



A New Day at Gulfport

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We are grateful for your interest and your participation in the hurricane recovery work that has been going on along the Gulf Coast since September 2005.

Your time, talent, and financial support of Camp Hope has made a great impact on the Gulf Coast.

As the ministry of Camp Hope closes, we ask that you continue to uphold the people of the Coast in your prayers for the continued renewal of body, mind, and spirit to continue.

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Thank You For Bearing Our Burdens — Dr. Guy Richard

Those of you who have seen the movie “You’ve Got Mail” will remember the scene in which Meg Ryan’s character is faced with closing her childrens book store and with dealing with the flood of memories that that sad event brings to her mind. Well, in one sense, closing Camp Hope has produced something similar in myself and in many of those to whom I have spoken lately. True, it was only a part of our lives for a relatively short period of time (not quite 2 ½ years). But it was such a **huge** encouragement for so many of us during those 2 ½ years, especially in the months that immediately followed the hurricane.

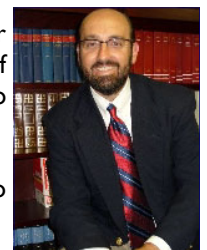
Camp Hope helped many of us to go on putting one foot in front of the other. It helped others of us to refocus our priorities away from the things of this world and onto serving Christ and His Church (after all, what will continue to bear fruit when we are dead and gone? the activities we were involved in? our résumé? the money we made? the possessions we accumulated? Or, will it be the work we have done for the sake of Christ?). Camp Hope reminded all of us that God is real, that His Church is real, and that His Church is alive and well and is FAR bigger than Gulfport, Mississippi.

It is always a sad occasion when we are forced to say goodbye to those things that have played important parts in our lives. And such events do bring back a flood of memories. For me, Camp Hope’s closing has brought back memories of the early days, before there ever was such a thing as “Camp Hope”; of the very first crews from Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church in Greer, SC, who came down to build the bath house; of the many Wednesday nights early on that we spent together (outside, mind you!) to eat dinner, to enjoy rich fellowship, and to praise our Great God and Savior; and of the many, many faces that I can still see in my mind’s eye and that I hope I will continue to see for some time to come.

Closing Camp Hope was a sad occasion. But if we neglect to finish what Camp Hope has started in our midst and fail to refocus our efforts as a congregation on reaching out and serving our community in new and different ways, then Camp Hope’s closing *really* will be sad. It will then mark not just the end of one chapter of our lives and the beginning of a new one but also the end of our attempts to reach and impact our community, a turning of our backs on what we have learned after Katrina.

Please continue to pray for us here on the Gulf Coast, that we will never forget the lessons of Camp Hope. Pray for us as we now start the process of building our new church facility. Thank you for everything you have done to encourage us and to stand by our sides during these most difficult of times.

You have been a fulfillment of Galatians 6:2, “bearing our burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ.”





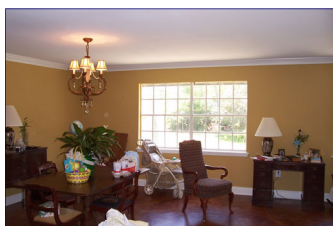
Vicki Herwig with Louise Holcomb in her new kitchen



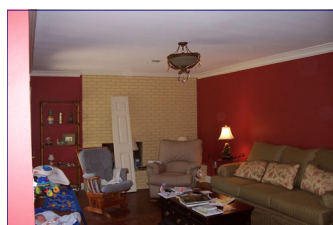
Georgia Volunteer wrote:

“I came and saw what my mind could not comprehend. We tore down and rebuilt.

We were served by serving others.”



Two more finished rooms in Louise Holcomb's home



“Blessed are You Who Do These Things...” —Heather Carter

For the first time since I started as scheduling coordinator I have no future volunteer schedules to post for Camp Hope. With some sadness at this ending I feel an equal excitement about what God will do next, where, with whom, and how.

I did not loose my home in Katrina and I was not a recipient of Camp Hope in that sense. However, in seeing what has taken place here on the Gulf Coast and at Camp Hope I find my life changed and I stand today even more amazed at the greatness of our God and the many ways He works.

Over 3,600 men and women volunteers have come here to our camp and have served with a John 13 kind of love for one another. We should not underestimate the power of that love and what God can still do with the seeds that have been planted here as a result. They will be growing and bearing fruit for generations to come. What a humbling and wonderful thought! I will miss seeing so many of you that I have grown to love. Nothing can take away the bond that is ours as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

So, in closing, I say thank you from just one life that has been touched by the testimony of so many.



Camp Hope FAQ's

Over the period of time Camp Hope was in operation, financial support came from churches (164), many individuals, organizations and foundations. These contributions were sent for a time on a regular monthly basis and in other cases a one time gift.

- These contributions **totaled \$1,054,000.00.**

Some churches who came to volunteer brought their own funds which they used to buy supplies, etc. and were not counted in this total.

- **3,632 volunteers** came to Camp Hope, some for one visit and others returning multiple times.
- The **cost to feed these volunteers** over the tenure of Camp Hope was **\$131,181.09** which breaks down to **\$36.12 per volunteer!**
- **300 homes** were refurbished by the volunteers.

Not included in this total were homes which clean-up and debris removal assistance was given in the early days after the hurricane and for which a total was not kept.

Praise God for the generosity of His people

Canadian Volunteer writes:

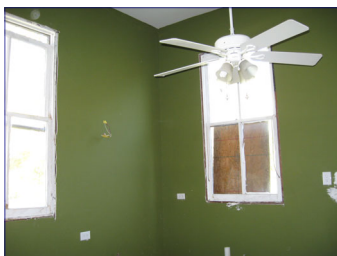
“Seeing the devastation with my own eyes has really impressed on me how necessary it is to place our trust in the unchanging God because everything else in this world can change so quickly—just like that! As Hurricane Katrina changed so many millions of lives. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work revival in America & Canada.”



Debra Classens' 150 year old home



“Camp Hope may have taken down its sign, but it the memories we share can never be taken away”



Top picture: Kitchen in progress

Bottom: Kitchen Completed!



The Memories Live On — Brian Houweling

As I reflect back on the three times spent at Camp Hope over the past 2 1/2 years, I have mixed feelings. I am sad it has come to an end, yet I am so thankful that God has allowed me to come and spend time there.

The first time my friend, Vic, and I came we planned to spend one week. When that week ended we felt guilty about going home so we stayed as long as we dared and made up the time driving home. It is only a 40-hour drive, 2,400 miles. That time U.S.A. customs took our eye and finger prints and we had to pay \$6.00 to volunteer, and they gave us a card we had to hand in on our way out of the U.S.

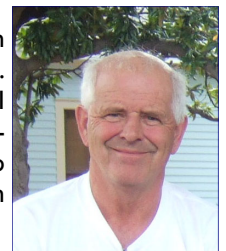
The second time Vic and I came back, we were given letters from Fema. You should have seen the look on the faces at customs (who's Fema?). We stayed just over two weeks. This time there was no Camp Host or "job boss" so guess what happened? Lisa asked if I could help fill in. Thankfully, God gave me the ability to humbly help out, people put up with me and together we made it work. Again Vic and I used the driving time to make up time. Before I left, Lisa challenged me to come back again.

When I heard Camp Hope was closing on Dec. 1, 2007, I wanted to return one more time. My wife, Alice, came along. She said she had to check out all these women I always talked about, Lisa, Heather, Melanie, and Cece. We spent five weeks there. Again, I was asked to be project manager. It is amazing how God gives us insight and talent to do the work that needs to be done.

The work was something else. We never knew what to expect. We would look at house and think: How in the world can we fix this? We had to remind ourselves that we were there to get families back into their homes and then what had seemed impossible became possible.

As I look back it was quite an experience working with other Christians from different backgrounds. We shared our faith and had very good discussions about why we believe what we do. It made me appreciate and realize how rich my reformed heritage is. What a blessing to work with older and younger people. We always encouraged each other and devotions were always a highlight.

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all who worked with me to make the projects successful. Also thanks to the Gulfport P.C.A. Church for Camp Hope and the Sundays I looked forward to every week. I would also like to express many thanks to Heather and Lisa for their expertise and patience. Above all, thanks to our Father in Heaven! Camp Hope may have taken down its sign, but the memories that we share can never be taken away.



North Carolina Volunteer wrote:

This was one of the most amazing weeks of my life. In past trips I usually just stayed in my group,...but this time all the groups did everything together. I've never made such lasting friendships in so short a time. The fellowship was real and powerful. There was an amazing lady who changed my life and became my role model. She lost 5 loved ones and then in the hurricane, her home as well. Yet she came through with an incredible faith and she's not afraid to admit that she is still struggling. You come here expecting to help people but they are ones who give so much to you. The work is hard and sometimes new but it is mentally and emotionally refreshing!

Karen Riad's Home



Karen has kept a running diary of every volunteer who has helped repair her home.



She framed out the drywall with all the volunteer signatures.

It has become a permanent testimony in her home of God has done for her.



Living Room and Kitchen



Remember His Wonderful Deeds —Bonnie Campbell

As I look back on the ministry of Camp Hope I am so totally overwhelmed by what I learned each time my husband and I went back. I learned so much about the horrific devastation of storms. I learned about the incredible resiliency of peoples' spirits in the face of such tragedy. I learned about the unbelievable generosity of God's people to come together to help. I learned things about myself. I learned things about crawfish I didn't really need to know but most of all I learned how great our God is and what a powerful force His people can be when they allow Him to work in and through them.

It is no exaggeration to say we saw miracles happen daily. We saw needs being filled sometimes even before we realized there was a need—from materials on a job site, a volunteer with the expertise to do a job, to making the facilities at the camp more efficient for serving the volunteers. Grace abounded in every volunteer as their energy waned as the week went on. God always revived us to do even more the next day.

The unity and one spirit of total strangers coming together to "help Mississippi" was amazing. I do pray that spirit of oneness is something we will all take back to our churches and endeavor to keep alive. The boldness of those who were usually timid in sharing their faith was incredible and this sharing of God's message increased their own faith.

Although the volunteers came to give aid to the folks of the Gulf Coast, it wasn't unusual to find one volunteer ministering to another. We all come carrying our life's problems. What a blessing it was to see how God matched up the volunteers to encourage one another.

Last, but certainly not least, are the people of the Gulf Coast and most especially the people of First Presbyterian Church. What I learned from all of them is how to face incredible trials with dignity, strength, and faith. Their generous southern hospitality and graciousness can not be matched anywhere else in the US. Any volunteer will tell you they always were thanked profusely by the folks for coming but we all felt deeply grateful for the privilege of getting to know them. Friendships have been forged that I especially pray will continue to grow for years to come.

It is my prayer, as I'm sure it is of all of you who volunteered, that what we saw God do, the wonders He preformed, will continue to impact the lives we came into contact with, as well as our own in our home churches, and "in His time" will grow into maturity and bear fruit. Also as FPC continues to reach out into the communities they will truly be a beacon of God's love for the coast to see and be drawn in.



Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face continually.
Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done, His marvels and the judgments from His mouth,
O seed of Israel His servant, Sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!
I Chronicles 16:11-13

PA Volunteer wrote:
Camp Hope has been an opportunity to see God's hands at work. We have watched His body come together even with all of our quirks. One who's a leg, is completed by a foot, and a hand completes an arm, all working together as Christ's ambassadors. As you watch, it makes your heart warm. But the greatest work here is done by the listening ears that allow the hurting people to share and thereby helping quiet their fears. We thank you for allowing us to serve God in this awesome way and we pray His hand favors you each and every day.

Doug Barber's Home



“...seeing joy on the faces of people, who have lived in FEMA trailers for over two years return to their homes are just a few of the blessings.”



A College Student wrote:

Thank you for providing an opportunity for us to serve the Lord during our break at school. By serving others, we were able to have a wonderful experience with the good deeds that are prepared for us by the Lord. The mixing of crews was also a true blessing. Even though we were cross-cultures, we were able to connect on the deeper level, that is share the blessing of Christ's grace. Thank you again for the wonderful opportunity.

One Door Closes, Another Opens — Scott Herwig

Almost three years ago as my wife and I were planning my retirement, I wondered what the Lord had in store for us. I had just heard about our denomination's disaster response ministry, and figured it would be something we could do in our spare time. Something that would require perhaps a week or two a year of travel into an area effected by a natural disaster.

Things started out that way in 2004 when we took our first team to Florida after hurricane Charlie, and our second trip was to Sri Lanka in 2005 after the devastating tsunami. But in August of 2005 our country suffered the worst natural disaster in its history. Hurricane Katrina destroyed a part of the U.S. the size of Great Britain. It was then we realized the great opportunity the Lord had given us to serve Him.

Over the past two and a half years we have had the opportunity to make six trips to Gulfport, Mississippi totaling six months. Working with First Presbyterian Church of Gulfport and its Camp Hope project has been the most rewarding experience of our lives. The privilege of seeing how the Lord turned something bad and created good has been a blessing to everyone who made the trip South.

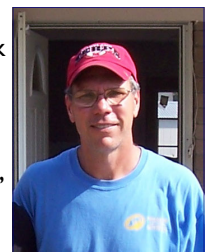
Nearly 1,000 members of our presbytery heeded the call, and many for the first time stepped outside their comfort zone and experienced the power of God working to bring the lost and hurting to Him. Living and working 24/7 with Christians from all over the country and Canada, seeing friendships formed between team members and locals and seeing joy on the faces of people, who have lived in FEMA trailers for over two years, return to their homes are just a few of those blessings. Some 400 families experienced the love of Christ through the efforts of Camp Hope and its volunteers.

When the Lord closes one door he usually opens another. Camp Hope closed down on December 1st but there is still much to do in the Gulf Coast area and many more souls seeking hope. Our denomination has a project in Bay St. Louis as well as New Orleans and we are waiting to hear with anticipation what he has in store for us.

Pray for those families Camp Hope touched through its outreach ministry, that they may see Christ this holiday season as they enjoy Christmas in homes built by those willing to share His love.

To all those who served with us, have a blessed Christmas and we look forward to meeting again on this side of the Jordan or the other!

Note: If you are interested in volunteering with the Bay St. Louis effort, contact Scott Herwig at slherwig@gmail.com for more information



The Warren Home

How flood waters can damage a home
inside and outside



“The came from the North,
South, East and West,
oh! What a sight.
It was evident God’s
guidance was from
beginning to end...”

Pointing out how high
the water level reached



“Twas The Night Before Camp Hope Closed —Lisa Ladner

‘Twas the night before Camp Hope closed, when all through the bunkhouse
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse (well, maybe a mouse);

The tools were all hung in the trailers with care,
In hopes that the Deacons would soon be there;

The homeowners were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of new sheetrock danced in their heads;
And Bonnie in her apron, and Sam by his lamp,
Had just settled down for the last night at camp,
When out by the bunkhouse there arose such a clatter,
Sally sprang from her bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the window she flew like a flash,
Crawled over the bed and made such a clash.
The moon over the kitchen gave such a glow
Caught Jacob at midnight, a snack in tow
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,

But a Minnie trailer, and a VW in the rear,
With Sam the driver, tired and not so quick,
I knew in a moment it wasn’t St Nick.

While trying to remember why they came,
He whistled and sang and thought, hey, I’m still sane;
Now, Scott! now, Vickie! now, Brian! now, Alice!
On, Hans! on Rita! on, Tom! and Steve!
Clean the floors! clean the pots and the pans!
Now wash away! wash away! wash away with your hands!
As memories of what hurricanes can do to a town,
We remember what obstacles can get you down,
So up to the house-top of roofs that leak,
Nail guns were being used all through the week.

And then, in a twinkling, all the wiring was complete
The mudding and sanding of each new wall was neat.
As each volunteer felt like they were spinning around,
New direction and focus was soon found.
They were dressed all in overalls, boots and an old shirt,
And their clothes were all tarnished with dust and dirt;
A bundle of shingles they flung on their backs,
Soon they felt like roofers, once they got the knack.
Their eyes—how they twinkled! their dimples how merry!
As they went about their work without a tarry!
Chubby, skinny, tall and short, each one a delight,

They came from the North, South, East and West, oh! what a sight.
It was evident God’s guidance was from beginning to end,
He sent us Heritage, their hand to lend.
Money, materials and volunteers He did provide,
As HOPE did abound, with God on our side.
Closing Camp hope brings such a sigh,
Let us dear friends, give God praise on high.

We can all exclaim, as we turn out the camp light,
To God be the glory, with all of our might!

Recipients of Camp Hope's
Love & Assistance



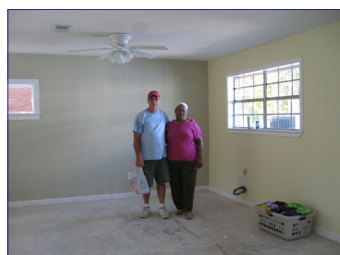
Mary Ferguson



Mr. & Mrs. Ben Hillyard



Mr. Wray Anderson



Scott Herwig with
homeowner Jean Dedeaux

Thank You —Lisa Ladner

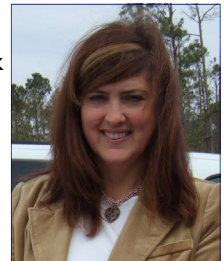
As I look back on the last two and half years, it is with love and admiration that I think of all of the volunteers that made Camp Hope happen.

As a recipient of Camp Hope's help, I know first hand what the face of Christ looks like. As a Christian, I know what it means to have brothers and sisters in Christ that were willing to put their lives on hold for us.

As the Camp Hope administrator, I have learned what being a servant of Christ really means. Whether you were able to give of your time, your money, or your prayers Camp Hope would not have been as successful without you.

On behalf of myself, the commission, and our church, a heartfelt thank you to one and all.

Lisa Ladner
Roddy Russell
Butch Jordan
Ed Webb



The last entry in the Camp Hope Log is dated December 1, 2007 and was written by a member of the group of volunteers from the State of Washington:

Today is the last day of Camp. The doors will be closed but what a blessing this has been. A ministry that has touched so many, both workers and recipients.

This week we have:

- Repaired a house
- Restored a home
- Made new friends
- Ate great food
- Listened
- Laughed
- Prayed together
- Seen faith in God restored

Thanks for letting us be a part of it all.

“Well done, good and faithful servant”

