

INSIDE LA SPIRIT

Special points of interest:

- Teach Tolerance is an organization that provides resources for promoting tolerance for parents, teachers, teens, kids and communities via their website. www.tolerance.org
- A list of events for the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina is on pages 13, 14.
- A list of events for Hurricane Rita will be in the next issue.
- www.volunteerbatonrouge.org.
- www.louisianarebuilds.info

Inside this issue:

Cook's Corner	2
When the Levees Broke	2
Cultural and Linguistic Competence Training	4
A Time for coming together	5
Outreaching Harmony	6
Capital Area: mental health services	7
The Road Home	8
Children's summer activities	8
Peer Support	10
Children return to school	11
Training Photo Collage	12
Anniversary Events	13



INSIDE



August 29th 2005 & September 24th 2005 Remembered

Many Louisiana residents remember Katrina and Rita as if it were yesterday and many areas in Louisiana still look like the hurricanes hit yesterday. Though the valiant effort of many residents, organizations, state and federal departments are not complete, we are making giant steps toward coming back bigger and stronger. The resilience that is being shown by Louisianans is a direct display of the rich culture that surrounds our state. Over the years, hurricane after hurricane made landfall across our state lines and we rebuilt and retained our rich history and culture. From Second Lines to Mardi Gras to Zydecos to the many festivals that Louisiana hosts year round, our rich history lives with us. Our wonderful foods, our abundant wildlife, our antebellum cities, and

make Louisiana America's gumbo pot.

Louisiana's reputation of exemplifying "southern hospitality" will be on display for the next few weeks as the anniversaries of the two major hurricanes approach us. We will remember through art, faith based activities, music, marches, videos, speeches, and food. Many events are scheduled to commemorate those affected and those deceased as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Listed on pages 13 and 14 are events with dates, times, and places.



New Orleans style Second-Line. A Second-Line is a group of people parading the city to jazz music played by a live band.

Life after Rita: Providing Mental Health Services in Southwest Louisiana

For many who worked in the mental health system in Lake Charles, last September was the first time they had ever evacuated for a hurricane - even those who had been around for Audrey. After providing emergency services for people who fled from Hurricane Katrina, suddenly these workers became evacuees themselves, and were not allowed to re-enter the city for more than a week. Almost all had some damage to their homes, including significant roof damage. They also found a city with a very changed look, with 50% of the trees wiped out. And staff had to return to work before dealing with their personal situations.

Allen Mental Health Center was the first to reopen, followed by Beauregard, and staff

were providing services without electricity in the buildings. Most of the houses in the area also were without power. The Lake Charles MHC was in the midst of an asbestos abatement project and all the staff had moved to one wing, where they expected to be for only a short time. After Rita hit and they were able to return, it was difficult to get construction workers and so staff stayed in one wing for months. With very few rooms in which to do therapy, they used whatever space was available, (and sometimes that was outside). Staff had to be very flexible and supportive of each other. The acute unit was closed and there were no psychiatric beds in the entire city, so the ER's had to locate placements in Texas.

Continued on page 3



Charles Cook
Executive Director LA Spirit

"The amount approved is \$34.7 million. There are a number of conditions the State must respond to, some of which could lead to additional funding for certain things not included in the initial award. RSP programming will begin September 1, 2006 and is a nine-month grant."



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

COOK'S CORNER Charles Cook, Executive Director LA Spirit

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved the Regular Services Crisis Counseling Program grant (RSP) for Louisiana Spirit. The funding will be administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as a Public Health Service (PHS) grant to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. The amount approved is \$34.7 million. There are a number of conditions the State must respond to, some of which could lead to additional funding for certain things not included in the initial award. RSP programming will begin September 1, 2006 and is a nine-month grant. We are expecting award of the RSP grants for Hurricane Rita and the Katrina "undeclared" Parishes to be made soon as well.

For most disasters, funding for an RSP grant is awarded much sooner, typically 4 to 5 months after the disaster. In larger events like this, especially when there are many states involved, the review and approval process takes much longer. Examples are the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks of 2001 or the great Midwest floods of 1993. Much of the delay is a function of the lack of capacity at State and Federal levels to deal efficiently with catastrophic events. In this case, the initial RSP grant application was submitted by the State October 28, 2005 and an amended appli-

cation submitted April 14, 2006 as per federal request. We are very happy to receive this federal assistance, so desperately needed in response to the overwhelming need here; and now, Louisiana needs you more than ever as we look forward to a period of recovery and renewal. This funding gives us the opportunity to give others the attention, the help, the opportunity they deserve. This is a good time to say thanks to FEMA. Without FEMA funding this program would not exist.

This is a good time to say thanks to you. I want to express my gratitude to all of our provider agencies and every staff person working with Louisiana Spirit for the patience, dedication and persistence you have shown in this process. I know you have all given much of yourselves in this process and I want you to know it hasn't gone unnoticed. You are appreciated. Without **you**, this program would not exist.

I am excited about this next phase of our work and hope you are too. I am committed to the mission of Louisiana Spirit and welcome your continued commitment, especially now.

Charlie

Louisiana Spirit Partners with Superdome Staff at Spike Lee's Premiere of "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts"

Louisiana Spirit Hurricane Recovery was present at the New Orleans Superdome/Arena for Spike Lee's premiere of "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts", to offer help, healing and hope to an approximately 8000 member audience.

The premiere was free to all who attended; however Louisiana Spirit predicted that the frank images of the storm could be emotionally expensive to audience members who experienced Hurricane Katrina first hand.

John G. Daniel, Deputy Executive Director of Louisiana Spirit, met with Glenn Menard, General Manager of the New Orleans Arena and Superdome about getting approval from Home Box Office (HBO TV) for the Louisiana Spirit Crisis Counseling staff to provide emotional support at the premiere. Menard also included Louisiana Spirit's team in the preparatory meeting for his 250 plus employees.

Continued on page 3

Life after Rita cont'

After the storm, the MH system had open admission criteria to serve people who normally wouldn't be served by the public system. Any person who presented due to hurricane distress was accepted and staff worked to provide services quickly. Now clients have returned and things are returning to normal, but services still are being provided to hurricane survivors.

Phyllis Bennett, OMH Regional Manager for the Lake Charles area (Region V), said this past year has been the most difficult of the 29 years she has worked with the state. It has been hard for the entire community as well as her staff. What was gratifying to her was how well the clients did – even those who relocated found resources, got linked with mental health services and were able to get medications. She also was pleased with the cooperation and relationships of agencies within the city, and the leadership of the Mayor. He appointed one agency to take the lead in working with other groups to get information about available resources to the public. Those weekly inter-

agency meetings continued for months, and people really got to know one another, and a very cohesive community developed. Bennett was impressed with the generosity shown during the time and felt like it was a return to the times when people truly communicated with each other.

But the stress of the last year has taken a toll on the staff at the mental health center. Bennett reported more physical problems than she has ever seen in the past 29 years, including serious back and neck pain, stomach problems, and several surgeries. Staff found the most effective stress reliever to be chair massages provided by the Volunteers of America LA Spirit team in Lake Charles.

As the next hurricane season began, Bennett said that their clients and the community have experienced some anxiety, but the MH staff has been too busy to notice – they are back to business as usual.

Louisiana Spirit Partners with Superdome Staff at Spike Lee's Premiere of "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts" continued from page 2

Menard toured the building with Louisiana Spirit personnel and introduced them to Tim Suire, the Event Coordinator for the evening's entertainment.

Suire directed the preparatory meeting for the Superdome/Arena workers and explained that Louisiana Spirit Crisis Counselors would join the team for the evening and that the team should give them all their support. In his slide show, he displayed the Louisiana Spirit mission and logo for all employees to see.

At the close of the meeting, Spirit members took their assigned posts on each floor, where they were they joined by Superdome employees. Spirit employees also were provided a secluded and quiet location furnished with chairs, tables, tissues and water to offer emotional support for audience members or employees in need.

Throughout the evening, the crisis counselors offered help not only to audience members but to the Superdome staff who were all Katrina and Rita survivors. Their stories were of profound losses that included their homes, jobs, loved ones, personal items, churches, schools for their children etc. After everything their stories still contained hope, optimism and resilience.

Continued on page 5



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LOUISIANA SPIRIT'S CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE TRAINING SESSIONS IN AUGUST, 2006



"They were well received by participants, and the overall verbal feedback at the end of the sessions was that the training should have occurred sooner because people learned so much, and they requested additional training sessions as soon as possible."



Louisiana Spirit held two (2) cultural competence training sessions in August, 2006. The training was provided by the National Alliance of Multi-ethnic Behavioral Health Associations (NAMBHA). NAMBHA is a nonprofit organization representing four national racial/ ethnic behavioral health associations. The trainers have provided training around the world, and have researched and published extensively in this field.

Two (2) day training sessions were held in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. They were well received by participants, and the overall verbal feedback at the end of the sessions was that the training should have occurred sooner because people learned so much, and they requested additional training sessions as soon as possible. The training sessions were exciting and rich in content. They were more meaningful to participants because much of the training was based on Focus Groups conducted in March, 2006 with the Louisiana Spirit administrators, team leaders, crisis counselors and human services district staff.

The first day's agenda included, but was not limited to, the following items and issues:

Phases of Recovery: Cultural Factors that Impact the Recovery Process; Principles, Values and Definition of Cultural and Linguistic Competence, and small group sessions that addressed strategies for addressing the Dynamics of Difference in Various Contexts. The small groups' topics included: Outreach and Engagement; Communication and Language; Cultural Views of Mental Illness: Over-coming Stigma; Developing Recovery Plans within a Cultural Context; and Pre-assessment. The small group sessions were followed by "teach-back sessions" which allowed a person from each small group to teach those who were not in the specific group the significant points from that session.

This allowed participants to share what they learned with other trainees in attendance. The first session objectives were: to understand the overall format of the training session including its assumptions, goals and objectives; identify the specific expectations of the

Louisiana Office of Mental Health for the training; know the format of participants' folder and how to use it; and become acquainted with the other participants and the training team.

The second day's agenda included, but was not limited to, the following items and issues: Special Population Groups that included Children within the context of their Families and the Elderly; Self-care Strategies, Open Group Discussion and Post-training assessment.

The second session objectives were: define culture; define cultural and linguistic competence; identify the elements of a culturally competent service delivery model; discuss ways of incorporating the elements of a culturally competent service delivery model into practice; and issues related to special population groups; addressing children's mental health issues within the context of their families; issues related to special population groups: the elderly and children; followed by an in depth session on self-care strategies. A lengthy open group discussion occurred with the trainees asking the trainers any cultural competence questions they had, and at least one of the trainers responding to each question. THANK YOU to all trainees for your sensitive and quality participation. For questions or additional information contact Almarie Ford, Cultural Competence Officer, at alford@dhh.la.gov

Photo collage on page 12



Louisiana Spirit Partners with Superdome Staff at Spike Lee's Premiere of "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts" continued from page 3

A group of Louisiana Spirit Crisis Counselors from Catholic Charities offered a compassionate listening ear, and the Superdome staff reminded the counselors of the strong nature of the human spirit. As one survivor put it, "I don't think God has brought me this far to leave me"

The crisis counselors had comments about the movie overall.

Kim Payne, MSW, GSW, reports that the film had scenes that every Katrina survivor could relate to and facilitated closure for many.

Thanks to the crisis counselors for offering help, healing and hope to Katrina survivors at the Spike Lee premiere. The staff included Sharon Kirkpatrick, Program Director, who coordinated the Catholic Charities team; Lydie Phillips, Chad Harmon, Chris Curtis, Courtney

Joseph, Jerald Johnson, Deborah S. Alston, Kim Payne, Kristin Broussard, Marilyn Shraberg, Trinna Stanford, Rebecca Hubert, Nadia Joseph, Maria Andrews and Maria Posada, and finally John G. Daniel, Deputy Executive Director, Louisiana Spirit.



A Time for Coming Together: Bringing Emotional Healing to Storm Survivors

Almost one year after the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, untold numbers of Louisiana citizens continue to live with tremendous emotional suffering. The enormous loss and damage to property can not begin to compare to the loss of social support systems, human life, and the damage to the human spirit experienced by the victims. The slow pace of the recovery effort (the rebuilding of homes, lack of jobs, lack of transportation and other basic services) has further slowed the healing process and thus many are unable to plan for the future. And, while formal and informal crisis counseling and support services continue to seek and reach out to thousands of survivors, many more have not yet been reached through these traditional methods.

Knowing that many Louisiana citizens look to the leaders of their faith based communities for healing and hope, The Louisiana Family Recovery Corps invited ministers, pastors, priest, rabbis and other faith-based community leaders to hold a service with the message of healing

and hope for members of their congregation emotionally impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The event was called: **A Time for Coming Together.**

Through the formal Memorandum of Understanding, Louisiana Spirit Hurricane Recovery Program joined the LFRC to assist in outreach and distribution of information about **A Time for Coming Together.** Prior to the events, Mr. Raymond Jetson, LFRC CEO, traveled to New Orleans, Lafayette, Lake Charles and Baton Rouge to host pre-gathering meetings with local religious leaders. He brought a message of caring for others and caring for self.

After many months of planning and outreach, the doors of Louisiana's houses of faith opened with a special message to Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors during the weekend of Saturday, August 12 and Sunday, August 13, 2006. **continued on page 6**



"The slow pace of the recovery effort (the rebuilding of homes, lack of jobs, lack of transportation and other basic services) has further slowed the healing process and thus many are unable to plan for the future."





“With the anniversary of the hurricanes just days away Carter recalls residents reminded of the aftermath of the hurricanes when strong winds or large sums of rain descend upon their living quarters.”



Outreaching Harmony

Outreach usually refers to activities designed to make contact with clients primarily in their **‘natural’ settings** - on the street, at home, in clubs or other meeting places (EMCDDA 1999). These activities can be delivered by professionals or by peers. Outreach work is important in helping reach target populations that will not attend ‘static’ services. Hartnoll (1990) defined outreach as ‘a community oriented activity undertaken in order to contact individuals or groups from particular target populations, who are not effectively contacted or reached by existing services or through traditional health education channels.’

Harmony Outreach Services, meets the qualifications of an effective outreach worker. The staff conducts their outreach in natural settings of the survivors including trailer communities, apartment buildings, disaster relief centers, Departments of Social Services and Labor, churches, and local colleges across a seven parish service area.

Harmony serves about 300 Hurricane survivors a week in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area. James Carter, Harmony Outreach worker says, “The number of survivors living in the Metropolitan areas has seen more of an in-

crease than a decrease because of Louisiana residents moving to Baton Rouge from other states that took them in.” Harmony has coordinated various activities for the residents of the trailer communities including Men’s Day on Fathers Day, Sister’s Tea on Mothers Day, an Easter egg hunt, Health Fairs, and assisted with things such as job fairs, faith based events, and back to school dental examinations and immunizations shots.

With the anniversaries of the hurricanes just days away Carter says, “residents memory of the hurricanes are triggered when strong winds or heavy rainfalls occur” and “that those issues give the crisis counselors an idea of what different situations they were going through and are going through now.”

Harmony will be assisting with an event two days before the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina at First United Methodist Church, 930 North Blvd., Baton Rouge. More information can be found at

www.volunteербatonrouge.org.

A Time for Coming Together: Bringing Emotional Healing to Storm Survivors

Over 10,000 copies of the informational brochures were printed by the LFRC and distributed to religious leaders throughout the state. In addition to the appeal to Let The Feeling Lead To Healing, the brochure listed Help Numbers for mental health services through the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.

The Louisiana Spirit crisis counselors were present, upon request, and provided crisis counseling and referrals at many sites.

Louisiana Spirit Hurricane Recovery Program is honored to have worked with the Louisiana

Family Recovery Corps on this event. As Governor Kathleen B. Blanco’s proclamation so eloquently stated: the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps is working to recover Louisiana’s most precious resource, its families, by connecting our citizens impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with the resources they need to recover and resume a quality of life.

Katrina's impact on mental health services in the capital area

When the Greater Baton Rouge population swelled by almost 350,000 literally overnight, service providers throughout the region were faced with severe challenges. Capital Area Human Services District (CAHSD) is the agency responsible for publicly funded community-based services for people with mental illness, addictive disorders and developmental disabilities within a 7 parish region and it assumed a lead role for coordinating the response effort. CAHSD initiated daily briefings on evacuees' locations and needs for the first two months after the storm and facilitated the efforts of 50-70 agencies and local and national volunteers. Over the months the frequency of the meetings changed, to weekly and then monthly, but the coordination efforts continued.

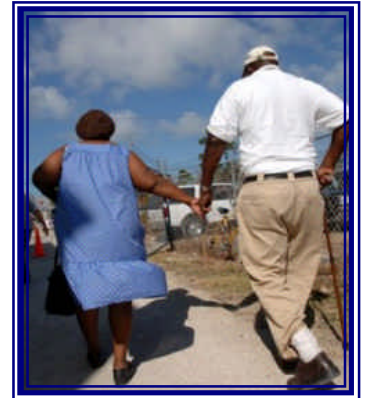
After this unprecedented community disaster, many people were overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety, fear, helplessness, frustration and depression. Within a few weeks after the storm, CAHSD, through funding from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, established an Assessment Unit that enabled people to have an immediate assessment, the day they called, either over the phone or in person. This was open to everyone who called, even though the public clinics typically serve only people with severe and persistent mental illness. Group sessions for evacuees were set up at the clinics.

Dr. Jan Kasofsky, the Executive Director of CAHSD, reported that two months after Katrina, the mental health clinics saw 40%

new clients. At six months, that figure rose to 72% and remains there. While the number of people who are seeking treatment for addictive disorders has increased only slightly, staffs are seeing a lot more substance abuse in clinics and congregate settings such as the trailer communities. This has been a common way people have chosen to cope with stress and the health consequences may be serious.

Mental health crisis assessments also have increased in hospital emergency departments. Earl K. Long Hospital reported a 30% increase, including people with mental illness from affected areas (some who were receiving treatment and others who were not); evacuees and others without a prior mental health/addictive disorder problem; volunteers/providers from out of state who experienced an onset of a post-trauma MH/AD problem; and the homeless population seeking refuge.

People throughout the state, and even the country, experienced extraordinary stress related to the devastation of the storm and now may also be experiencing anxiety and depression. These are normal reactions to the abnormal events of the past year and it is important for those affected to understand that intervention and support are important for a healthy recovery, and the sooner the access to services, the healthier we will be in the long run.



“Dr. Jan Kasofsky, the Executive Director of CAHSD, reported that two months after Katrina, the mental health clinics saw 40% new clients. At six months, that figure rose to 72% and remains there.”



Louisiana Spirit and The Road Home



"Homeowners are eligible for the total amount of damages to the house on top of any insurance and FEMA repair payments- up to a total level of assistance not to exceed \$150,000. You may also be eligible for grants to help prevent similar damages in the future."

The Road Home Program was developed by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco and the Louisiana Recovery Authority to distribute Community Development Block Grants of up to \$150,000 to help our residents get back into a home as quickly and fairly as possible.

Under the current Road Home Proposal, eligible homeowners have choices about rebuilding their homes. Homeowners are eligible for the total amount of damages to the house on top of any insurance and FEMA repair payments up to a total level of assistance not to exceed \$150,000. They may also be eligible for grants to help prevent similar damages in the future. If costs to get back into a home are higher than losses, additional assistance may be available. Homeowners can choose from four options: Repair, Rebuild/Resettle, Buyout/Relocate, Sell.

Repair – to repair an existing home, the state will pay you for damages up to the pre-storm value. Owners may be eligible for an affordable loan to cover the gap if there is a difference between repair costs and the grant received.

Rebuild/Resettle- If a homeowner chooses to rebuild on his/her property, the state will pay for damages up to the Pre-storm value. Owners may be eligible for an affordable loan to

cover the gap if there is a difference between repair costs and the grant received.

Buyout/Relocate- If someone wants to sell the rights to a home and move elsewhere in Louisiana, the state will pay for damages up to the pre-storm value of the home. Owners may be eligible for an affordable loan to cover the gap if there is a difference between repair costs and the grant received.

Sell- If an owner wishes to move somewhere outside of Louisiana, the state will buy the home for 60 percent of its pre-storm value or the estimated repair costs for the property.

Homeowners can register online for The Road Home grant or register by phone at 1-888-ROAD-2-LA (1-888-762-3252). The TTY phone number is 1-800-566-4224

www.louisianarebuilds.info



LA Spirit & Children's Summer Activities



The Children's Teams of LA Spirit Providers provided mental health disaster related support for summer camps and programs throughout impacted areas this summer. More of the services were concentrated in the metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. By working together, LA Spirit and other organizations helped children deal with the effects of the storm by addressing their sadness & fears, preparing for future hurricanes and rebuilding trust in their communities.

LA Spirit's collaboration with Lutheran Social Services' (LSS) Camp NOAH hurricane recovery program was unique. To our knowledge, it was the first time LSS collaborated with a state level crisis recovery program in a systematically beneficial way. All 4 of the LA Spirit providers' children's teams were involved with Camp NOAH sites in the declared parishes this summer; they were a presence at 30+ Camp NOAH sites this summer.

Continued on page 9

LA Spirit & Children's Summer Activities (continued from page 8)



"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."

As the Camp NOAH sites were set up, LSS contacted LA Spirit state office & the information was relayed to the appropriate provider children's team to arrange Louisiana Spirit coverage. Louisiana Spirit outreach workers and crisis counselors referred children & youth to the camps. They sometimes shared information on local resources & contacts as LSS was attempting to set up camps in particular areas. Louisiana Spirit children's staff provided assistance to the Camp NOAH staff by assisting with pre-camp orientation and by explaining local customs and cultures as well as signs of distress among campers. They de-briefed staff on their hurricane related camp experiences on daily basis. They were a presence to both campers & camp staff and addressed emergency/crisis mental health needs as they developed. For example, one 5 year old held his hands over his ears and expressed wanting to go home as the story of Noah was told he was so distraught, he throw up twice that day. After the crisis counselor worked with him, he was able to return to activities and enjoy the rest of the camp week so much that he didn't want to leave the camp. Counselors also provided conflict resolution assistance with the hurricane impacted junior camp counselor/participants at some camps. Counselors have followed up with campers needing additional crisis counseling services after the programs ended.

In addition to the Camp NOAH collaboration, Louisiana Spirit Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans (CCANO) worked with Save the Children to provide services to 5 of their 36 sponsored summer programs and activities that were interested in providing continued mental health services to their campers. Louisiana Spirit provided crisis counseling as needed and assisted with providing hurricane preparation information to campers. CCANO also worked with 2 of the summer camps of the School District and provided crisis counseling at the 3 Recovery School District registration sites.

Louisiana Spirit provided information on signs of PTSD to the 100+ teachers and camp staff during the combined training sessions of Big

Buddy & Boys/Girls Club in the Baton Rouge area prior to the start of the summer camps. VOA GBR also provided crisis mental health support as needed for their summer programs in the Baton Rouge area. VOA GBR and Harmony jointly provided support for the Camp NOAH programs in Baton Rouge.

VOA GBR in Lafayette worked with hurricane impacted campers through June and July. They provided crisis counseling and resiliency support for 4 different groups of campers 2 days a week at the Thinsted Center housed at Academy of Sacred Heart campus and sponsored by the St. Charles Church. They provided mental health crisis counseling support for Boys and Girls Club camps in Abbeville and New Iberia one day a week through June and July. They provided "Juice Break" activities for the children of the adult attendees of the Coffee Break bi monthly hurricane recovery support group in Erath.

VOA GBR in Lake Charles provided psychosocial educational groups on managing stress and handling frustration for children in the Cameron & Calcasieu parishes. This included Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and some recreational camps. One day a week, they provided regular ongoing psycho educational groups for children impacted by the hurricanes at community centers in Cameron and Calcasieu parishes. Because of their summer involvement, the community centers are inviting Louisiana Spirit back for their after school programs.

Options, Inc. began their summer outreach activities as the school ended. Information on Louisiana Spirit and hurricane preparedness was sent to 15,000 students with their report cards. They stayed busy at summer camps and day care centers throughout their area (River Parishes, Morgan City and St. Charles) presenting psychosocial educational groups and puppet shows to the children. They have participated in back to school community sponsored activities at Kids Day at the mall in Houma and the Back to School day sponsored by the Children's Coalition.



First Responder Support

The New Orleans Fire Department CSU (Counseling Services Unit) is modeled after post 9/11 with the New York Fire Department. Firefighters that were working and retired were requested to help start a first responder support group. They have been very successful in the peer program assisting fire and EMS personnel in New Orleans. Working directly with Catholic Charities Archdiocese New Orleans (CCANO) has given the team a great resource of support programs and mental health professionals for consultation and direction. Through donations for food, the CSU has held cookouts in St. Bernard, New Orleans and Jefferson Parishes as a way of reaching out. Along with the cookouts, LSU Health care has come in to do basic health checks for free. This has already helped some recognize high blood pressure and other health concerns. They indeed are making a big difference in the lives of firefighters, EMS and their families.

With the RSP coming on line, Danny Adams will be working to expand outreach to first responders statewide. Adams said, "when I call other areas of South Louisiana, I hear that first responders are asking for help which is unusual for first responders and very telling." One of the areas is Lake Charles and the surrounding areas. The Volunteers of America mental health professionals, Paul Godeaux and Bart Leger, have gone through training with the Fire Department to better understand fire fighter stressors. One such training included is a fire flash over, where participants are in full fire bunker gear and air pack and fire rolls above they use a fire hose to keep it under control. Also they have done ride-a-longs with the engine companies to observe their jobs. This has really helped get them in the door with most firefighters and EMS personnel. Adams will be expanding the training for mental health counselors working with Louisiana Spirit to build additional under-

standing of the work and stressors facing first responders.

One concern is that police in Louisiana haven't been helped to the extent of having peers available to them. Through networking with police officers, Louisiana Spirit has had some success in making contacts that may result in the police going with a peer support group. Adams comes from a law enforcement family. He has had the privilege of knowing some great police officers that have helped him in network with the right people and said he looks forward to developing services for law enforcement professionals and all of those in a first responder role.

Adams has been doing peer support since 1979 and believes that with Louisiana Spirit we have an opportunity to get things done that can make a difference in the lives of first responders.

International Association of Fire Firefighters (IAFF) has given Louisiana Spirit a helping hand by helping to logistically organize and get peers on the ground in affected areas to see where the needs are and what we need to do to support and help. Groups from New York, Boston, Los Angeles and Baton Rouge formed teams and were sent out with areas, objectives and places to stay with the fire fighters. Without the role in which IAFF served we would not have received the critical information that will help ensure that we serve those so deserving. Thanks again!

For any questions contact Danny Adams First Responders Peer Support
dadams@dhh.la.gov



Adams said, "when he calls other areas of South Louisiana, he hears that first responders are asking for help which is unusual for first responders and very telling."



Children and schools return to New Orleans



"The total number of public schools that will be open is 57, and 21 of these will be run by the Louisiana Department of Education through its Recovery School District (RSD). (As a result of legislation passed in 2005, authority over 102 public schools in Orleans Parish was transferred to the RSD.)"



Nearly a year after Katrina disrupted lives and property in New Orleans, the school year begins in a vastly changed city. The total number of public schools that will be open is 57, and 21 of these will be run by the Louisiana Department of Education through its Recovery School District (RSD). (As a result of legislation passed in 2005, authority over 102 public schools in Orleans Parish was transferred to the RSD.) The challenges are enormous for this newly created school system and for the principals who must fully staff the schools with all new employees. The Orleans Parish School System will run four schools (plus an evening only school) and the other public schools are charter schools. Most of the buildings will be ready by the first day of school, September 7, and a few will have a delayed opening because repairs are not complete. In some cases, the restoration work required is so extensive that alternate sites must be found.

A little less than one month before the scheduled start date, 6,900 students have pre-registered, either by phone or on-line, and 5,000 have fully completed the registration process. The RSD assures parents that it can provide staff and resources to serve all students who return to public schools in Orleans Parish, especially those who require special education. For further information, visit www.nolapublicschools.net.

LA Spirit staff will provide services to the RSD and teachers and students as they return in the middle of a hurricane season and also prepare for reactions related to the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

For any questions contact Danita LeBlanc, Child/Youth Crisis Services Coordinator at DLeblanc2@dhh.la.gov



A devastated school district has an unprecedented opportunity to remake itself—and to create a more equitable and effective system in the process

Rebuilding New Orleans Schools

KATHLEEN VAIL





Hurricane Katrina Anniversary Events

The City of New Orleans has planned Hurricane Katrina memorial activities themed Remembrance, Renewal, and Rebirth on **Sunday August 27, 2006 and Tuesday, August 29, 2006**. All City events are free and open to the public.

The Remembrance, Renewal, and Rebirth schedule of activities are as follows:

- **Sunday, August 27, 2006** Gospel Concert 2nd floor Auditorium, Hall H Ernest N. Morial Convention Center 3 p.m.

900 Convention Center Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70130

- **Sunday, August 27, 2006 4 PM:** "Remembrance, Thanksgiving and Hope"

United Methodist Church, 930 North Blvd Baton Rouge, LA

- **August 25, 7-9 PM:** National Dialogue: What We Learned from Katrina, Ashe Cultural Arts Center

- **August 26, 12-3 PM:** Hands Around the Dome

- **August 27, 2-4:30 PM:** Ecumenical/Interfaith Worship Service

August 28, 7-9:30 PM: First Annual Katrina Lecture Series

Contact: Mtangulizi Sanyinka, wazuri@aol.com

- **Saturday, August 26:2 PM:** ACORN's Tour of Hope

1024 Elysian Fields in New Orleans

6 PM: ACORN's Katrina Memorial Event

Contact: ACORN, 1-800-239-7379, x. 127 (for reservations on the bus or to trail in your own vehicle)

- **August 27, 2006:**

Noon-Midnight: **Kazanjan Jewels for Charity Silent Auction (bid and view) Harrah's Casino (8 Canal Street)

3-5 PM: *Gospel Concert in the Convention Center (900 Convention Center Blvd.)

9-11 PM: **Ambassadors of Swing Talent Search, Harrah's Casino Theatre (8 Canal Street)

- **August 28, 2006:**

Noon-Midnight: **Kazanjan Jewels for Charity Silent Auction (bid and view) Harrah's Casino (8 Canal Street)

1-2 PM: **Cooking With Music featuring Emeril Lagasse and Wynton Marsalis, an educational program for children at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (900 Convention Center Blvd.)

6-9 PM: **Exclusive Food Experience, Restaurants around New Orleans (Restaurants to be determined)

9 PM-TBA: **Comedy Night at Harrah's Casino Theatre (8 Canal Street)

- **August 29, 2006:**

8:30 AM: *Prayer Breakfast at Asia Baptist Church (1400 Sere Street)

9:38 AM: First Levee Breach

*Ringing of the Bells/Laying of the Wreaths at City Hall (1300 Perdido Street) – Laying of the wreaths will take place at each levee breach in the City Council respective districts

Noon: *Ecumenical Prayer Service at Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, Convention Center Auditorium, Hall H (900 Convention Center Blvd.)

Noon-Midnight: **Kazanjan Jewels for Charity Silent Auction (bid and view) Harrah's Casino (8 Canal Street)

2 PM: *One New Orleans Procession in the tradition of a jazz funeral from the Convention Center to Superdome – Lieutenant General Russell L. Honore will be the Grand Marshall of the procession, honoring first responders, the lives lost in Katrina, and the rebirth of New Orleans

3:30 PM: *Pre-Concert Community Event begins at the end of the One New Orleans Procession at the Superdome (1500 Poydras Street)

6-8PM: **New Orleans: Rebuilding the Soul of America...One Year Later televised concert at the New Orleans Arena (1501 Girod Street)

8:30 PM-TBA: **Post-Event: Masquerade Gala (Diamond and Platinum tickets only) at Harrah's Casino (8 Canal Street)

9:30 PM: *Fireworks – Rebirth of One New Orleans on the Riverfront

*City Events

**Wynton Marsalis' Packaged Events

Contact: Emeline Desse, edesse@mayorofno.com (for city events) and Mary Lee Murphy, murphym@peteramayer.com, (504) 210-1320 (for Wynton Marsalis' Events)

List of Events Continued on page 14

Hurricane Katrina Anniversary Events

Tuesday, August 29 (Anniversary of Landfall of Hurricane Katrina):

10 AM: On August 29 at 10 AM, students faculty, family and friends will all gather in New Orleans' Upper Ninth Ward at the former ministry and school headquarters of the **Desire Street Ministries and Desire Street Academy, 3600 Desire Street**, for a time of prayer, remembrance, and thanksgiving lead by executive director and former New Orleans Saints quarterback Danny Wuerffel.

Contact: Marcia Peterson, mpeterson@desirestreet.org

10 AM-1 PM: People's Hurricane Relief Fund is working with **30 grassroots organizations** to coordinate the **Great Flood Commemoration March** which will begin at the levee breach in the Lower 9th Ward and end in Congo Square. Planning meetings are currently scheduled for Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Musicians Union Hall (2401 Esplanade Ave).

Contact: Malcolm Suber, 504-931-7614, msuber4366@yahoo.com

10 AM-5PM: To commemorate the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, **The Historic New Orleans Collection** will host an all-day event on Tuesday, August 29, featuring presentations by the Times-Picayune reporting staff, winners of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Hurricane Katrina coverage, and a lecture and book signing by Richard Campanella (Geographies of New Orleans; Urban Fabrics Before the Storm, August 2006). The anniversary event, free and open to the public will be followed by a reception and exhibition viewing.

12 Noon: Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans plans a "Back to the 9th on the 29th" lunch at 12 noon at the **Shirley Landry Benson PACE Center at St. Cecilia (4201 N. Rampart St.)** to recognize Catholic Charities' dedication to models of excellence in health-care, education, housing, and economic development in the neighborhoods of New Orleans.

7 PM: Archbishop Hughes will host a **Katrina Memorial Interfaith Prayer Service** at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans. The Cathedral has a 950 person seating capacity.

Contact: Deacon Ron Guidry, Director of the Office of Worship for the Archdiocese, 504-861-3600 (to reserve your seat).

7-8 PM: The **Archdiocese of New Orleans** will hold a prayer service from 7-8 pm on August 29 at **St. Louis Cathedral on Jackson Square**. Members of 12 faiths, including Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu will participate in this service. The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra will play in Jackson Square from 8:00-8:55, and at 8:55, the Katrina bell (twin to the 9/11 bell in New York City) will be rung to commemorate the lives lost in Katrina.

- **Tuesday, August 29, 2006 10 AM:** St. Bernard Parish daylong remembrance

Contact: Tony "Ricky" Melerine, Parish Councilman and Committee Co-chair, and Charlie Reppel, Chief of Staff for Parish President Junior Rodriguez

- **Tuesday, August 29, 2006** National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Prayer Breakfast and Macedonia Ministry Asia Baptist Church
8:30 a.m. , 1400 Sere Street New Orleans, LA 70122

- **Tuesday, August 29, 2006** Ceremonial Bell Ringing and Wreath Laying City Hall 9:38 a.m.
1300 Perdido Street New Orleans, LA 70112

- **Tuesday, August 29, 2006** Dedication Ceremony Mississippi River Heritage Park 10:30 a.m.
1100 block of Convention Center Boulevard

- **Tuesday, August 29, 2006**
Citywide Interfaith Service Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
Convention Center Auditorium - Hall H, 2nd Floor 12Noon
900 Convention Center Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70130

- **Tuesday, August 29, 2006**
One New Orleans Procession 2:00 p.m. In the tradition of a Jazz Funeral - Convention Center to Superdome
More events listed by the Times Picayune <http://www.nola.com/katrina/?katrina/content/anniversary.html>

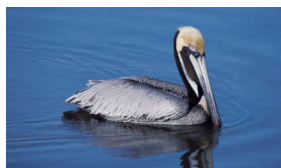


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Keeping the spirit of
Louisiana alive!

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Wellness tips : the art of self acceptance

A wise man once wrote, "Everyone is worth more than his worst act." At some point in our lives we each face failure, loss, and shame. One of the basic elements in the recovery process is the art of self-acceptance. Learning to love and value yourself means that you let go of past mistakes, regrets, and frustrations. This opens the door to a bright new future...a world full of hope and promise.

Use this check list from Louise Hay to begin practicing the art of self-acceptance:

STOP ALL CRITICISM - Accept yourself just as you are.

DON'T SCARE YOURSELF - Switch your scary thoughts to a mental image that gives you pleasure.

BE GENTLE AND KIND AND PATIENT – Treat yourself like someone you really love.

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND – Don't hate yourself. Gently change your thoughts.

PRAISE YOURSELF – Praise builds up the inner spirit. Tell yourself how well you are do-

ing.

FIND WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF – Reach out to friends and allow them to help you.

BE LOVING TO YOUR NEGATIVES – Lovingly release old negative patterns.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY – Learn about nutrition and exercise. Cherish the temple you live in.

MIRROR WORK – Look into your eyes often. Express the growing love you have for yourself. Forgive yourself looking into the mirror.

LOVE YOURSELF...DO IT NOW – Don't wait until you get well, or lose the weight, or get the new job, or get out of debt, or find the new relationship. Begin now...and do the best you can.

Accept reality, the facts and conditions of our lives, not the unreal expectations of ourselves and others. Recovery begins with "The Art of Self-Acceptance."