations of the Janette Pierce Award at the opening dinner of the group's annual meeting. Jerry Hames, retiring editor of Episcopal Life, was also an award recipient.

"I became a case manager in November 2006 and put out the last issue of the paper at the same time," said Ball. Just prior to receiving the award, she delivered a moving presentation and invitation to the gathering to come and see in person the continuing efforts to rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

"I'm overwhelmed by the award and to be included with the likes of Janette Pierce and Jerry Hames, who are overwhelmingly tremendous journalists," Ball said after the ceremony. "I learned all the journalism I know from folks like them and then went and got a journalism degree in 1996. She's a "diehard supporter of the Episcopal Communicators. They are such good mentors and always supportive. Many of them, like me, served as lone rangers in our jobs for the most part. Usually we do it all, in one-person offices. It's lonely work and often others don't understand. Then, one time a year we get together with this group and everyone understands. You get support, make friends. It's a tremendously supportive group."

Established in 1988, the award was first presented, at the discretion of the board, Wozniak said. It commemorates the work and ministry of Janette Gayley Skerrett Pierce, "a person who strove for excellence in communications and was a dedicated professional who epitomized what Episcopal Communicators was all about," Wozniak said.

Pierce was managing editor of The Episcopalian when she died of cancer in 1988. She was a past president of Episcopal Communicators who had frequently addressed the House of Bishops and the Executive Council about church communication. Respected by bishops and church leaders as well as fellow communicators, she was universally beloved by the organizations' membership.

Previous recipients of the Janette Pierce Award are: Barbara Braver (2005), Sarah Moore (2003), Harry Crandall (1998), Dan Crossland (1997), Ruth Nicastro (1993); William &

Episcopal Urban Ministry Center Grand Opening



Photo by Ben Jenkins

Annunciation goes **KaBOOM!**

On December 8, two vacant lots belonging to the Church of Annunciation, New Orleans, will be transformed into a brightly colored, state-of-the-art community playground.

This playground is especially important to the children living in the Broadmoor neighborhood of New Orleans where Annunciation is located.

“Broadmoor is a microcosm of New Orleans,” the Rev’d Jerry Kramer, rector of Annunciation, said. “It ranks high on the violent crimes list, and many of the kids don’t live with both of their parents.”

The playground is an effort by the organization “KaBOOM!” According to their website, KaBOOM! is a national nonprofit organization that “envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America.” KaBOOM! brings together businesses and communities and assists them in finding grants and resources for the playground. All KaBOOM! playgrounds are “designed by the children who use them, planned by local residents and built entirely by volunteers.”

Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, KaBOOM! committed to building 200 playgrounds in the Gulf Coast area in two years. Annunciation is their next work site.

“Play is such a huge stress reliever for kids,” Rusty Berridge, director of development at Annunciation, said. “Post traumatic stress disorder affects 50 percent of kids in the city of New Orleans after Katrina, so the children really need this.”

The playground will be appropriate for children ages 2-12. The other designs available were compatible for children ages 5-12 or 2-5.

“We chose to make our playground so that it has universal appeal,” Berridge said.

The playground will be fenced only on the side that faces the street. The idea is for the playground to be available to the entire community, not just for parishioners of Annunciation.

“We want this to be a place for everyone,” Berridge said. “We want to have some green space with picnic tables so people can watch their children and visit. We also want a bulletin board so people can learn more about their community, available jobs and the church.”

The playground will end up costing approximately \$65,000, not even counting the value of the two lots that Annunciation owns and has allocated for the playground. Much of the cost will be defrayed by Annunciation’s sponsor, the National Basketball Association, who will purchase the equipment. Starbucks and St. Columbia also contributed financially.

Over 300 volunteers will be needed on Dec. 8 to help construct the playground. There will be jobs for people of all skill levels, and Annunciation can accommodate up to 100 people on their campus.

“This is a huge moment for our neighborhood and parish recovery,” Kramer said. “Folks are beyond excited about this. It is definitely time for some good news, and God delivered in a big way.”



[photo by Cam Davis]

A view of the two vacant lots that will be transformed by KaBOOM! and volunteers on December 8. The lot is on the corner of Jena and South Derbigny Streets.

TWO YEARS LATER...

ODR Reflects on Good Work and Unfinished Business

Submitted by Archdeacon Dennis McManis

Immediately following Hurricane Katrina, Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) helped the diocese establish the Office of Disaster Response (ODR) with disaster expertise and funding. As the residents of New Orleans began returning to the city in October 2005, ODR was operational with six employees, two rented vans and a handful of volunteers. In those first days, Christ Church Cathedral opened its doors as a resource center, serving 1,200 people a day by handing out provisions as available. ODR's first mission was to locate and deliver goods ranging from water, to hygiene items and snacks on a daily basis. From those initial efforts, the city's needs have grown and evolved as has ODR's response.

Distribution of Goods: In addition to the Cathedral's efforts in October and November 2005, the Church of the Annunciation and Chapel of the Holy Comforter became distribution centers. Between October 2005 and May 2007, 95,081 people were served. ODR obtained and delivered goods to these centers from various outlets throughout the area at no cost. However,

by early 2007, these sources closed, requiring the ODR to rent warehouse space and purchase goods to supply these centers.

Mobile Respite Unit: Immediately following the storm, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge, purchased a motor home and dispatched it to the Lakeview area. The ODR acquired this unit, and in early 2006 and redeployed it to the Lower Ninth Ward. While this ministry gives out water and basic provisions, its real ministry is one of pastoral listening and being a presence for those trying to return and recover. As of June 30, this ministry has served 77,457 people and continues to help 3,500 people each month. This program has been a transforming ministry for those we serve, and for the thousands of volunteers who have blessed us with their time and talent.

Feeding Programs: Trinity New Orleans Mobile Loaves and Fishes and St. George's Dragon Café have been feeding people since January 2006. The mobile unit continues to go into several neighborhoods six days a week and averages 1,800 people served each month. St. George's opened their operation to feed returning families in the uptown area and has evolved into a program for the homeless on Thursday and Friday evenings.

House Gutting & Rebuilding: This has been a phenomenal program that focuses on the most vulnerable in our community. They engage with the homeowner and in a most pastoral way help them begin the process of healing by helping them retrieve personal items and gut their homes. To date 875 homes have been gutted. The value of this service averages \$6,000 per home and we have been blessed by wonderful volunteers and college interns that enable us to provide this service at no cost. At this

point, the program has evolved into a house refurbishing program where we help the homeowner hire plumbers and electricians and purchase sheetrock, flooring, cabinets and trim; all to be installed and finished by volunteers. While each house is unique, the average value of material and labor is \$12,000. We have finished seven homes and have seven other homes in the process.

- **Case Management:** Through a United Methodist Church/ERD grant we have established a case management program to help individual families design and actualize their personal recovery plan. This staff consists of fifteen case managers and data entry personnel and is located in five locations in Orleans Parish. To date they have helped 569 families and have a waiting list of over 600 people. The ODR also funds GRACE Community Services Case Management in LaPlace which has helped over 500 families.
- **Homecoming Centers:** Centers have been established at St. Luke's and St. Paul's in New Orleans. The St. Luke's program focuses on

"THE CITY'S NEEDS HAVE GROWN AND EVOLVED, AS HAS ODR'S RESPONSE."

DEACON DENNIS MCMANIS

helping John McDonogh High School students with after-school programs and hosts two summer camps for children. The focus of St. Paul's is recovery in Lakeview, where it serves as a community center for residents and organizations to receive help. In their first six months, they have served 10,656 people and partnered with Beacon of Hope to beautify their communities.

- **Medical and Mental Healthcare:** ODR funds a Pediatrician and helped raised funds for a pediatric nurse at St. Thomas Community Health Clinic as well as the completion of state-of-the-art mammogram and cardiac care suites. Previously, the poor and uninsured could only get medical attention in Houma or Baton Rouge. The ODR funded a consultant to develop mental healthcare and outreach programs at Trinity Counseling and Training Center.
- **Congregational Ministry Initiatives:** The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana has funded: St. Anna's Mobile Medical Unit which serves the healthcare needs of people throughout the city; Chapel of the Holy Spirit's Legal Aid Program with Loyola's Law School; St. Andrew's, New Orleans Childcare Program; Christ Church Covington Suicide Intervention/Counseling Program; St. George's Dragon Café; and Trinity, New Orleans Social Renewal Ministry Program.

Today, the ODR has twenty-nine staff employees and had thirty-nine college interns helping our efforts this summer. We continue to serve over 12,000 people each month and house 100 volunteers each week. As more residents return to the city, the needs continue to grow. Please keep these programs in your prayers and support them with your Good Christian Stewardship.

St. Andrew's Early Learning Center Opens, Provides Affordable Childcare in New Orleans

Submitted by Kathy Smith

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, New Orleans, has opened an Early Learning Center in response to the growing need for child care in the city post-Katrina.

Childcare has been identified as the second highest priority for the recovery and re-population of New Orleans, ranking only after affordable housing. Prior to Katrina there were 287 childcare centers in New Orleans, but only 30 were operating at the time that St. Andrew's decided to establish one. With the city's population at 62 percent of its pre-storm size, the need for child care is on the rise.

"Parents have a particularly desperate need for quality child care for the youngest children, infants to three years," Kathy Smith, Director of St. Andrew's ELC, said.

The rector and vestry of St. Andrew's, as well as St. Andrew's Episcopal School, collaborated to get the center opened. Contributions and prayers from Episcopal schools and churches from around the United States made the center a reality, as well as a congregational ministry initiative grant from the Diocese of Louisiana.

The center is located on St. Andrew's campus and offers care to children of families of all income levels, races, religions, genders and ethnic origins. Currently, 25 percent of families must qualify for financial assistance, but the center hopes to increase this number to 50 percent in the future.

St. Andrew's Early Learning Center is committed to providing a quality developmental program for children ages 18 months to 4-years-old, a population that is generally underserved. The curriculum addresses physical, social, emotional and cognitive needs of the children.

The Venerable Dennis McManis, Director of Operations for the Office of Disaster Response, believes that St. Andrew's learning center fits a unique niche in the city's recovery.

"Childcare programs being offered in the city are too often focused on low cost rather than high standards of quality for the education and care of the child," he said. "St. Andrew's is committed to both affordability through financial help for the family and the quality of care that the Episcopal Church desires in our programs."

The Early Learning Center is open year-round from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information about the program or to enroll a child, please contact Kathy Smith, Director, at saeyoungest@gmail.com or 504.865.1347.



Photo provided by Kathy Smith

Children enjoy playing in the new Early Learning Center at St. Andrew's, New Orleans.

Acolyte Commissioning at St. Francis

Submitted by Buddy Hancock

On June 24th a new class of acolytes was commissioned to service of St. Francis in Denham Springs. The class included some veteran acolytes along with some who are new to the ministry. St. Francis assumes an inclusive approach that allows all children who are old enough to understand the ministry, and who express an interest in participating, to serve.

The commissioning occurred during the 10:30 AM service. Under the direction of The Rev'd Mary Ann Heine and Acolyte Master Sam Hyde, the acolytes completed a training course designed to ensure their familiarity with each aspect of the service and the various roles they play. Special attention was given to the need for adaptability and accommodation in dealing with new priests and visiting members of the clergy. The training session concluded with prayer and a pizza party.

During the commissioning, each acolyte was assigned a new fitted robe and cross as a symbol of the responsibility and commitment they willingly embrace to the service of Christ's church.



Photo provided by Dianne Gill

Left to Right
Front row: Alice Thornton, Paul Fontana; Second row: The Rev'd Mary Ann Heine, Jamie Davis, Victoria Mounoir, Andrew Hyde; Third row: Clay Hyde, Jacob Picou, Jade Edens, Sam Hyde (Acolyte Master)

Chapel of the Holy Spirit Initiates Episcopal/Loyola Partnership

Submitted by Francis King

The Katrina Legal Outreach Project of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit began in January 2007 with a grant from the Congregational Ministries Initiative. This project represents a partnership between the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, Loyola University Law School and Loyola University Ministry. The project was initiated by Chapel of the Holy Spirit, New Orleans, the Episcopal campus ministry of Tulane and Loyola Universities. The project is supervised by an advisory committee which includes the Rev'd Francis King (chaplain), John Kitchen (attorney), Arlene Wiltz (Loyola Law School chaplain) and Bill Quigley, (Loyola law professor and clinic director.)

The mission of this program is to provide information, communicate on behalf of and give legal assistance to individuals on hurricane-related issues. Clients come to the program primarily through phone calls to the widely-advertised Katrina Clinic hotline. Between January 1 and March 30, the clinic received 324 requests for service through the hotline. The clinic coordinated with the Office of Disaster Response to compliment their outreach efforts. In the first quarter, the clinic took more than 20 direct referrals from Episcopal case workers. The clinic also runs a weekly outreach clinic at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, New Orleans.

The project uses staff attorneys and law students to present outreach clinics, give direct services and to refer cases to other appropriate resources. The program

also employs an attorney-web specialist to expand outreach and legal services through the Internet. A full-time attorney began work with the project in January and joined another staff attorney who also serves as program coordinator. In the first quarter, program staff attorneys supervised more than 70 law students from New Orleans and around the country in providing legal services to Katrina and Rita victims. Law student volunteers came from a variety of law schools including Harvard, Temple and Howard.

The most common issues addressed involve contractor fraud, FEMA issues, homeowner's insurance, landlord-tenant disputes and Road Home related problems. The clinic does not typically provide individuals with legal representation, but law students under the supervision of clinic staff attorneys have provided information and supported communication to resolve issues. Staff attorneys directly represent clients on issues that are representative of systematic problems and also participate in legislative advocacy work.

The activities of the clinic have been coordinated with the help of a web-based case manager system, specially designed for this program by Judson Mitchell, a Loyola Clinic attorney and member of Christ Church Cathedral. This system allows the program coordinator to monitor incoming cases and the services delivered, and, because it is web-based, makes it possible for the clinic to employ volunteers from all over the country.

Vespers in French at Mount Olivet

Submitted by The Rev'd Dr. Jean Meade

Mount Olivet Episcopal Church, Algiers, conducted and sang a Vespers service in French on July 11 to commemorate the French national holiday, Bastille Day.

Members of various French cultural and heritage organizations such as L'Alliance Francaise, the Bastille Day Association, Les Causeries de Lundi, the Council of French Societies, and the French-American Chamber of Commerce were asked to participate as readers and enjoy being part of the congregation.

Mount Olivet's choir, with volunteers from other choirs such as St. Mark's and St. Philip's, sang the canticles and anthem in French. The bulletin was printed in French and English so that everyone who attended might fully participate. Archdeacon Ormonde Plater was the Gospel cantor. All the music for the French text was composed specially for Mount Olivet in 2003 by Albinas Prizgintas, Music Director at Trinity Church, New Orleans.

"Some people didn't even realize that the Book of Common Prayer had been translated into French, but now in our part of Louisiana with such strong French heritage, we are doing our part to make it known and used," the Rev'd Dr. Jean Meade, rector of Mount Olivet Episcopal Church, said.

This tradition began in 2003 as part of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. Since then vespers has been held every year during the week of Bastille Day and again during Advent.



Photo provided by Dr. Jean Meade

The Rev'd Dr. Jean Meade, rector of Mount Olivet, The Ven. Ormonde Plater, retired Archdeacon of the Diocese of Louisiana and Ms. Keith Porteous, contralto are pictured as they are about to go into the service. Keith and Genevieve Fontenot, soprano, were the soloists with the Mount Olivet choir for the Cantique de Marie (Magnificat) and Cantique de Simeon (Nunc Dimittis).

Ministry by the Numbers

July 2007

Provided by Archdeacon Dennis McManis

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana's Office of Disaster Response is committed to serve our community by living into the commission given to us by our Lord and Savior, "to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, welcome the stranger..." We do so through our various ministries of distributing basic provision, feeding, pastoral listening, gutting homes and individual family Case Management. We are committed to our mission and are constantly trying to build our capacity to meet the unmet needs of any person or family that comes to us regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status. To date we have served:

	10/05-05/07	06/07	Total to Date
Number of Persons/families	239,979	12,416	252,395
Through distribution of goods- (Cathedral, Annunciation, Holy Comforter)	95,081	-	95,081
Mobile Respite Unit- (Dist. Goods and pastoral listening)	73,907	3,550	77,457
Feeding- (St. Georges and Mobile Loaves and Fishes)	50,055	3,420	53,475
House Gutting- (839 x \$6000 = \$5.034M value)	839	36	875
House Rebuilding (7 x \$8K mtl purchase = \$56K (7 x \$3K vol labor = \$21K)	7	-	7
Case Management- LaPlace	569	-	569
Case Management- New Orleans	341	152	493
Mobile Medical Unit	5,719	229	5,948
Suicide Intervention/Counseling (No. Shore)	1,231	310	1,541
St. Luke's Homecoming Center	2,151	1,048	3,199
St. Paul's Homecoming Center	6,985	3,671	10,656
Number of volunteers housed and coordinated- (housed at St. Andrew's, Holy Spirit, St. Augustine's, St. Martin's, St. Luke's)	4,303	552	4,855

Site Manager Watches Ministry Evolve

Katie Mears, site manager for the House Gutting and Rebuilding program came to work for the Office of Disaster Response in the first part of 2006, just a few months after Katrina devastated the New Orleans metro area.

When Mears first came onboard,

gutting was the major priority.

"It was all gutting, all the time," she said. "We had no worries about rebuilding at that point."

Under Mears direction, the gutting phase of this ministry tapered off by

Rebuilding, continued on p. 29

Lakeview Residents Enjoy Weekly Summer BBQ's

St. Paul's Homecoming Center and Adventures in Missions hosted a community BBQ every Wednesday night in June and July for the Lakeview Community.

For \$5, local residents could enjoy barbecue ribs, hamburgers, hot dogs, various side items and live music.

Connie Uddo, site manager at St. Paul's Homecoming Center, came up with the idea. "I wanted people at the end of a hard day, to come and sit, have a meal and see their friends again."

The gatherings were a big hit, with around 300 people being served at the events.

"The bar-b-que's were successful because the Lakeview residents are feeling very disconnected. Many are living on blocks by themselves, and long for a sense of community again with friends and neighbors. The bar-b-que's met that need," Uddo said.



(Top): Site coordinator at St. Paul's Homecoming Center, Connie Uddo, helps with cooking.

(Bottom): Cooks and Lakeview residents wave napkins in the air as they second line to the Chris Burk jazz trio.



Bishops Touch New Orleans with Hands-On Volunteer Work

After days of conversations and deliberations at their annual fall meeting held in New Orleans during the week of September 18, members of the House of Bishops were eager to gather in a tangible context of mission, outreach and transformation.

Bishops, their spouses and other guests were invited by the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana to partake in a "Day of Service" on Saturday, September 22.

"We have been the recipient of tremendous generosity from dioceses across the Episcopal Church, so it was a blessing to be able to involve the Bishops and their spouses first hand in the work they

have been supporting. It was a true day of ministry," Bishop Jenkins said.

Bishops were assigned to one of six possible work teams: Gutting & Rebuilding, St. Paul's Homecoming Center, Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative, Mobile Respite Care Unit, St. Anna's Mobile Medical Unit or Trinity's Mobile Loaves & Fishes.

"We welcomed this time of fellowship, to talk together in a less formal setting," said Bishop Chilton Knudsen, Bishop of Maine.

Some bishops opted to go on a Civil Rights Tour throughout New Orleans. Participants on the tour were familiarized

with the history, cultures, political structure, economic distribution and social settings of several historically black neighborhoods in New Orleans.

Each site had opportunities for volunteers of varying skill level and expertise.

Those working with the Gutting & Rebuilding team were divided among several houses in the Gentilly area that needed finishing. These houses had already been gutted, and volunteers helped sheetrock, paint, install flooring and trim along with other miscellaneous construction work.

"I wish we could stay and finish the
Day of Service, continued on p. 11

Day of Service, continued from p. 10
 job. You really get invested in your work," said Lynn Alexander, wife of Atlanta's bishop, J. Neil Alexander.

Jericho Road divided volunteers among two work sites on Sixth Street behind Christ Church Cathedral. Volunteers spent the day installing subflooring and completely recovering an entire house with Tyvex paper. They also prepared a house for electrical work, including drilling all the holes as well as installing all the materials necessary for electricians to do their work. Bishops were able to work alongside volunteers from CrossRoad Missions and Reconcile New Orleans, two community partners of Jericho Road.

Brad Powers, Jericho Road Executive Director, pointed to the work being done by the bishops and said, "You can feel the genuine enthusiasm and compassion of the volunteers. This is what a community should be built from."

Connie Uddo, site coordinator at St. Paul's Homecoming Center, had volunteers work alongside parishioners and school children from St. Paul's Episcopal Church in a community garden.

The garden, previously an empty lot, was turned into a place for vegetables, herbs and flowers to thrive.

Volunteers looking for less physical work and those who wanted to engage in a ministry of presence, helped pack welcome baskets with gifts and then delivered them to people moving back into the Lakeview area.

Those with the Mobile Respite Care Unit spent the day handing out water

Day of Service, continued on p. 12

(p. 10): Bishop Kirk Smith, Diocese of Arizona, helps on one of Jericho Road's construction sites during the "Day of Service." The writing on the framing is from volunteers that have helped build the house. "The idea is that love and prayers are built into the home," Holly Heine, director of operations and communications for Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative, said.

(Top): Darlene Davillier, volunteer coordinator for the Diocese of Louisiana, helps Lynette Williams, Diocese of Ohio, locate which bus to load for her service opportunity.

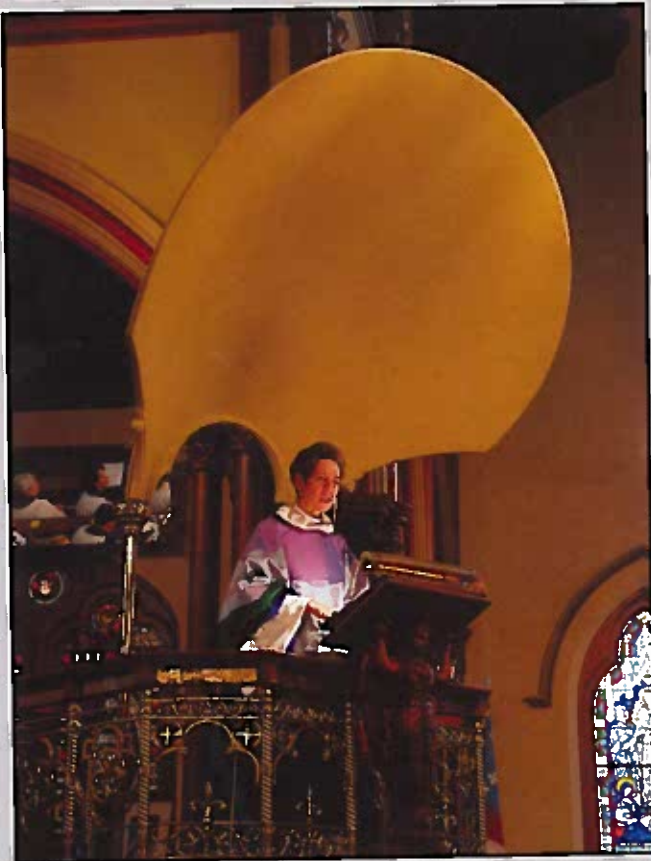
(Bottom): Bishops and spouses prepare peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the Trinity Mobile Loaves & Fishes ministry.



Presiding Bishop Celebrates Eucharist at Christ Church Cathedral

The Most Rev'd Katharine Jefferts Schori, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, celebrated and preached at Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday, September 23.

Several other bishops attended the Eucharist as well. The service included a blessing of the "Elysian Trumpet," a hand-crafted instrument designed by David Monette and dedicated to the memory of Irvin Mayfield, Sr., and all of the victims of hurricane Katrina.



[ELO photo/Matthew Davies]

(Left): Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori told the congregation gathered September 23 at Christ Church Cathedral in New Orleans to become "trumpeters of good news, banishers of disease and division, and proclaimers of the presence of God in our midst."

(Bottom:) The Cathedral hospitality committee prepared a lavish reception after the Eucharist. Pictured are (first row l-r) Lyn Wattle, Pam Lanaux, Meryl Fink, George Egan, Wyatt Blankingship (second row l-r), Frances Beverly, Joan Wood, Sue Blankingship, Marcia Molloy, Barbara Mangum.



[photo by Kenn Elder]

Day of Service, continued from p. 11

and other provisions. Deacon Quin Bates, site coordinator for the unit, encouraged volunteers to listen to the stories of people who came for provisions. Volunteers were also asked to be available to pray with people.

"It's about showing the people that this is the church and that we care. Listening to the people's stories is very helpful to their psyche, it's very therapeutic. Their morale is lifted when someone cares to listen," he said.

Volunteers with the St. Anna's Mobile Medical Unit invited community residents to come out for free hypertension screenings, diabetes testing and basic medical care.

Those with Trinity Mobile Loaves & Fishes prepared sandwiches and assembled bag lunches.

This ministry normally travels into neighborhoods and provides lunches for residents. However, on the Day of Service, volunteers fanned out across New Orleans and distributed lunch to volunteers at the various work sites.

Bishops and spouses reconvened at 1 p.m. for a block party at the Church of All Souls in the Lower Ninth Ward.

The Church of All Souls is a recently formed church installation that will begin meeting in a former Walgreens store. This store, on the corner of St. Claude and Caffin, was blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury during his visit to New Orleans.

To celebrate the blessing and future transformation of this space, the diocese invited bishops, spouses, diocesan staff, church parishioners and community residents to join together for free food and entertainment.



While the band takes a break, a group of young boys enjoys entertaining the crowd.

Murder Ministry Honors Victims, Offenders

About this time a year ago, citizens rallied outside Mayor Ray Nagin's office in protest of the violent killings of Helen Hill, a local filmmaker, and Dinnerral Shavers, a music teacher.

Unfortunately, since then, the murder rate in New Orleans has only continued to climb. In 2007 the city registered 209 homicides and was dubbed the country's "Murder Capitol." Many see crime as a reality in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans, but the Rev'd Bill Terry, rector of St. Anna's Episcopal Church, says that violence has always been a characteristic of urban areas and New Orleans shouldn't be singled out.

The problem is exacerbated by city residents who turn the other cheek and proclaim that the violence is only a result of gangs, drugs or simply "isn't in their neighborhood."

Terry and others hope to change that attitude and transform the statistics into human beings.

St. Anna's tracks the murders on what they call the "Murder Board," a plastic board that hangs outside the church and lists the murder victims for the entire year. The names are written in Magic Marker, and the board contains information on the victims name, age, gender and manner of death.

Then, every Monday, red roses are delivered to Mayor Ray Nagin, the city council and Police Chief Warren Riley. Each rose symbolizes a death during the preceding week.

Inside St. Anna's, a scrapbook is kept with news clippings and information on each murder victim. Deacon Elaine Clements highlights the victims' names, age and other information. Clements, who did her diaconal field placement last year at St. Anna's, but is a member of St. Andrew's in New Orleans, first came up with the

Murder Ministry, continued on p. 23



The 2007 "Murder Board" hangs on the walls of St. Anna's, New Orleans. The church hopes for donations to begin a memorial garden and place a permanent rendering of the board.

Murder Ministry, continued from p. 22

idea for the murder ministry. Clements grew concerned over the escalating violence in the city and the fact that many of the victims were not being named in the media unless they were “ordinary citizens” or when there were multiple victims of a single crime.

Clements became frustrated because she felt there was nothing she could do to end the violence. That is when she first approached Terry, who responded, “We don’t have to fix violence, but we can bring awareness.”

“We wanted to draw attention to the humanity of all involved, the recognition that all are children of God—both victims and perpetrators,” Clements said.

The “Murder Board” has received a lot of media attention, with stories appearing on Anderson Cooper’s Hurricane Katrina two-year anniversary broadcast, ABC’s “Nightline” and in the Times-Picayune. Those who pass by it in this pedestrian-heavy neighborhood show a sense of awe. Families of victims and perpetrators have also taken note. Many have personally contacted Terry and thanked St. Anna’s for keeping the memory of their loved ones alive.

Several churches now participate in the ministry. St. Andrew’s, New Orleans, delivers flowers to the Mayor’s office, St. Anna’s takes flowers to the chief of police, Grace Episcopal Church, New Orleans, delivers to City council, and St. Paul’s Lutheran, New Orleans, includes the names of people in the Prayers at their services. Clements also emails a list of all the week’s murder victims to clergy in the diocese so that other churches can call out the names of those murdered during their prayers of the people on Sundays.

Of course, the ministry does have its critics. Some city officials feel that the roses sent to their offices is threatening, but Terry and Clements hope that the aim of their offering has been sorted out. Clements said that St. Anna’s has received a lovely note from the mayor’s office, and that the city council has responded kindly as well.

“What we are doing is not meant to be threatening,” Clements said. The idea is about honoring the victims, not at placing blame on city officials.

Other critics feel the murder board is too sensational to be posted on the outside of a church and that passers-by, especially children, could be offended. Terry, however, feels that children will be exposed to the problem through other means anyway.

Then, there are those who doubt the effectiveness of the Murder Ministry. Terry, Clements and others involved feel it has been extremely successful at starting a dialogue on the universal theme of violence and also at honoring the victims of crime as humans rather than just another number.

“While it isn’t, of course, stopping the violence, it has certainly raised the level of consciousness about it in the participating congregations and has begun conversations about drugs and violence which persist in not only our city but in our country as well,” Clements said.

At the close of 2007, Clements decided to keep track of the names of those murdered in the entire metropolitan area, not just Orleans parish. St. Anna’s has also begun a new murder board for 2008. They are currently seeking donations to begin a memorial garden on-site and place a permanent board to honor the victims of 2007.

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, May 15 or
Saturday, May 17, 2008

The Lay Employees’ Planning for Tomorrow Conference

Join members of the Church Pension Fund staff and lay employees of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana at:

The Solomon Center, 54296 Hwy. 445, Loranger,
LA 70446

Why do you need to plan?

Q: Where are you now?

- Is your financial future secure?
- Have you considered a retirement that could last 20-years or longer?
- What measures can you take today in planning for the quality of life you expect tomorrow?

Q: Have you wondered about...

- Saving to buy a home or paying for college?
- Taking full advantage of saving with pre-tax dollars?
- Having adequate insurance?
- Becoming disabled?
- Providing for your dependents?

Q: Have you considered when you retire...

- Where you will live?
- How you will spend your time?
- Whether you will have the financial resources to support a fulfilling retirement?
- If you will have adequate medical coverage?

The questions above, other topics (including health and wellness, taxes and social security) and more options and alternatives will be discussed at the conference.

- Staff of Episcopal schools are encouraged to attend the Saturday conference.
- Spouses and partners of lay employees are encouraged to attend to be a part of the planning.
- The cost to attend this full-day conference is \$10.
- Registration will be done electronically.

For more information:

Call Christy Campbell at the Church Pension Fund at 1.800.223.6602