

INSIDE LA SPIRIT

Special points of interest:

- Cultural Competence trainings will be held next month.

Baton Rouge
When: 8/10 & 8/11
Where: Bethany World Prayer Center

New Orleans
When: 8/14 & 8/15
Where: Location to be announced

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INSIDE



A new hurricane season

At the beginning of another hurricane season, Louisiana residents find themselves wondering, worrying, and waiting to see if another Katrina is due to hit our state this year.

Many evacuees want to return home and rebuild, but they are unsure about doing so in the midst of another Hurricane season.

As many displaced victims begin to assess their damaged homes for the first time since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed most of southern Louisiana, we are in the process of preparing for another predicted active hurricane season.

According to USA Today, forecaster William Gray from Colorado State University, 17 named storms are predicted, including 9 Hur-

ricanes and 5 Major Hurricanes.

Given the combination of these predictions with the devastation that the 2005 season caused, Louisiana Spirit must be well prepared and able to assist others with Hurricane preparations.

Along with preparing for the 2006 hurricane season, we also must prepare for the anniversary effects of the devastating storms.

With the anniversaries fast approaching, Louisiana residents need to be prepared for some reactions that may be troubling to them.

See Anniversary Reactions, page 3



Data evaluation of the CCP

The Louisiana Spirit Crisis Counseling Program has made over 775,000 in-person contacts, over 125,000 phone or email contacts, and over 7 million materials have been distributed. Data is collected from the five providers (Options for Independence, Volunteers of America of Greater Baton Rouge, Harmony Outreach Services, LSU, and Catholic Charities). The data in this article reflect totals from all the providers from September 2005-May 2006. The Louisiana Spirit Program collects the following types of data:

- Individual Crisis Counseling
- Group Crisis Counseling
- Public Education

- Brief Crisis Counseling
- Telephone Contacts
- E-mail Contacts
- Materials Handed Out
- Materials mailed to homes
- Materials left in public places
- Community networking and coalition building

Over 144,000 individual crisis counseling sessions were conducted. An individual crisis counseling sessions is defined as contact where the discussion goes beyond education and assists the person to understand their current situation and reactions, *See data, page 3*



Charles Cook
Executive Director LA Spirit

"The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently held a "Spirit of Recovery Summit" in New Orleans. All fifty states and the five territories were invited to participate and the event drew hundreds of behavioral health professionals and planners from around the country."



Assisting our friends,
family and neighbors
with recovery back to a
state of normalcy.

COOK'S CORNER Charles Cook, Executive Director LA Spirit

Perspective is the key. After ten months in the recovery from the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita I truly begin to wonder what reality is. The impact continues to grow more complex as people and communities attempt to rebuild their lives in Louisiana as well as the rest of the country. I recently had the opportunity to gain and share perspective with colleagues from other states.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently held a "Spirit of Recovery Summit" in New Orleans. All fifty states and the five territories were invited to participate and the event drew hundreds of behavioral health professionals and planners from around the country. I had the privilege to attend along with several other leaders representing the State of Louisiana. The highlight of the Summit for me was that I had the opportunity to visit with colleagues and share perspectives of the Summit and more importantly the catastrophic impact of these disasters.

I gained perspective on two truths. First, you have to see it to understand it. The Summit agenda did not allow for attendees to see the damaged areas in New Orleans. As a gesture of good will and to help those serving evacuees in other states gain perspective, Louisiana Spirit offered to take a small number of Summit participants on a tour of some of the damage in the New Orleans area. Time restraints prevented tours of the damage in Southwestern Louisiana or North of the lake. Over forty people took advantage of the offer. Without exception, each of them came back with a new perspective of the impact. Each of them were in awe of the state of recovery or lack thereof, and of the scope and magnitude of the destruction. The truth is that those outside of Louisiana can not understand the nature of this event without being there. One of my goals is for Louisiana Spirit to be the genesis of a new knowledge base for the United States. We need to find ways to help others, particularly those in service to victims of disaster, understand this event, to be there in some way. My challenge to all of Louisiana Spirit is to help me find ways to show our country the impact of this event, to help them gain the perspective we have.

Please share your perspective in stories, pictures, art, music, what ever sort of communication we can use to help our nation understand this one and plan for the next.

Second, we need to educate others about the value of the Crisis Counseling Program. The Spirit of Recovery Summit included time for much deserved formal recognition of the hard work and diligence of SAMHSA staff and the incident command system set up to help manage these events. Time also was dedicated to recognizing the value of SAMHSA's initiative to provide behavioral health professionals deployed throughout Louisiana and Mississippi to provide treatment services for victims. Time was dedicated at the Summit for dialogue on behavioral health planning and infrastructure development to serve disaster victims. No time was dedicated to discussing the Crisis Counseling Program. The truth is that the value of the CCP is not understood. Another of my goals is to identify clearly the value of the CCP. Our work has a great deal of value. My challenge to all of Louisiana Spirit is to help clearly identify the value of the work of the CCP. I believe there is a great deal of value in psycho-education, validation and affirmation, bearing witness, brain-storming, problem solving, connecting resources, and just "being there" for someone in pain. Again, please share your perspective on the value of our work. Help us to clearly identify the value of the CCP.

Finally, I want to thank those who helped on the tours of the damaged areas. Gilda Armstrong-Butler, John Daniel, AlMarie Ford and Jill Farr from our central office worked overtime to help out. Sharon Kirkpatrick organized Louisiana Spirit staff tour guides from Catholic Charities including Chavez Lee and Elgin Salomon, Outreach Workers, Raphael Velasquez, Children's Team Leader and Trinna Stanford, Masters Level Crisis Counselor. Driving through these areas, especially for those who are victims of the disaster themselves is difficult and an emotional time. Your help in this effort means a great deal in our efforts to help others help victims. Thank you so much.

Anticipating and managing anniversary reactions

While not all disaster survivors experience anniversary reactions, it is important for mental health workers to understand the types of reactions that may occur and help people to anticipate these. Without some preparation for these thoughts and feelings, many people may believe that they are having a “setback”.

Some of the most frequently reported reactions among disaster survivors are:

Memories, dreams, thoughts and feelings:

These may be particularly vivid, and people may report that they can't keep their mind off the hurricanes and the flooding during the weeks leading up to the anniversary.

Grief, sadness and regret: People who lost loved ones or homes or precious possessions may experience an intensity of their grief, their homesickness, their regret that they were unable to save the things that were important to them.

Fear, anxiety and stress: Some people may have found that their feelings of fear and anxiety have subsided several months after the disaster, but suddenly appear again near the anniversary date. They may experience jumpiness, an increase in their startle response, and hyper-vigilance about safety. Crisis counseling centers may notice a higher volume of callers as the anniversary date approaches.

Frustration and anger: The anniversary may reawaken resentment and anger about the disaster, and people may express bitterness about

the slow recovery and the bureaucratic process.

Avoidance: For some, the anniversary may be so difficult to deal with that they try to avoid any reminders and instead attempt to treat the day as just an ordinary day.

Reflection: Recovery from a disaster takes place on many levels and involves rebuilding physically, emotionally and spiritually. For many people the anniversary may be a landmark point in the recovery process. They have had sufficient time to gain some perspective on the event and its place in their lives, hearts and minds. This may be the time when they are ready to confront the question “What would I do differently if I had to go through it again?” They often do this with the hope that their answer may help others who might confront a similar situation. Unanimously, survivors of disasters recommend preparedness planning. Many people also reflect on ways in which their lives have changed in positive ways, despite the trauma and the losses. A disaster causes a reassessment of values and beliefs. People express gratitude for the support of friends and family, thankfulness for deeper and more meaningful relationships, and may reach an important transition of seeing themselves as survivors rather than victims.

(From Disaster Response and Recovery: A Handbook for Mental Health Professional, by Diane Myers, R.N., M.S.N)

Data continued

review their options, and address their emotional support or referral needs. These sessions last 15 minutes or longer. Over 537,000 brief contacts have been made. Brief contacts are defined as contacts with individuals that were less than 15 minutes and did not result in an in-depth discussion or interaction of an educational or crisis counseling nature.

Over 136,000 contacts have been made through group counseling, public education and community networking. Group counseling refers to those services that help group mem-

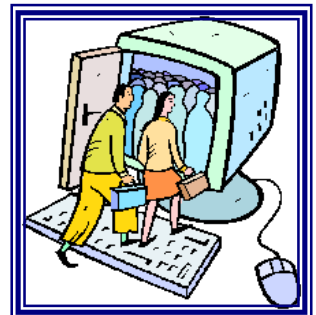
bers understand their current situation and reactions to the disaster, review or discuss their options, provide emotional support or referral services, and/or provide skills to cope with their current situation and reactions. It is similar to individual crisis counseling, but involves 2 or more people. Public Education includes public speaking at community forums and local community meetings. Over 7 million pieces of material have been distributed. See page 4 for a chart with data from the program reports.

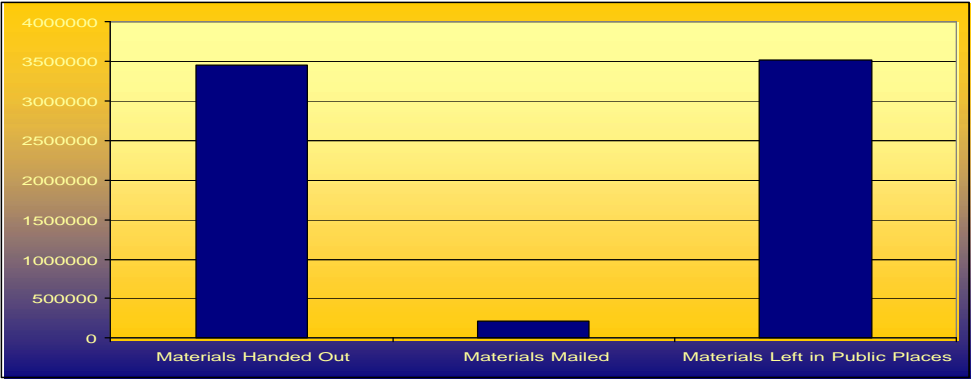


“Over 144,000 individual crisis counseling sessions were conducted.”

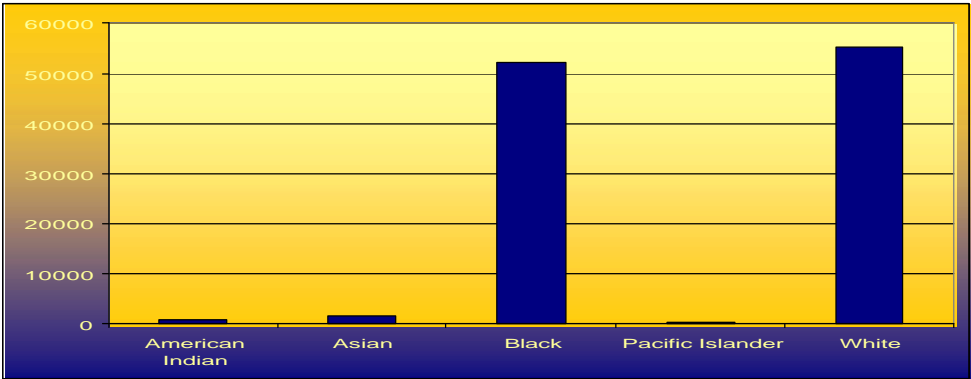
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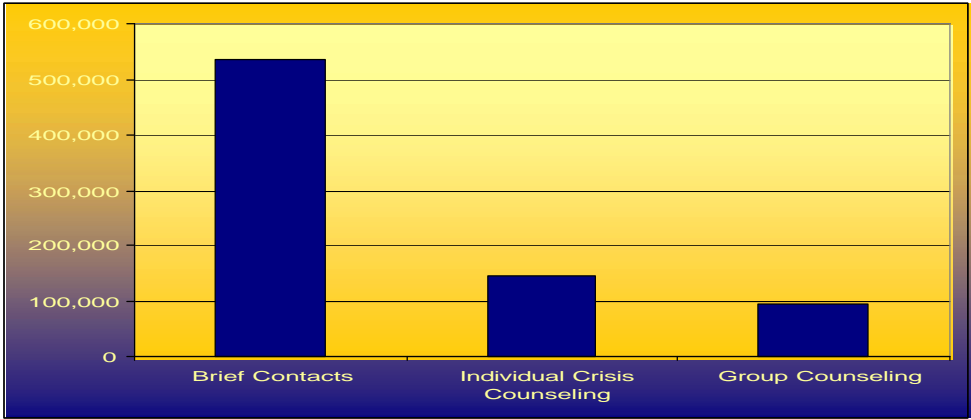




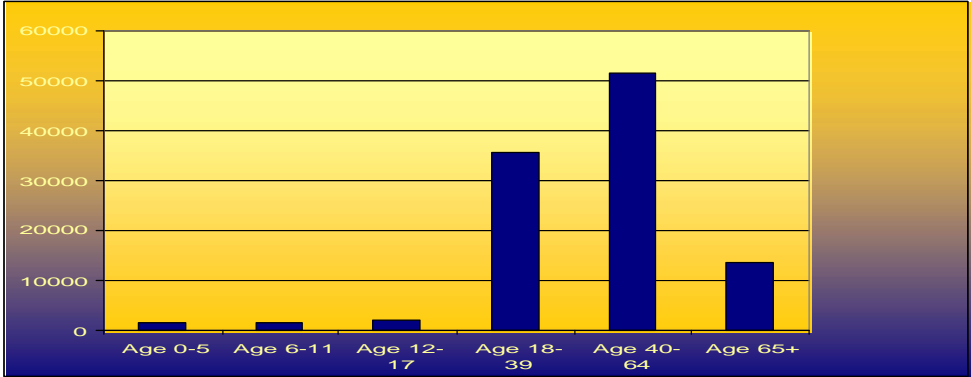
Materials Distributed



Racial Breakdown of Individual Crisis Counseling Contacts

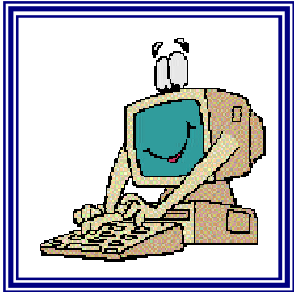


Brief, Individual and Group Counseling Contacts



Individual Crisis Counseling Contacts by Age

“The Louisiana Spirit Crisis Counseling Program has made over 775,000 in-person contacts, over 125,000 phone or email contacts, and over 7 million materials have been distributed amongst the public.”



Louisiana Recovery Authority

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated South Louisiana, displacing more than 780,000 residents, destroying more than 200,000 homes, and damaging more than 18,000 businesses. In the aftermath of these storms, Governor Kathleen Blanco established the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) to serve as the planning and coordinating body of Louisiana's Recovery. This 33 member body is coordinating across jurisdictions, supporting community recovery and resurgence, ensuring integrity and effectiveness, and planning for one of the most extensive rebuilding efforts in the world.

The LRA was created by Executive Order of the Governor on October 17, 2005 and established into law by Act Five of the Louisiana Legislature in the First Extraordinary Session of 2006. The mission of the LRA is to help ensure that Louisiana rebuilds in a way that

makes the state safer, stronger, and smarter than ever before. The LRA will carry out this mission by focusing on four areas of work: securing funding and other resources needed for recovery, establishing principles and policies for redevelopment, leading long term community and regional planning efforts, and ensuring transparency and accountability of recovery funds.

Useful state resources

www.gov.state.la.us

www.recoverycorps.org

www.lded.state.la.us

www.lsp.org

www.louisianarebuilds.info

www.louisianahelp.org

www.lra.louisiana.gov



Kids back for the summer

School is over and families are returning to home for the summer. As predicted the number of families returning to areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina is rising by the day. Many people opted to delay their return home until their children finished the school year. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita not only impacted the landscape of southern Louisiana or adults, but the children have been deeply impacted. This leads to the growing need for child specific summer programs. Over 24 youth-focused nonprofit groups in Louisiana received more than \$400,000 in grants to serve our youth. According to Mercy Corps, grants of up to \$20,000 each were awarded to groups that include: Children's Bureau of New Orleans, KIDsmART, Teach for America, and Young Audiences. "Too many youth groups are fighting to keep their doors open at a time when their services are needed more than ever," said Denise Barrett, Director of Mercy Corps' Gulf Coast Recovery Program. "These grants are meant to help the healers and enable more children to

stay engaged in activities - especially during the summer - that keep them learning and playing, which is the best medicine for recovery from this disaster." Mercy Corps also stated that a nonprofit organization in Metairie, Angel's Place, is able to re-establish services to terminally ill youth with this grant money. For the Bishop Perry Middle School in New Orleans, this grant means that they can postpone closing their doors until after the summer. There are also a variety of other grants being offered for use with our youth. Since many areas that hosted summer youth programs were destroyed, the grants serve as opportunities to aid with the non-profit agencies to return to service. For a list of summer camps and their prices, check out this link. <http://www.nola.com/living/t-p/index.ssf?/base/living-0/1143442994126270.xml>



Options for Independence

"Over 24 youth-focused nonprofit groups in Louisiana received more than \$400,000 in grants to serve our youth. According to Mercy Corps, grants of up to \$20,000 each."





"The U. S. Postal Service indicates that more than 22,000 households, or about 72,000 people from New Orleans are having their mail forwarded to Baton Rouge; about 36,000 households are having their mail forwarded to the Houston area; 29% of New Orleans residents - or about 200,000 households - are having their mail forwarded to other cities (May 2006)."



What is Louisiana Spirit?

It is at one level, the identity chosen for the federally funded crisis counseling programs (CCP) in Louisiana. Crisis counseling programs are an integral feature of every disaster recovery effort. Louisiana has effectively used the CCP model following major disasters in the state since Hurricane Andrew in 1992. The basic premise underlying the CCP is to provide counseling assistance and community education activities about psychological self care which can function as a catalyst for unleashing the seeds of resilience within all of us.

For most people impacted by a natural disaster, psychological recovery emerges with the passage of time and emotional support. For others, the exposure to traumatic events and other factors may contribute to their need for more intensive methods of psychological care. Following the unimaginable levels of destruction and trauma exposure which devastated our state last August and September, we searched for a name for the CCP which would reflect the mission of support on which we were about to embark and our quest for unleashing the resilience within our state and its residents.

What we have all to come appreciate is that Louisiana Spirit is representative of more than the CCP. It is in fact, our history and our future. It is our family heritage, our cultural traditions, our suffering and our joy. It is our struggles with knowing who we are, where we come from and now that we are here...the legacy we leave for those who follow. It is our crucible upon which we build our dreams and construct our reality. It is the strength within you and me, it is our determination to recover from the impact of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

We are all aware of the many struggles Louisiana residents have faced over the last 10 months, and how difficult it is sometimes to see if we are making any progress. When

routinely confronted with numbers that constantly reflect how great is the disruption of normal (pre Katrina) life, it is difficult to accept that any progress is in fact being made. For example, some recent statistics; (1) The U. S. Postal Service indicates that more than 22,000 households, or about 72,000 people from New Orleans are having their mail forwarded to Baton Rouge, about 36,000 households are having their mail forwarded to the Houston area; 29% of New Orleans residents - or about 200,000 households - are having their mail forwarded to other cities (May 2006); and (2) FEMA indicates that at the close of business on April 29th, there were 65,726 occupied travel trailers and mobile homes on private, industrial, group and commercial sites and 3,010 occupied federal housing resources provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

It is easy to look at these numbers and wonder if we will ever recover.

I think we can and will recover, and yes, I think we are moving forward, but the passage to recovery is long and filled with many challenges. However, I thought it might be helpful and healthful to reflect on how some things have changed for the positive.

On October 2, 2005 the New Orleans situation report for the Gentilly area read as follows:

- * Sewer: East Bank sewer system is inoperative

- * Water: Water for fire protection only - not potable

- * Electricity: Assessment complete. Entergy placing information letter on customer's door for houses with booted electrical meters.

- * Gas: 30% service available. Gas company placing door hanger on homes with meter turned off. *Article continued on pages 8 & 9.*

Partnerships Make LA Spirit Successful

Louisiana Spirit Mental Health Recovery Program and Bayou Area Habitat for Humanity, the local affiliate of housing organization Habitat for Humanity International, are working in partnership to find people who can build 100 homes in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes by the end of the year. The two service organizations go out into the community together. Louisiana Spirit's outreach team and Habitat's Family Selection Coordinator make home visits to put potential home builders on a fast track to home construction.

Striking back after two major storms, Habitat and Louisiana Spirit want to reach out to those who are living in low income housing, tents or FEMA trailer villages and offer a hand to help them put their lives together. In disasters like these, families who were hanging on by a thread before the hurricane will suffer the most in its aftermath.

Louisiana Spirit, operated through DHH, OMH and Options for Independence, involves four teams of mental health outreach workers covering Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. John, St. James, St. Charles and St. Mary parishes. The outreach crisis counseling program addresses the emotional and mental health needs of those impacted by Hurricane's Katrina and Rita.

Two Louisiana Spirit employees who typically work to help others find emotional healing in their lives, have both found new lives of their own with new homes through Habitat. These are two individuals who lost everything but hope during Katrina. Soon they'll have a new address in the Thibodaux-Houma area. While

the two Louisiana Spirit employees helped the housing organization locate people who were homeless and could qualify for a Habitat for Humanity home, they kept their focus on a plan for their lives. To take ownership of a home and to build a home from the ground up felt normal. Normal also involved staying interested in the lives of people and taking their minds off their own situation. Now they are both investing 300 hours in construction time on their new home and are soliciting the help of fellow LA Spirit employees. If you are willing to volunteer or perhaps organize a group of volunteers, please contact Lisa Smith, volunteer coordinator@

volunteer_bhfh@bellsouth.net or call (985) 447-6999. The Habitat for Humanity building blitz will help hurricane victim's gain decent, affordable housing.

The homes are not free. Rules that require applicants to have lived in Terrebonne or Lafourche for at least a year have been waived, but applicants must be living in one of those parishes now.

Applications are available at the following locations: the Habitat office at 800 Jackson St. in Thibodaux, Lafourche and Terrebonne Parish libraries, Terrebonne and Lafourche Parish Housing Authority offices, Catholic Social Services in Houma, the Chamber of Lafourche and the Bayou Region, Louisiana Spirit/Options for Independence and at www.bayouhabitat.com. For information, call Habitat at 985-447-6999 or LA Spirit at 985-868-2620



"Normal also involved staying interested in the lives of people and taking their minds off their own situation. Now they are both investing 300 hours in construction time on their new home and are soliciting the help of fellow LA Spirit employees."





Classroom Based Intervention Program (CBI)

A psychosocial educational program for children and youth exposed to difficult circumstances. It was designed and developed by the Center for Trauma Psychology, Boston, MA USA in affiliation with the Columbia University-School of Public Health and the Save the Children Foundation. There are five main objectives:

- 1) Reduce the risk of mal-adaptation
- 2) Facilitate resiliency and return to normalcy
- 3) Facilitate empowerment and mastery
- 4) Use a natural learning environment
- 5) Screen for high risk youth



VOA Children's team staying active

"There are no limits to caring" is the familiar motto of the Louisiana Spirit Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge Hurricane Assistance Program. (LA Spirit-VOAGBR) This belief is evident in the services provided by the LA Spirit-VOAGBR Children's Team. Using the Classroom Based Intervention Model (CBI) supported by Save the Children, the Children's Team is actively involved throughout the Baton Rouge area assisting and collaborating with various schools, child care centers and recreational programs. Below are a few activities that we have been involved in throughout the community.

East Baton Rouge Health Centers in Schools

This past spring, the East Baton Rouge Health Centers in Schools (EBRHCS) allowed the Children's Team to enter elementary schools to provide a safety net for the children that were unable to participate in the established CBI model. School social workers provided the initial assessments and worked with the school Internal Teams (IMT) to provide the initial lists of participants. School social workers would intervene with children who were not appropriate for this group format. IMT's welcomed us with open arms, accepting the CBI model and supported it throughout the busy last months of the school year.

Big Buddy Program

This summer, the Big Buddy Program is welcoming us at four of their sites to provide Cri-

sis Intervention (CI) during the morning and CBI in the afternoon. Presently, we are working through a referral protocol for on site social worker staff who rotate from site-to-site.

Urban Restoration Enhancement Corporation (UREC)

LA Spirit-VOAGBR Children's Team is also working with the Urban Restoration Enhancement Corporation's (UREC) Summer Camp located at Baker Heights Elementary. The Children's Team is currently using the CBI model, and they also provide extra help on scheduled field trips, allowing time to interact with children who attend the group in an unstructured activity

University Presbyterian Camp Noah

In the future, the Children's Team plans to be onsite with the University Presbyterian Camp Noah for a three week session. The team will provide the Sunday evening orientation support; daily CI with supervision and daily evening debriefing sessions with staff.

The spirit of the LA Spirit Children's Team members has been up beat and tenacious in maintaining excellent rapport with our collaborators. This makes it easy to facilitate and manage the youth groups. The children's response has been great, and the Volunteers of America Louisiana Spirit Children's Team Program has been a success!

What is Louisiana Spirit? Continued from page 6

* Debris: Phase 1: 100%, Phase 2: 0%, Phase 3: 0%

* Transportation: Roads passable; signals in-operative; no temporary signage yet in place. No bus service; no gas stations open

* Fire: Low water pressure; delayed response

* 911: Fully operational Sept. 30

* Housing & Building Inspection: In Progress

* Food: State Health Dept. must evaluate be-

fore re-opening for food

On July 5, 2006 the same situation report for Gentilly read as follows:

* Sewer: Sewer system is operational.

* Water: potable.

* Elect: Service available to 100% of customers.

* Gas: 100% service available.

What is Louisiana Spirit? (Continued from page 8)

- * Debris: 8.2 M cubic yards collected to date.
- * Transportation: 90% of traffic signals working throughout the city
- * Fire: Fire coverage operational
- * 911: Operational service (3-4 days). Two 10 person teams available next week.

Also as of 7-05-06, New Orleans reported that over 2,046 businesses were open in the city. There are 1,049 food establishments open in the city.

This is evidence of recovery, and of the resilience of the Louisiana men and women who are making it happen.

And yes, while there is a huge need for resource allocations to reflect the scope of the disaster, we are receiving financial assistance directly to Louisiana residents. CNN reports over \$5 billion in private donations and FEMA reports the following resource distributions as of June 1, 2006:

- More than \$14.7 billion has been paid out under the National Flood Insurance Program to policyholders in Louisiana. More than 420,000 Louisianans currently hold these policies, with average coverage at \$152,000.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved more than 12,000 disaster assistance loans to business owners totaling \$1.03 billion; and 74,851 loans to renters and homeowners totaling more than \$6.10 billion.
- FEMA has issued 1.64 million housing assistance checks totaling more than \$3.5 billion to Louisiana victims, in the form of rental assistance and home repair or replacement grants.* More than \$2.4 billion in federal dollars has been allocated for Public Assistance (PA) projects. The program provides assistance for work including debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the restoration of infrastructure to pre-disaster conditions.
- Under FEMA's Other Needs Assistance Program, more than \$1.4 billion has been distributed to 324,522 Louisiana victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This grant program provides assistance for serious,

disaster-related needs.

- FEMA has approved more than \$725 million in Community Disaster Loans to help keep essential services operating in communities hardest hit by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
- More than \$289 million in disaster unemployment assistance has been approved for 173,173 eligible victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who signed up during the application period.
- In addition to household debris removal from rights of way, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with private contractors working for some Louisiana Parishes, have removed more than 40 million cubic yards of debris (one cubic yard is equivalent to one household dishwasher) under a FEMA-funded mission assignment.
- FEMA has completed more than 1 million housing inspections in Louisiana. * More than 777,000 Louisiana residents have sought information at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) throughout the affected areas.

Looking at the numbers above, I am reminded that an essential part of the recovery process involves stepping back from the intensity of one's own efforts and reflect not on just what needs to be done, but also, on the hurdles that have been overcome, the challenges met, and the seeds of recovery planted.

It is our collective Louisiana Spirit that is moving us into recovery!

Anthony H. Speier, Ph.D.

Director, Disaster Mental Health Operations



"FEMA has issued 1.64 million housing assistance checks totaling more than \$3.5 billion to Louisiana victims, in the form of rental assistance and home repair or replacement grants."



Hurricane Preparation Tips

Planning ahead for the storm season is a pivotal part in being safe. Here a list of a few items that you will need to stock up on.

- Stock up on non-perishable food, medicine, baby supplies and pet food.
- Purchase bottled water; 1 gallon of water per person per day.
- Check emergency equipment (flashlights, battery-operated radios, extension cords, emergency generators, etc.) and purchase extra batteries.
- Consider the installation of shutters over windows and doors. Depending on the design of your home, plywood works well, but stock up early.
- Monitor official weather bulletins.
- Keep extra cash on hand, as automatic

teller machines or banks don't operate without power.

- Review evacuation routes.
- Arrange for safe sheltering for your pet if you must evacuate. Public shelters don't accept pets.
- Keep your vehicle's fuel tank full.

Move yard items inside, such as patio furniture.

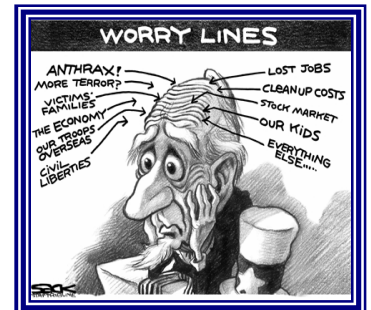
For more tips and evacuation plans check out The American Red Cross website @ http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_587_00.html for a direct link to preparation tips page.



The Work of LSU Health Sciences Center for LA Spirit

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, mental health professionals have been called upon to respond to the needs of children and families in ways that often are unconventional and challenging. A team of psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers from the Department of Psychiatry at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans has been working together with Louisiana Spirit in an effort to prevent mental health and adjustment problems. Crucial components of this work focus on clinical direction, oversight, training, and crisis and brief interventions to strengthen individual and family resilience. Two aspects of the interventions that have been done in Metropolitan New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina are: 1) Interventions with first responders and their families, eighty percent of whom lost their homes, initially on the cruise ships from September 2005- March 2006 and now in districts and more permanent work locations; 2) Evaluations and interventions with displaced children and children re-

turning to schools and preschools (ages 3-18 years) in Metropolitan New Orleans. Some pertinent needs assessment data on the 1686 children in grades 4-12 analyzed to date are presented below.



Symptom	Percent Responding "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much"
Worry about what is going to happen	47.5%
Trying not to think or talk about the event	37.7%
Having a harder time completing schoolwork since event	35%
Feeling upset when thinking about the event	31.9%
Irritable	31.8%
Sad, down, or depressed	31.5%
Harder to concentrate since the event	31.1%

Louisiana Spirit Builds Partnerships

On June 22, 2006, Louisiana Spirit Hurricane Recovery held its biweekly Provider Leadership Meeting and met with representatives from Louisiana Family Recovery Corps (LFRC), Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), Katrina Aid Today Program (KAT), American Red Cross Hurricane Recovery and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

The purpose of this meeting was to build partnerships with other organizations lending a helping hand to survivors of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Each of the organizations offered a solid overview of their goals and objectives to reconstruct Louisiana, post Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and all present found collaborative opportunities. The representatives included: Lenneria T Franklin, Greater New Orleans Field Coordinator, LFRC; Stacie Barconey Washington, New Orleans Field Coordinator, LFRC; Jeff Hebert, Community Planner, LRA; Kimberly Durow, Program Coordinator KAT; Lou W. Kennedy, American Red Cross; Kathy Kraiza, UMCOR; and Tia Alexander, Senior Associate, Public Affairs Hurricane Recovery Program, American Red Cross.

Louisiana Spirit providers on hand included Harmony Center, Options for Independence, Catholic Charities, and Volunteers of America. In addition to forming partnerships with other organizations our providers exchanged best

practices at the Louisiana Spirit Provider Leadership Meeting.



Groups in attendance:

- *Louisiana Family Recovery Corps*
- *Louisiana Recovery Authority*
- *Katrina Aid Today*
- *American Red Cross*
- *United Methodist Committee on Relief*

You can gain more knowledge about these recovery programs at their websites:

Louisiana Family Recovery Corps
<http://www.recoverycorps.org>

Louisiana Recovery Authority



Louisiana Spirit helps kids make recovery a success



Associated Catholic Charities Children's Team in the New Orleans Metropolitan Area has been visually and physically active with the kids of Orleans Parish. Tracy Cormie, Children's Team Clinical Manager said they have a team of fifteen crisis counselors who have been providing services to several New Orleans Public Schools and Summer Camps.

The work they are doing has not gone unnoticed. Carol Flores, Camp NOAH Gulf Coast Coordinator had this to say about their work, "I have been visiting Camp Noah's all over LA and they are going fabulously thanks in no small part to the involvement of your folks." It has been a wonderful gift and truly a blessing to be able to partner with you all.

So far we have served over 800 kids in Texas and Louisiana."

The Department Of Education's recovery school districts spoke well about their activities, "Spirit folks have been at the Banneker and Clark schools as registration has been occurring & that y'all have been a definite presence during registration and are doing great. They're glad to have your support."

"Camp NOAH has served over 800 kids in Texas and Louisiana."



LFRC Funds Summer Programs for Hurricane Impacted Children in 26 Parishes

Thousands of children affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are being provided quality summer programs free of charge because of grants provided by the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps (LFRC). The Family Recovery Corps allocated \$2,000,000 of its funds and secured an additional 2,500,000 from the Red Cross and the Louisiana Office of Youth Development to provide financial support to programs offering unique and meaningful summer opportunities.

In announcing the awards, LFRC's Chief Executive Officer Raymond Jetson said: "We cannot forget that our children are also living with the repercussions of the storms and they need to recover too. Our children need the break and our parents need the peace of mind, knowing their children are in a safe and quality environment while they work to rebuild their lives."

The programs selected are offering everything from dance, karate and music lessons, to

sports, computer instruction, field trips and pony rides. They are being offered in Ascension, Caddo, Claiborne, East Baton Rouge, East Carroll, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lafourche, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Orleans, Ouachita, Rapides, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, St. Landry, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion and Washington Parish.

For a listing of the program recipients, go to:

www.recoverycorps.org/summerprogramlist.php



"The Family Recovery Corps allocated \$2,000,000 of its funds and secured an additional 2,500,000 from the Red Cross and the Louisiana Office of Youth Development to provide financial support to programs offering unique and meaningful summer opportunities."





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Keeping the spirit of Louisiana alive!

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Wellness tips

Can incorrect breathing be stressful for the body?

Most of us rarely think about our breathing, but many of us probably could use some re-training in breathing. Do you think that the way to take a deep breath is to puff out the chest and suck in the gut? In fact, this is not a relaxing way to breathe, and actually restricts breathing since oxygen doesn't reach the lowest portion of the lungs, where oxygen exchange is most efficient. In essence, you are avoiding the area of the lungs that can best process oxygen!

Instead of breathing this way, imagine that your lungs are two big balloons that fill almost the entire chest cavity. When inflating, these balloons reach way down to the belly and all the way up to the collarbones. A deep, full breath expands in these lung "balloons" in six directions – front and back, up and down, side to side.

Give it a try right now – take a deep breath and feel your lungs inflate in all six directions. Then

exhale slowly and you will begin to feel stress melt away.

As you concentrate on fully inflating your lungs, close your eyes and practice your breathing while counting. Inhale to the count of 5, and exhale to the count of 5. Make your in breath and your out breath smooth and even. Practice this for five or six complete breaths several times a day. If you are feeling anxious or stressed or angry, this tool is very effective in reducing those powerful emotions. If you are sitting in traffic through yet another light cycle and your blood pressure is rising rapidly, try this technique for 2 or 3 complete breaths – but keep

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your eyes open!