

62982

SERO Hurricane Katrina Assessment Team Report

November 1, 2005

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Overview

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)-Southeastern Regional Office (SERO) Hurricane Katrina Disaster Assessment Project is intended to provide the foundation for a long-term response to select communities (geographic and diverse cultural groups) within the disaster area: Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. The assessment team was directed to:

1. Identify specific communities that will benefit from a focused a significant AFSC presence.
2. Conduct a needs assessment in these areas.
3. Begin laying the groundwork for AFSC involvement by establishing relationships with local agencies, churches and other grassroots/community based organizations.
4. Prepare a report on their findings.

The assessment team covered an area that extended east to west from Mobile, Alabama to Houma, Louisiana and north to Hattiesburg, Mississippi. In the coastal towns within this area, most buildings within ½ mile of the Gulf of Mexico were destroyed or damaged beyond repair. For the next mile or so inland, some structures survived, but almost all sustained serious damage. In East Biloxi, Mississippi, nearly every building was damaged or destroyed.

The counties and parishes that have been declared eligible for federal disaster assistance for individuals include about two-thirds of the population of Louisiana and Mississippi and one-sixth of the Population of Alabama. In an article published by The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities on September 19, 2005, "Essential Facts about the Victims of Hurricane Katrina" Arloc Sherman and Isaac Shapiro reported that "Many Hurricane Katrina victims faced difficult living conditions even before the storm arrived. Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama are respectively the first, second and eighth poorest states in the nation. And of the 5.8 million individuals in these states who lived in the areas struck hardest by the hurricane, more than one million lived in poverty prior to the hurricane's onset." The Center published the following table showing "the poverty rate and median household income in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. The table compares the data for these states to the data for other states and the nation."

	Poverty Rate	Rank	Median Household Income	Rank
Alabama	16.1%	8th Worst	\$36,709	9th Lowest
Louisiana	19.4%	2nd Worst	\$35,110	5th Lowest
Mississippi	21.6%	Worst	\$31,642	2nd Lowest
U.S.	13%*		\$44,684	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) for 2004.

According to the ACS (which the government uses for ranking states by poverty), the national poverty rate was 13.1 percent in 2004. According to another government survey, the Current Population Survey, it was 12.7 percent.

On September 29, 2005 the Environmental Justice Resource Center Published an article entitled “Legacy of Unfairness: Why some Americans Get Left Behind.” In this article Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright observed that: “Katrina struck a region that has a disproportionately large share of African Americans and poor people.”

Given AFSC’s priority of serving oppressed communities, especially people who are poor, working poor and communities of color, the assessment team sought out African American communities, Latino communities, Southeast Asian communities and underserved groups in the area.

Communities

Hurricane Katrina hit an area of the United States that is disproportionately African American and poor with new immigrants, documented and undocumented, arriving in large numbers to take jobs that were traditionally held by the native born poor of the region.

1. African American Communities

Poor and desperate African Americans are the faces that many people remember most vividly from the pictures and news clips documenting the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe. African Americans constitute twelve percent of the United States Population. Pre-Katrina New Orleans was nearly 68 percent black. "The African American population in the coastal area of Mississippi ranged from 25 percent to 87 percent. African Americans make up nearly half (46.3 percent) of Mobile, Alabama" (Bullard and Wright, 2005).

Poverty rates were 28 percent in New Orleans, 17.7 percent in Gulfport, MS, and 21.2 percent in Mobile, AL in 2000. Nationally 13 percent of Americans fell below the poverty line in 2000. "In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, those who had little, now learn that they have absolutely nothing. What was poverty has become destitution, a dark tunnel with no light at its end for many of these stranded families. It may take years to rebuild or reestablish these devastated cities" (*Left Behind*, Susan Pizarro-Eckert, About.com). "You'd have to go back to slavery, or the burning of black towns, to find a comparable event that has affected black people this way," said Darnell M. Hunt, a sociologist and head of the African American studies department at UCLA. As reported by the AP on September 9, 2005

The following table also by Sherman and Shapiro compares poverty rates between the general population of the three states "hit" by Katrina and the "black or African American" population.

**POPULATION AND POVERTY DATA FOR AREAS AFFECTED BY
HURRICANE KATRINA, FROM THE 2000 CENSUS**

Source: 2000 census; FEMA designations as of 9-14-05

"Black or African American" includes some individuals who specified more than one race.

Numbers in thousands

	<u>ALL RACES</u>				<u>BLACK OR AFRICAN-AMERICAN</u>			
	All Persons	Number Poor	Pct Poor*	Number below 50% of poverty line	All Persons	Number Poor	Pct Poor*	Number below 50% of poverty line
U.S.	281,422	33,900	12.4%	15,337	36,213	8,535	24.7%	4,279
Hardest-hit states:								
AL,LA,MS	11,761	2,097	18.4%	973	3,671	1,208	34.4%	589
Alabama	4,447	698	16.1%	315	1,167	350	31.2%	168
Louisiana	4,469	851	19.6%	408	1,462	511	36.6%	256
Mississippi	2,845	548	19.9%	250	1,042	348	34.9%	165
Federal disaster areas:								
Counties eligible for								
Any FEMA assistance**	14,194	2,417	17.5%	1,124	4,065	1,278	32.7%	624
Alabama	1,877	307	16.7%	142	588	179	31.2%	86
Florida	5,003	711	14.5%	324	973	241	25.6%	117
Louisiana	4,469	851	19.6%	408	1,462	511	36.6%	256
Mississippi	2,845	548	19.9%	250	1,042	348	34.9%	165
Hardest hit-counties: eligible								
for aid to individuals	5,780	1,043	18.6%	493	1,909	625	34.0%	305
Alabama	771	130	17.2%	60	231	75	33.5%	35
Florida	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0.0%	0
Louisiana	3,110	559	18.4%	272	998	331	34.5%	167
Mississippi	1,899	355	19.3%	161	680	219	33.6%	103
New Orleans metropolitan area	1,317	237	18.3%	120	496	159	32.9%	83
New Orleans city	485	131	27.9%	70	328	111	34.9%	59

* Percentage poor equals column 2 divided by the population for whom poverty status is determined.

This may not equal column 2 divided by column 1.

** Includes counties eligible for assistance to individuals as well as a broader group of counties eligible only for assistance to public agencies. For Louisiana and Mississippi, this includes all counties in the state. For Alabama and Florida, only selected counties are included.

2. Latino/a Communities

Immigrants represent a fraction of those harmed by Katrina. These residents, like others, suffered the loss of lives, family members, jobs and homes and possessions. They also face additional hardships:

- Loss of legal status
- Loss of documents proving lawful status and employment authorization
- Barriers to government benefits
- Language barriers
- Loss of refugee services

The presence of Latina and Latino migrant communities has increased significantly along the gulf coast area during the past ten years, in concert with the need for labor (construction and maintenance) in the growth of casinos along the shores as well as in poultry and fish processing plants. Estimates of the number of Latinos in the Gulf Coast region range from 10,000 to 300,000 with most people knowledgeable about the area estimating a population of approximately 200,000 based on consular reports. This increase in the gulf area has coincided with the recent overall growth of the Latina/o population throughout the Southeast region as a whole. As such, Latinas and Latinos, like all communities living in the area, experienced a sense of despair and vulnerability, affected by the devastation of the storm with the loss of possessions and most deeply, with the sudden loss of loved ones.

3. Southeast Asian Communities

There are sizable communities of poor and working class Southeast Asian Americans – most notably Vietnamese with smaller numbers of Cambodian and Laotian – in Bayou La Batre, AL and Biloxi, MS. (at least 1,300 out of a population of around 4,500 in Bayou La Batre, and about 4,000 along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, 1,500 of which live in the city of Biloxi – Census 2000.) Most made their modest living in the fishing (including shrimping and seafood processing) and gaming industries while others worked in construction, welding, nail salons, and other service industries. Because of the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina and Rita on the gaming and fishing industries, most folks are currently out of jobs.

Like other poor victims of color, poor Asians were also left behind during the wake of the hurricane. (Unfortunately, more than a month later many families are still being neglected by the State. *Biloxi families still wait for aid*, Houston Chronicle Oct. 23, 2005 - <http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/nation/3408238>.)

It should be noted that there is a sizable number of single Asian female households along the Gulf Coast. (*South leads trend of motherhood without marriage*, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, <http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/10/05/13motherhood.html>.) In

addition, there is a relatively large concentration of Amerasians (abandoned Vietnamese/bi-racial children of U.S. servicemen) in Bayou La Batre.

4. Underserved Groups

- **Women**

Poverty rates in the United States are highest for families headed by single women, particularly if they are black or Hispanic. In 2004, 28.4 percent of households headed by single women were poor, while 13.5 percent of households headed by single men and 5.5 percent of married-couple households lived in poverty. In 2004, both black and Hispanic female-headed households had poverty rates just under 40 percent.

Women of color are particularly disadvantaged in the southern states. The Institute for Women's Policy research reports that in the South Central Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas) overall, 27.1 percent of African American women and 24.0 percent of Hispanic women lived in poverty in 1999, compared with only 10.9 percent of white women. Louisiana ranks worst in the region and in the nation for poverty among African American women, and Mississippi ranks next to last both regionally and nationally. In Louisiana, more than 35 percent of all African American women aged 16 or older lived in poverty in 1999, compared with 12.6 percent ranks best in the region of white women (based on 2000 Census data). Mississippi's figures are almost identical.

Jane Connolly, writing for the Association for Women's Rights in Development -- a large, progressive organization with good global feminist analysis, summarizes a report on women recovering from the Tsunami, with the observation that the situation in Indonesia is relevant for women in the Gulf Coast:

Women are more vulnerable during disasters because they have less access to resources, and they are the primary caregivers to children, the elderly and the disabled. This means that they are less able to mobilise resources, will be more likely to be over-represented in the unemployed following a disaster, and overburdened with domestic responsibilities leaving them with less freedom to pursue sources of income. It is most often the women who go without food in order to feed their families during a disaster. In addition to these issues, women are often the victims of domestic and sexual violence following a natural disaster...

There are even barriers to women's participation in disaster relief because some areas are not considered "safe" for women to work. This has major

implications for women survivors who want assistance from women relief workers...

But just as women are more vulnerable to the consequences of natural disasters, they are often the most innovative in implementing immediate relief to their families and communities.

- **Children**

Nationally, 17.8 percent of children live in poverty. The following chart from the U.S. Census Bureau gives a breakdown of these children by race.

Children Under 18 Living in Poverty, 2004		
Category	Number (in thousands)	Percent
All children under 18	13,027	17.8
White only, non-Hispanic	4,507	10.5
Black	4,049	33.2
Hispanic	4,102	28.9
Asian	334	9.8

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2004, Report P60, n. 229, Table B-2, pp. 52-7.

In a press release dated September 23, 2005, The National Center for Children in Poverty reported that “throughout the Gulf Coast states, rates of extreme child poverty—that is, children in families with annual incomes of less than \$10,000 for a family of four—are among the highest in the nation.”

- 13% of all children in Louisiana live in extreme poverty
- 12% of all children in Mississippi live in extreme poverty
- 8% of all children in Alabama live in extreme poverty

- And in the City of New Orleans, 38% percent of all children live in poverty—which is more than double the national child poverty rate (17% U.S.).

And, “poverty rates for African-American children far surpass poverty rates for white children not only in the Gulf region but nationally as well.”

- In Louisiana, 44% of all African-American children live in poverty; 9% of white children do.
- In Mississippi, 41% of African-American children live in poor families; 10% of white children do.
- In Alabama, 42% of African- American children live in poor families; 11% of white children do.
- Across the United States, 33% of African-American children live in poor families; 10% of white children do.

Findings

“We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn’t do it, but God did.” Louisiana Congressman Richard Baker (R-LA).

In 1969 the American Friends Service Committee and the Southern Regional Council published a report entitled *In the Wake of Camille*. The findings of that report are as follows:

The response of the Federal Government and of agencies acting on its behalf to the disaster ... was large. Private agencies also provided extensive immediate help. But to a great extent the federal influence was characterized by its size rather than its sensitivity. The Federal Government appears to treat a natural disaster as it would a military disaster ... large numbers of troops are rapidly assigned to remove bodies and clean up debris, and are withdrawn as soon as possible.

- The Federal Government devoted its primary attention to public facilities damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster and regulated the care of individuals to others.
- The Federal Government has not recognized by its actions the need for imaginative outreach to people both numbed by disaster and cut off from normal channels of communication. *Clear information regarding services available, location of sources of aid and the terms of such aid was not taken to people, and as a result rumors were rife and inhibited utilization of such services.*
- Aid was not dispensed equitably to all people. There is no minimum standard of need by which the adequacy of disaster care is measured.
- There has been no coordinated program to protect consumers from exploitation and fraud.
- The special needs of the poor have not been affirmatively identified and met. *Often alienated from the community at large the poor are especially ill-prepared to cope with a disaster. ... Many of the poor live in isolated areas and aid was slow to reach them. The poor have not been involved in identifying needed emergency services nor in planning for the future, thus adding both to frustration and alienation.*
- The Federal Government has taken little or no action to combat racial exclusion and discrimination in this disaster situation and in some cases is contributing to the problem.

Sadly, thirty-six years later little has changed. Although the Federal Government did, in fact, respond to the recommendations put forth in the Hurricane Camille report by establishing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), much of what was accomplished by that agency was diminished when it was placed under the Department of Homeland Security. And, a recommendation was made by the President of the United States that in the future disasters should be treated as military operations taking the country back to the 1960’s.

The findings of the Hurricane Katrina Assessment Team are as follows:

- **The Federal Government has taken little or no action to combat racism and discrimination in this disaster situation and in some cases is contributing to the problem.** In an area that was predominately African American, the Black community has been dispersed – absent from the land and hard to find. AFSC staff member, Darryl Jordon commented that “not since slavery have institutions of authority so deliberately planned and executed the separation and distribution of the African community. I now believe that what began as a natural disaster has in fact given birth to the recreation of a new south, gentrified and safe for corporate investment and private development.
- **As in 1969, the needs of poor people have not been acknowledged or met.** The lack of adequate transportation prohibited poor people in New Orleans from being evacuated. Lack of adequate transportation has made it impossible for many poor people to access aid. To compound this situation FEMA and Red Cross services were located in areas inaccessible to many people – particularly people who are elderly and disabled. Language barriers also prevented many people from understanding what was happening and prevented them from evacuating when warnings were issued.
- **The evacuation of New Orleans was not coordinated resulting in children being separated from their parents and families.**
- **The special needs of immigrant populations have not been identified or met.** With an estimated 200,000 – 300,000 Latina/o people in the hurricane devastated area, neither FEMA nor other significant players in disaster relief provided Spanish speaking workers, translators or forms in languages other than English. FEMA did provide some translation services for the Vietnamese population. However, culturally appropriate food was not provided to Vietnamese immigrants or Latina/o immigrants.
- **Aid was not dispensed equitably to all people. The Federal Government continues to exclude undocumented immigrants from accessing services that should be available to all people in a disaster area.** In a circular entitled, ‘You May Be Able to Get Disaster Assistance,’ FEMA states: “If YOU are not eligible (referring to undocumented persons), but you have a CHILD who is a citizen, non-citizen national, or a qualified alien, then you may qualify for assistance AND You do NOT have to give information about your own citizenship or immigration status.”

However, on the actual application to request assistance called the “Applicant’s Guide to the Individuals and Household Program FEMA Form 90-698,” on page

19, it reads: “I understand that the information provided regarding my application for FEMA disaster assistance may be subjected to sharing within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) including, but not limited to, the **Bureau of Immigration and Custom Enforcement.**”

In areas where there are significant numbers of Southeast Asian people, disaster relief services were slow

- **There has been no coordinated program to protect people from exploitation and fraud.** Immigrant populations in the disaster area have been subjected to racial profiling, intimidation, worker abuse and exploitation. The threat of immigration enforcement is being used to evict families from their places of residence. Latino migrant workers are being lured to the area from surrounding towns (Jackson, Forrest, Morton) and states (NC, AL, TX, TN, FL) by FEMA-funded sub-contractors to help with clean-up yet are being denied basic necessities, such as adequate housing and a decent hourly rate. In some cases, these workers were and are not being paid for their labor! (See Appendix 5, attachment C: Lured by the Work, but struggling to be paid).

In the Vietnamese community many families have been forcibly evicted from their homes.

Recommendations

Short Term Recommendations

- 1. It is recommended that the AFSC contribute at least \$10,000 each to The National Association of Vietnamese American Service Agencies (NAVASA) and Boat People SOS that will go directly towards their work with the Southeast Asian community in the South.** By making this contribution to NAVASA and Boat People SOS, the AFSC will establish stronger ties with the national Vietnamese community and demonstrate our commitment to relief and justice for this particular population of refugees and immigrants. At the same time, this contribution may better position the AFSC to present our values around global peace, justice, and human rights as minimal shared principles to carrying out community work. This is extremely important with the national Vietnamese community in particular as it tends to be more concerned with right-wing initiatives and less focused on building progressive community leadership that can address issues of poverty, education, and refugee and immigrant rights.
- 2. It is recommended that the AFSC contribute \$20,000 to the emergency relief work of the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA) to help pay for any expenses such as travel and materials/supplies which are necessary to continue the work. Again, MIRA stands as the only immigrant rights community group on the ground now, working with and advocating for Latino/a migrant communities in the area. (OXFAM has donated \$30,000 for this purpose).** Direct support now as an expression of our solidarity to MIRA and other groups representing recent immigrant communities and communities of color will strengthen our relationships with these folks, which will in turn strengthen the effectiveness of any physical presence by AFSC in the long-term in the devastated area. These relationships are vital.
- 3. It is recommended that the AFSC contribute \$10,000 to Saving Our Selves (SOS), a coalition of 117 African American organizations providing assistance and resources to communities of color in the Southeastern United States. These funds will go directly to SOS efforts in communities hit by Hurricane Katrina.**

These recommendations represent \$50,000 in grants.

Medium Term Recommendations (up to 2 years)

- 4. It is recommended that AFSC –SERO initiate a program of community organizing, empowerment and networking in the Gulf Coast area. The target audience would be poor people and communities of color, African American, Latino, Southeast Asian (Vietnamese) and women. The program would concern itself with issues of economic justice, criminal justice, racism, immigration and peace.** The window of opportunity is large right now for the AFSC to jump in and work with local community leaders, their organizations and constituencies as a partner in the struggle to rebuild, resettle, reclaim and redefine their neighborhoods. This is an ideal time and opportunity to build bridges of cooperation and hopefully respect between communities of color. The process for beginning to work in the area as a perceived partner with the community has already begun and it is imperative that we continue to build relationships with the traditional and grassroots organizations and leadership already active there.

This area is ripe with possibility for work on the issues we as an organization say we are concerned about.

5. It is recommended that AFSC-SERO initiate a project to support neighborhood rebuilding and cleanup efforts in the Gulf Coast by coordinating Friends and other volunteers to assist local residents in repairing and reclaiming their communities.

Long Term Recommendations (Beyond two years)

6. It is recommended that AFSC-SERO establish an office in either Mobile, AL or Biloxi, MS. There are several reasons why the AFSC would best serve the affected communities of color if we position ourselves in either Mobile or Biloxi. Primarily there are devastated, poor communities of color including refugees and immigrants present in this Southern region that need long-term support to secure basic human rights. Geographically these two fairly large cities are only an hour away from each other and within 1 to 2 hours of other affected towns and cities along the Gulf Coast such as Bayou La Batre, New Orleans, and Gulfport. Their locations and local municipal resources may help facilitate and support cross community and cross regional work with a number of communities. The specific kinds of long-term work the AFSC may carry out in the South should be in coordination with individual and organizational efforts of relief and justice already being accomplished. The focus and objectives of projected AFSC work in the South can remain broad at this time, serving the affected communities of color by supporting emergency relief and justice efforts for the first 2 years with the more specific and longer term goals of defending the rights of the poor communities of color including refugees and immigrants by working with these folks to demand justice. Whatever our efforts may look like in the long-term will depend on further work and relationship building with those on the ground in the South – local constituents as well as those already working in the area.

Appendices

- 1. Places visited by Assessment Team**
- 2. People/organizations contacted/identified by Assessment Team**
- 3. Darryl Jordan's report**
- 4. Tony Nguyen's report**
- 5. Antonio Vasquez's report**
- 6. George Brown's report**
- 7. David Robinson's interim reports**

Appendix 1: places visited

1. Choctaw Friends Center, McIntosh, AL
2. Mobile, AL
3. Bayou La Batre, AL
4. Fairhope, AL
5. Bay Minette, AL
6. Biloxi, MS
7. Palmers Crossing, MS
8. Wiggins, MS
9. Janice, MS
10. Ocean Springs, MS
11. Pascagoula, MS
12. D'Iberville, MS
13. Hattiesburg, MS
14. Gulfport, MS
15. Pass Christian, MS
16. Waveland, MS
17. Bay St. Louis, MS
18. Purvis, MS
19. Moss Point, MS
20. Slidell, LA
21. Point Algiers, LA
22. Houma, LA
23. DuLac LA
24. Versailles, LA
25. New Orleans, LA
26. Baton Rouge, LA
27. Gonzales, LA
28. Boothville, LA
29. Port Sulphur, LA
30. Plaquemines Parish

Appendix 2: organizations/people contacted/identified

Organizations:

There are local and national organizations (CBOs, NGOs, and FBOs)* working in this region that our needs assessment team have established relations with. It is in AFSC's best interest to not only maintain a connection with these organizations but to partner with them on community projects and campaigns so that all our voices of reason and justice can be united and thus make a greater impact in the South.

Among these groups are:

- a. Boat People SOS
- b. Saving Our Selves (SOS)
- c. Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA!)
- d. Oxfam America
- e. National Association of Vietnamese American Service Agencies (NAVASA)
- f. Chua Chanh Giac (Vietnamese Buddhist Temple in Bayou La Batre)
- g. Chua Van Duc (Vietnamese Buddhist Temple in East Biloxi)
- h. Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS)
- i. Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force.

* CBO – Community Based Organization, NGO – Non-governmental organization, FBO – Faith-based organization

People

Fairhope, AL: Bertha Battey, Fairhope MM (251.928.0982)

Oxford, MS: Lena Wiley, Oxford Worship Group, and Interfaith Compassion Ministries (phone 662.281.1002)

Gulfport, MS: Jeremy Eisler and Carol Burnett. Jeremy is State Director of Litigation for Mississippi (228.697.0395). Carol is with Child Legal Defense (228.669.4827) (email: cburnett@mschildcare.org)

Starkville, MS: Humphrey Costello (H) 662.615.6252, (O) 662.325.8655

Hammond, LA: Michael & Nancy Comeaux (cell 985.634.4089), referral by Bertha Battey, Fairhope MM

Rip Daniels, WQIP 94.5, N. Gulfport (228.896.5307), referral by Sandra Peters, Palmers Crossing (Hattiesburg) (FAX: 228.896.5703) [station may actually be WJZD]

Two Common Grounds sites in Point Algiers. The first was a medical center, and the second was the home of an individual (Aaron) who has set up a center for meals, a distribution center for food and other supplies, and creating and administering work orders for local repairs. A truly grass-roots activity.

At the second Common Grounds site, we met Jessica Azulay, a reporter. <http://newstandardnews.net> in Syracuse, NY. Her card identifies her as Civil Liberties and Security Editor. She appears to be a relevant contact for the migrant issues in the Katrina area.

Appendix 3: Darryl Jordan's report

Darryl's Thoughts on the Katrina Assessment

My contribution to the assessment report is not going to be a travelogue, but rather a brief view of what I encountered during my two and a half weeks traveling through some of the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina and my impressions, reactions and suggestions for how I think AFSC might best situate itself for work in this region.

I will start with my suggestions for where and what I think AFSC is uniquely suited to contribute to the rebuilding effort in the Gulf. I believe the AFSC should plan to work in the areas of metropolitan Mobile, Alabama and metropolitan Biloxi, Mississippi. I would urge the AFSC to initiate a program of community organizing, empowerment and networking. The target audience would be the poor and communities of color, African American, Latino and Southeast Asian (Vietnamese). The programs would concern itself with issues of economic justice, criminal justice, racism, immigration and peace. I believe the window of opportunity is large right now for the AFSC to jump in and work with local community leaders their organizations and constituencies as a partner in the struggle to rebuild, resettle, reclaim, redefine their neighborhoods. I believe that the process for beginning to work in the areas as a perceived partner with the community has already begun and we must while in our efforts to plan and define our program work continue to build relationships with the traditional and grassroots organizations and leadership already active there. These areas are ripe with possibility for work on the issues we as an organization say we are concerned about.

I had plenty of ideas of what I would find during my trip through Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana but there was a big surprise for me. I had not expected to find the black community so dispersed, absent from the land and hard to find. This is the black belt south, Mississippi and Louisiana. Not since slavery have institutions of authority so deliberately planned and executed the deliberate separation and distribution of the African community. I now believe that what began as a natural disaster has in fact given birth to the recreation of a new south, gentrified and safe for corporate investment and private development. I was also surprised at the size of the Vietnamese community. I was not surprised but really overwhelmed at the level of poverty I encountered in communities of color in Mississippi. The devastation of the hurricane only made a really bad situation worse for thousands of people living in poverty, often jobless or working for wages that almost cost them to work. The situation of primarily Latino immigrants was not a surprise, they have in fact been made more vulnerable to exploitation and deportation as a result of the hurricane. If you are waiting for something positive, then what I also found was that this is an ideal time and opportunity to build bridges of cooperation and hopefully respect between communities of color. I don't know how long this opportunity will exist because the forces of racism and right wing conservatism are already busy at work laying the foundation for distrust and division. Conservative religious institutions and political organizations are in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana are feeding the hungry, supplying needed resources and aiding the sick while dispensing their version of god's word and building relationships of gratitude and felt

loyalty. I also found in the communities of color I visited an understanding of the relationship between their plight and our governments commitment to its policies of war and intervention all over the world. The particular circumstances of women - low pay and few great job opportunities, lack of healthcare access for them and their children, sexual and domestic abuse are longstanding in the south, but the opportunity to do work with women on issues of social and economic empowerment to change these dynamics are great as their shear numbers and potential influence in the political arena are huge. The voting edge in these areas surely must be in women's favor.

Appendix 4: Tony Nguyen's report

Gulf Coast Relief Report
Section focus: Vietnamese American Community
October 14, 2005
Prepared by Tony Van Nguyen

Introduction

This section of the report focuses on two counties situated near each other in the South that could benefit from a long-term AFSC presence – Mobile County, Alabama and Harrison County, Mississippi. Although the needs assessment team conducted site visits and interviews in other hurricane affected areas, these two counties have been prioritized for three reasons:

- 1) These areas, especially the towns of Biloxi and Bayou La Batre, have been devastated by the hurricanes and need the long-term support of organizations like the AFSC to help rebuild communities, defend immigrant rights, and demand economic and racial justice;
- 2) Given our organizational priority of serving oppressed communities, especially the poor, working poor, and communities of color, it is imperative for the AFSC to position itself in this region where there are sizable populations of poor and working class African Americans, Latinos, and Southeast Asians; and
- 3) There are local and national organizations (CBOs, NGOs, and FBOs) working in this region that our needs assessment team have established relations with. It is in our best interest to not only maintain a connection with these organizations but to partner with them on community projects and campaigns so that all our voices of reason and justice can be united and thus make a greater impact in the South. Among these groups are: a) Boat People SOS; b) Saving Our Selves (SOS); c) Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA!); d) Oxfam America; e) National Association of Vietnamese American Service Agencies (NAVASA); f) Chua Chanh Giac (Vietnamese Buddhist Temple in Bayou La Batre); g) Chua Van Duc (Vietnamese Buddhist Temple in East Biloxi); and h) Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS).

The targeted population of this section is the Vietnamese American community of Bayou La Batre, AL and Biloxi, MS. General observations and what I see as barriers faced by this community are presented below. Asian Pacific Islander American and other communities of color groups and organizations (CBOs, NGOs, and FBOs) that have been carrying out cross community relief work will be noted here as well. This section ends with specific recommendations of AFSC work – short and long-term.

Observations

General Overview of Population

There are sizable communities of poor and working class Southeast Asian Americans – most notably Vietnamese with smaller numbers of Cambodian and Laotian – in Bayou La Batre, AL and Biloxi, MS. (at least 1,300 out of a population of around 4,500 in Bayou La Batre, and about 4,000 along the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, 1,500 of which live in the city of Biloxi – Census 2000.) Most made their modest living in the fishing (including shrimping and seafood processing) and gaming industries while others worked in construction, welding, nail salons, and other service industries. Because of the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina and Rita on the gaming and fishing industries, most folks are currently out of jobs.

It should be noted that there is a sizable number of single Asian female households along the Gulf Coast. (*South leads trend of motherhood without marriage*, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, <http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/1005/13motherhood.html>.) In addition, there is a relatively large concentration of Amerasians (abandoned Vietnamese/bi-racial children of U.S. servicemen) in Bayou La Batre.

Barriers and Difficulties faced by Southeast Asian community

The Southeast Asian Americans along the Gulf Coast are a young, limited English proficiency (LEP) community. Because of socio-cultural and economic barriers, and the lack of local, state, and federal programs and resources sensitive to this community's particular needs and concerns, these refugees and immigrants do not possess the cultural and political power or “know how” to navigate around the system and advocate for themselves.

In addition to being a LEP community, Southeast Asian Americans along the Gulf Coast have had to struggle with formal and informal discriminatory practices of white racism in the South. Like other poor victims of color, poor Asians were also left behind during the wake of the hurricane. (Unfortunately, more than a month later many families are still being neglected by the State. *Biloxi families still wait for aid*, Houston Chronicle Oct. 23, 2005 - <http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/nation/3408238>.) At a community meeting in Bayou La Batre that Darryl Jordan and I attended on September 30, several Vietnamese refugees informed me that they did not receive fair treatment at some white-led food banks and distribution centers. On October 6, volunteers at the East Biloxi Relief and Coordination center informed me that it took FEMA over a month to finally make a presence in East Biloxi, which is predominantly African American and Vietnamese American. According to these volunteers FEMA had been in other “whiter” parts of Biloxi for some time.

Lastly, many Southeast Asians in this grouping were renters and have had to face an onslaught of housing issues such as forced evictions, lack of temporary FEMA trailers, and poor temporary living situations (e.g., families with children living in tents in front of destroyed homes, and folks living without electricity and gas for several weeks).

A Brief Look into Two Groups on the Ground in the South

■ Boat People SOS and Saving Our Selves (SOS)

Within a few days of Hurricane Katrina two groups – one, a national Vietnamese American organization based in Washington D.C. and the other, a mostly African American coalition of 117 organizations based in the South – stepped up to provide much needed emergency relief along the Gulf Coast. From evacuating victims from Biloxi to distributing food and other basic necessities (including culturally-sensitive goods such as jasmine rice and fish sauce) to assisting LEP victims to receive relief assistance (FEMA, Red Cross, and State) to advocating for those neglected by the State, Boat People SOS and Saving Our Selves have relied on diverse teams of short-term, unpaid volunteers – individuals like Chi Nguyen of North Carolina and Michael Luu of San Jose to organizations such as a Northern California chapter of Veterans for Peace and the Mobile County based One for Life – and donations from around the country to carry out work that should be applauded and further assisted.

One aspect of these two groups' efforts that should be noted is their inclusive relief approach. Although Boat People SOS is a Vietnamese American organization, their volunteers have branched out to assist other Southeast Asian victims (Cambodian and Laotian). In the days following Hurricane Katrina, Saving Our Selves helped relocate a few Vietnamese families from a public housing project in Biloxi to Atlanta. SOS relief coordinator Vivian Felts has also worked closely with Vietnamese Baptist Pastor Daniel Tran of Mobile to distributed basic materials to Southeast Asian families in Bayou La Batre.

Short-term recommendation

AFSC contributions to NAVASA and Boat People SOS

In order for the AFSC to carry out long-term projects of substance in this region, it is critical for us to not only identify individuals and groups already doing service and justice work on the ground, but to partner with them as needed so that work is not re-invented and so that better collective organization and coordination can occur. Assessment team members were able to locate local and national groups and organizations that have been carrying out work since Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. Among these groups are Vietnamese nonprofits and faith based organizations that have spent much of their own resources and time doing emergency relief work with the Southeast Asian community. At this time, it is more feasible for the AFSC to contribute to and support the efforts of the national Vietnamese community, and more broadly the Asian Pacific Islander American community, than to establish new work.

The National Association of Vietnamese American Service Agencies (NAVASA) and Boat People SOS are two groups that are seeking the support of community members and others to help fund long-term, comprehensive social work (6 to 24 month and longer depending on funding!) with the Southeast Asian communities along the Gulf Coast. (Please refer to each group's respected proposal.)

It is recommended that the AFSC contribute at least \$10,000 each to NAVASA and Boat People SOS that will go directly towards their work with the Southeast Asian community in the South. By making this contribution to NAVASA and Boat People SOS, the AFSC will establish stronger ties with the national Vietnamese community and demonstrate our commitment to relief and justice for this particular population of refugees and immigrants. At the same time, this contribution may better position the AFSC to present our values around global peace, justice, and human rights as minimal shared principles to carrying out community work. This is extremely important with the national Vietnamese community in particular as it tends to be more concerned with right-wing initiatives and less focused on building progressive community leadership that can address issues of poverty, education, and refugee and immigrant rights.

Long-term recommendation

Establishing an AFSC office in either Mobile, AL or Biloxi, MS

There are several factors to why the AFSC would best serve the affected communities of color if we position ourselves in either Mobile or Biloxi. Some critical reasons have already been outlined above in the introduction, primarily that there are devastated, poor communities of color including refugees and immigrants present in this Southern region that need long-term support to secure human rights, and that there are key relief and justice organizations – such as Boat People SOS, the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance, and Saving Our Selves – that our needs assessment team has been able to identify and establish relations with.

In addition to these factors, an AFSC office in either Biloxi or Mobile may be tactical for one other reason. Geographically these two fairly large cities are only an hour away from each other and within 1 to 2 hours of other affected towns and cities along the Gulf Coast such as Bayou La Batre, New Orleans, and Gulfport. Their locations and local municipal resources may help facilitate and support cross community and cross regional work with a number of communities.

To reiterate, the specific kinds of long-term work the AFSC may carry out in the South should be in coordination with individual and organizational efforts of relief and justice already being accomplished. The focus and objectives of projected AFSC work in the South can remain broad at this time to serving the affected communities of color by supporting emergency relief and justice efforts for the first 2 years with the more specific and longer term goals of defending the rights of the poor communities of color including refugees and immigrants by working with these folks to demand justice. Whatever our efforts may look like in the long-term, I hope, will depend on further work and relationship building with those on the ground in the South – local constituents as well as those already working in the area.

Appendix 5: Antonio Vasquez's report

AFSC Katrina Needs Assessment Team Report: Latina/o Migrant Communities

By Antonio Vásquez, PV SERO October 2005

Overview

Latina and Latino migrant communities living along the gulf coast continue to experience multiple waves of suffering and victimization in the aftermath of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, as we learned during the recent visit to the area as part of the AFSC Assessment Team in October 2005. These words seek to complement the overall AFSC Assessment Team Report by highlighting a few experiences witnessed during the visit as it relates to Latina/o migrant communities, followed by suggested actions for AFSC to pursue.

Latinas and Latinos Devastated by Katrina

During the past ten years, the presence of Latina and Latino migrant communities has increased significantly along the gulf coast area, in concert with the need for labor in the growth (construction and maintenance) of casinos along the shores as well as in poultry and fish processing plants. This increase in the gulf area has coincided with the recent overall growth of the Latina/o population throughout the Southeast region as a whole. As such, Latinas and Latinos, like all communities living in the area, experienced a sense of despair and vulnerability, affected by the devastation of the storm with the loss of possessions and most deeply, with the sudden loss of loved ones.

The sense of despair and vulnerability has intensified most especially for Latina/o communities who, as predominantly spanish-speaking, first generation, undocumented, migrant working-class communities of color, were and are also subjected to blatant individual and institutional forms of discriminatory practices (racial profiling, intimidation, worker abuse/exploitation).

There was first of all mistreatment by the **lack of services** of emergency assistance towards them. When visiting, for example, the bases of operations for FEMA and Salvation Army in Biloxi, which were adjacent to each other, I was at a loss to learn of the lack of understandable services of any kind for spanish-speaking communities who were just as devastated by the hurricane. There were no spanish-speakers at any of these two sites! In the 30 minutes at the Salvation Army, we were able to assist four Latina/o families go through the paperwork, two of whom were neighbors and indicated they were confined to their homes for 15 consecutive days after the storm, without electricity and running water.

It should also be noted that FEMA highlights a possibility for folks without accepted forms of documentation to receive assistance. In their circular entitled, 'You May Be Able to Get Disaster Assistance,' it reads:

“If YOU are not eligible (referring to undocumented persons), but you have a CHILD who is a citizen, non-citizen national, or a qualified alien, then you may qualify for assistance AND You do NOT have to give information about your own citizenship or immigration status.”

Then, on the actual application folks use to request assistance called the “Applicant’s Guide to the Individuals and Household Program FEMA Form 90-698,” on page 19, it reads:

“I understand that the information provided regarding my application for FEMA disaster assistance may be subjected to sharing within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) including, but not limited to, the **Bureau of Immigration and Custom Enforcement.**”

The threat of immigration enforcement in fact has been a constant reality for Latinas and Latinos devastated by Katrina.

As such, the actual places for folks devastated by the storm to turn to for refuge, in complete confidence, was limited—not on the large scale of relief that was and is still needed. (See Attachment A: Roundup of Immigrants in Shelter Reveals Rising Tensions). I visited in fact an apartment building in Gulfport, MS where Latina/o families continued to stay, despite the fact that the roof of the building was completely torn—half still in tact and the other half amid the debris. Two places identified along the gulf coast during the visit that provided some space of refuge to Latina/o communities included the multi-service La Bamba Store in Biloxi, MS, which served as an informational resource, and Iglesia Lugar de Sanidad in Gonzales, LA, which served as a shelter for approximately one month for Latinas/os from neighboring New Orleans.

The threat of immigration enforcement has also been used in individual situations to threaten Latina/o families with eviction from their places of residence. In visiting, for example, a trailer home near Gulfport, MS with the emergency outreach coordinator of the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA!), we encountered a situation where the owner of the home was calling for the immediate eviction of a Latino family from a place they have lived for the past three years and on a lease-to-own contract. The owner was enforcing eviction not with the actual statute involving eviction, which has been suspended in the area of devastation, but with the threat of immigration. In the one-week alone, immigration and law enforcement personnel were called and visited the trailer home at least twice, a call initiated by the owner as a means to intimidate the father, who is here without an accepted form of documentation.

The majority of the intense engagements with Latina/o communities in the devastated area was carried out in fact with folks from the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA!), the only immigrant rights community group on the ground now, working with and advocating for Latino/a migrant communities in the area.

Victimization of Latino Migrant Workers

The sense of despair confronting Latinas and Latinos who were devastated by Katrina has coincided with a deeper level of victimization and exploitation for Latino migrant workers being lured to the area from surrounding towns (Jackson, Forrest, Morton, Greenville) and states (NC, AL, TX, TN, FL) by FEMA-funded sub-contractors to help with clean-up yet are being denied basic necessities, such as adequate housing and a decent hourly rate. In some cases, unfortunately, some of these workers were and are not being paid for their labor! (See Attachment C: Lured by the Work, but Struggling to be Paid).

The very unhealthy living conditions and violations of the rights of workers I witnessed with MIRA are being perpetuated again with the threat of immigration enforcement looming large against these workers. (See Attachment D: Immigrants Detained at Katrina Job Site). We are witnessing in a sense “the first and second waves of devastation” for Latina/o communities in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Suggested Actions

In the immediate circumstance, a direct contribution now on behalf of AFSC to the emergency relief work of the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA!) will help pay for any expenses such as travel and materials/supplies which are necessary to continue the work. Again, MIRA! stands as the only immigrant rights community group on the ground now, working with and advocating for Latino/a migrant communities in the area—those victimized by the wrath of the storm and those being victimized by the FEMA-funded sub-contractors in the aftermath. The emergency coordinator of MIRA! in fact has been an active member of the Mississippi gulf coast community for years, as a community leader within the local Latin American Association as well as with her ministry outreach to Latino/a communities in the area through her church. We will in a sense be supporting work that is ‘homegrown.’

Direct support now as an expression of our solidarity to MIRA and other groups representing recent immigrant communities and communities of color, as highlighted by my brethren Tony Van Nguyen and Darryl Jordan, will strengthen our relationships with these folks, which will in turn strengthen the effectiveness of any physical presence by AFSC in the long-term in the devastated area, whether in Biloxi or Mobile. These relationships are vital.

Attachments

A. “Roundup of Immigrants in Shelter Reveals Rising Tensions”

October 3, 2005 *The Wall Street Journal* Page B1

B. “Is this law enforcement or racial profiling?”

October 7, 2005 Sun *Herald Newspaper* Page A8

C. “Lured by the Work, but Struggling to be Paid”
October 17, 2005 *The New York Times*

D. “Immigrants Detained at Katrina Job Site”
October 21, 2005 *The Times Picayune*

Attachment A.

“Roundup of Immigrants in Shelter Reveals Rising Tension”

By Chad Terhune and Evan Pérez, *The Wall Street Journal*

October 3, 2005, Page B1

LONG BEACH, Miss. -- Last Wednesday, police and the U.S. Marshals Service swept into a Red Cross shelter for hurricane refugees here. They blocked the parking lot and exits and demanded identification from about 60 people who looked Hispanic, including some pulled out of the shower and bathroom, according to witnesses. The shelter residents were told to leave within two days or else they would be deported.

"They asked me where I wanted to go: to Houston, Atlanta or back to Mexico," said Jose Luis Rivera, 39 years old and an undocumented construction worker from Veracruz, Mexico. Mr. Rivera said he had been sleeping in a tent outside the large shelter building since Hurricane Katrina struck just over a month ago, flooding his second-story apartment in nearby Pass Christian and destroying all his belongings, including a pickup truck. "I lost everything I own in the storm. But they said they didn't care. They told us that if we didn't leave they would return on Friday with buses to take us away," he said.

Fearful they would be forced to leave the country, Mr. Rivera and most of the other Hispanic men left the Red Cross shelter the next morning. Local contractors agreed to house workers they are hiring for cleanup work and other jobs in tents at worksites. Mr. Rivera set up his tent at a Baptist church that told him it had room for Hispanics from the shelter.

The incident was confirmed by the shelter's staff, including an assistant shelter manager and volunteer Jesse A. Acosta, who said he, too, was asked by a local police officer to show identification. After flashing his Red Cross badge, Mr. Acosta, a former Marine who served in Vietnam, was told to show another form of ID and then had to wait 20 minutes while being screened for outstanding arrest warrants. The line of men, women and children included no whites or African-Americans, he said.

"I was singled out because of my skin," Mr. Acosta said. "These people went through Katrina and went there to be taken care of and not to be hassled."

A spokesman for the U.S. Marshals assisting in Long Beach said the Wednesday night incident was led by the Harrison County Sheriff's office, and referred calls to it.

Harrison County Sheriff's Department Capt. Windy Swetman said no one at the shelter was threatened with deportation, adding that law-enforcement officials wanted to make sure everyone staying at the shelter had been displaced by the hurricane. "We were concerned with the growing numbers of the Hispanic population and whether or not we had displaced residents of southern Mississippi from the hurricane or workers brought in

from other areas using the shelter as base camp," he said. Contractors, not relief groups, are responsible for providing housing to workers, he added.

Police also were concerned about reports of drinking, marijuana use and fights among Hispanic men living in tents outside the shelter building, according to Capt. Swetman. "This was more of a humanitarian mission," Capt. Swetman said. On Thursday, the day after the incident, officers told Red Cross workers they were responding to a 911 call about a Mexican-American at the shelter. Red Cross workers said they didn't alert police.

Lea Stokes, a Mississippi state spokeswoman, referred calls about the incident to the Gov. Haley Barbour's Department of Public Safety. Reached during a meeting yesterday, Warren Strain, a spokesman for the public safety department, said he couldn't immediately answer questions. He didn't return a call seeking comment.

The roundup at the Red Cross center underscores deeper social and economic tensions that are surfacing as areas battered by Katrina and Rita struggle through what will be a frustratingly long recovery. Some communities will need to house thousands of displaced storm victims for months at least, further straining government agencies and relief groups. Meanwhile, undocumented workers are likely to be a major part of the massive cleanup and rebuilding, competing for jobs against some non-Hispanics thrown out of work by the hurricanes.

Before Hurricane Katrina, small communities along Mississippi's Gulf Coast, with its plentiful casino, seafood industry and construction jobs, had increasingly become a draw for immigrant workers. In 2004, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin formed about 2.6% of the population in coastal Harrison County, where Long Beach is located, compared with 1.4% in Mississippi statewide, according to U.S. Census estimates.

Immigrant groups say the incident in Long Beach is the latest example of how immigrant laborers are falling through the cracks of disaster recovery in the aftermath of the disastrous hurricanes that have pounded the Gulf Coast. Last year, thousands of immigrants in Florida were overlooked in the relief operation, and many feared asking for aid would lead to their arrest.

"These people have already lost everything they had, and now they have been victimized all over again," said Vicky Cintra, emergency outreach coordinator for the Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance, a coalition of civil rights, religious and community groups in Jackson, Miss.

Under government rules, illegal workers aren't eligible for most of the government aid made available to storm victims, such as cash grants and loans for emergency expenses and home repairs. But operations run by the Red Cross, churches and other nonprofit charities don't distinguish among storm victims and will grant them financial aid and other help.

Steve Bayer, the local spokesman for the Red Cross, said the organization doesn't ask about citizenship status when offering shelter or providing money after a disaster, and didn't ask the police and marshals to come to the shelter, where about 175 people were living. "We told them this is not the proper procedure to follow," he said. "The people there have been treated with respect by the Red Cross. ... We don't profile people."

Jana Zehner, a spokeswoman for the American Red Cross in Washington, said the organization's security chief met with local and federal officials to discuss how to avoid similar incidents. After the police visit, Red Cross staff helped some of the Latinos who were nervous about staying find another place to live.

In the aftermath of the hurricanes, residents and immigrants have received mixed messages on how welcome the immigrant labor force, which likely will form a major part of the reconstruction effort, will be. In early September, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it would temporarily relax its policies and not prosecute contractors who don't check the legal status of workers.

While not necessarily a suspension of immigration law, the department made the move "to make sure that people who are otherwise able to work, and now need employment, wouldn't be stopped from working," said Jamie Zuieback, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security. The measure expires in mid-October.

On Thursday, a day after the roundup, a senior federal marshal showed up at the Red Cross shelter in Long Beach, according to people who were there. "He told us that he had not given the officers permission to treat us that way," Mr. Rivera said, but he decided to leave anyway.

Attachment B.

“Is this law enforcement or racial profiling? Singled-out Latinos Wonder”

By Tracy Dash and Joshua Norman, *Sun Herald Newspaper*

October 7, 2005, Page A8

LONG BEACH, MS—When 20 law enforcement officers went to a Red Cross Shelter in Long Beach last week and asked for identification for many of the people there, officers said they were responding to complaints.

But people who run the shelter and the people living there said it is peculiar that the only people officers asked for identification were Latinos. There are at least three versions of what happened on Sept. 28 at the American Red Cross shelter at the West Harrison Civic Center on Espy Avenue.

The Harrison County Sheriff's Department said it went to the shelter officials, to help protect the safety of shelter residents. Red Cross officials manning the shelter, however, said they were surprised that officers showed up. Latinos said they were singled out.

Shelter Manager Scott Steiner was standing in the kitchen around 8 p.m. that night when he saw flashing lights through the window. He said to his surprise he discovered several lawmen rounding up Latinos, about 50 in all, in the corner of the parking lot.

About the same time, Aaron Gonzales said he walked through the front door of the shelter to take a shower and was grabbed firmly by an officer. Gonzalez, a tough-looking young man with tattoos and angular facial features said the officer demanded his Social Security card and drivers license, and then radioed in his name to see if he had any outstanding warrants.

Jose Luis Rubera, a friend and occasional co-worker of Gonzalez, said while he was being lined up and told to remove his shirt along with dozens of other Latino men, “an officer said he was looking for child molesters.”

Assistant shelter manager Mark Dragovich returned to the shelter from doing outreach work shortly after officers arrived. He said a lawman told him they were responding to a 911 call involving looting in a nearby neighborhood with a Hispanic suspect and that they had told the men to remove their shirts because the looter had a distinguishing tattoo.

Capt. Windy Swetman, a Sheriff's Department spokesman who was not on the scene, said he wasn't aware of a report of looting.

Sheriff George H. Payne Jr. said one of the men's name appeared on the National Crime Information Center database. He said it would not be uncommon for police to ask someone to remove their shirt if the NCIC showed the person had a distinguishing mark, such as a tattoo.

Payne said deputies learned the name on the NCIC was not the same person at the shelter. No one was arrested. Swetman, and Capt. Tony Sauro, who coordinates multi-agency law enforcement efforts post-Katrina, said deputies were responding to complaints by shelter officials who had left prior to Sept. 28. They said the complaint involved incidents with drinking and drugs in tents outside the shelter, where most Latinos were staying.

Steiner and Dragovich acknowledge that there had been problems in the tents outside the shelter, but deny making the 911 call that precipitated that incident. After the visit by officers, Red Cross officials decided to disallow all tent use outside the shelter.

Vidala Leal-Rodas said her husband, who is from Mexico and has fair skin and sandy-blond hair but speaks little to no English, was not lined up or questioned despite walking right by a group of officers while the incident was taking place.

According to Red Cross officials and several witnesses, the lawmen gave the group three options after their records and papers were checked: get on a bus to Houston, Atlanta or Mexico.

Steiner said he and his coworkers came up with a fourth option: call the many contractors who employ the men and see if space for their tents could be set up either on a business site or in other places.

Nearly all the men were able to find contractors to take them in. As a result, none of the workers got on a bus, Steiner said.

Sauro said deputies planned to help relocate the men if they had family in other states. He said they soon learned that the men in tents didn't want to leave; they were in town to work.

Rubera said he had been living and working in Pass Christian for nearly five years. While there were at least a dozen people or families who showed up after the storm looking for work, Rubera said most had been established in the community and they all worked together. The Red Cross welcomes anyone who say they've been displaced by a disaster and they need shelter, said spokeswoman Mary Lee Conwell.

She said if there were people in the shelter who were not displaced because of Katrina, they now understand that they are not supposed to stay there.

"We were not sure how many of them were displaced South Mississippians or were they contract workers just coming in here and using the Red Cross shelters as base camps," Swetman said.

Payne vehemently denies the officers threatened deportation.

“For them to turn it around and make it something evil when it was something good, that is disgusting to me.”

While Latinos at the shelter claim they were singled out, authorities deny any prejudice.

“We in law enforcement cannot help what perceptions people have,” Sauro said. “We in law enforcement can only be sensitive to their perceptions. That’s why we went in there with no (U.S.) Border Patrol, no immigration (officials).”

Attachment C.

“Lured by the Work, but Struggling to Be Paid”

By Robin Pogrebin, *The New York Times*

GULFPORT, Miss., Oct. 14 - The acrid smell inside trailer No. 2 is tough to take for any length of time. The linoleum floor is filthy and bare, aside from a few soiled blankets jammed in the corners. Dishes caked with leftover food are piled high in the sink, attracting flies. Two portable fans are the only things stirring the air.

But six men are living here. They sleep on that floor. They swat away those flies and dodge the roaches at night. They traveled all the way from Guatemala for this.

"It's O.K. for us," said one of them, Francisco Velazquez. "We need money."

One of the many casualties of Hurricane Katrina was the Mississippi work force. There are not enough people left in the area to fill the many jobs there are to do. Those posting "help wanted" signs include the Applebee's in Ocean Springs, Miss., which has been closing at 6 p.m. for lack of waiters, and the contractors enlisted to clear the seemingly limitless debris along the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Velazquez, 45, is one of 32 immigrants housed in three mobile homes who are being paid \$8 an hour to tear Sheetrock for 10 hours a day. The men are among hundreds of illegal immigrants who entered the United States hoping to find work in the aftermath of the hurricane.

They are promised good pay, three meals a day and a place to stay, and some contractors make good on this. But the Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance, an advocacy group, says many do not.

"These workers are superexploited by contractors in horrible living conditions," said Bill Chandler, the president of the alliance. "People are working without any kind of inoculation - tetanus or anti-hepatitis - they don't have goggles, they don't have gloves, they don't have any safety protection at all."

Last month, President Bush made it easier for employers to use a less-expensive hand, suspending the Davis-Bacon Act in the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina. The act is a Depression-era law that prohibits federally financed construction jobs from paying wages less than a local average.

Mr. Velazquez and the other men crossed the desert for three nights on foot and stole across the border because they heard about the hurricane and wanted jobs. Mr. Velazquez has 10 brothers, a wife and three grown daughters back home. He said his parents were sick, and when he talked about his father, his eyes filled with tears.

"He's 86 years old and he can't walk," Mr. Velazquez said. "My parents say, 'We need help.' "

Arnoldo Antonio Lopez, 36, another worker in the group, said he paid \$70 a month to live in trailer No. 10. He said he would have put up with the poor conditions, but the contractor who hired him did not pay him. "He promised me \$7 an hour wages and good food," Mr. Lopez said.

He and the other men went to work for another contractor. But that employer also did not pay, they said. The alliance refused to name any of the employers because it is considering legal action.

"They hadn't eaten for three days when we got to them," said Vicki Cintra, the Gulf Coast outreach organizer for the alliance. "They had no blankets, nothing. They were sleeping on the floor. They had no money to buy food."

So when the alliance offered a way out, Mr. Lopez and the other workers in the group eagerly accepted it. Now they are living at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Biloxi, Miss., where the Roman Catholic nuns took them in.

"They were having many difficulties," said Sister Maryvale Witrago, a nun working at the church. "We wanted to try to help them."

"We're trying to look for other jobs for them, other people who will be more honest," Sister Maryvale added. "If they work, they should receive the money for the work. Because they don't speak English, the bosses think it's easier to keep the money."

Attachment D.

“Immigrants detained at Katrina job site”

By Bruce Alpert, *The Times-Picayune*

October 21, 2005

WASHINGTON -- Immigration agents **detained** more than 100 temporary contract workers at the Belle Chasse Naval Air Station on possible immigration violations, U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu's office reported Thursday. Earlier this week, Landrieu, a Louisiana Democrat, asked the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to investigate reports that use of illegal workers by contractors hired to do Hurricane Katrina relief work was becoming "chronic."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials told Landrieu's office the raid occurred Wednesday, said Adam Sharp, a spokesman for Landrieu. No ICE officials could be reached Thursday night.

Landrieu wrote to ICE after receiving complaints that 75 Louisiana electricians hired to help put together a tent city at the Naval Air Station had been replaced by workers willing to work for less money. The Louisiana workers had questioned whether the replacements were in the United States legally.

The work on the tent city was being done by a BE&K, a contractor based in Birmingham, Ala. The company had been awarded the work by Texas-based Halliburton Corp., which has a contract to repair military bases damaged by Hurricane Katrina, according to Landrieu's office.

"It is a downright shame that any contractor would use this tragedy as an opportunity to line his pockets by breaking the law and hiring a low-skilled, low-wage and illegal work force," Landrieu said.

On Wednesday, a BE&K spokeswoman insisted the company is careful to check the immigration status of all employees. There was no answer at company headquarters Thursday evening.

Sharp said it was unclear what prompted ICE, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security, to investigate the matter. He said it was probably a "combination of things" -- the Landrieu letter and the public protest by the displaced Louisiana electrical workers, which included an appearance this week on CNN.

Appendix 6: George Brown's report

Part of my experience on the Gulf Coast after hurricane Katrina

I joined an assessment team for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). The team consisted on six people, three AFSC employees, two consultants on short-term contracts, and one volunteer, me. The three employees are Darryl Jordan, Tony Nyugen, and Antonio Vasquez. The two consultants are John Rogers and David Robinson. We met in McIntosh, AL on September 29 and have been visiting sites along the gulf coast in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. One of our missions was to connect with local community organizations to see how AFSC could help these people in the future. One of the people we met with was Victoria Cintra (contact #: 228-234-1697) from the Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA). Victoria lived in Gulfport, MS until hurricane Katrina destroyed her home. She has moved back to work for MIRA and lives in a trailer next to the Pass Rd. Baptist Church in Gulfport. She and her husband have been working day in and day out advocating for the Latin-American community in and around Biloxi. Because of all the clean-up and reconstruction work, many Hispanic workers (mostly undocumented) have arrived from all over the country to get work. Housing in the gulf coast region was already at a premium and now it has gotten even worse. Workers, unable to find shelter elsewhere or prompted by their employers, began residing at Red Cross shelters in the area. We have met with Victoria almost every single day after our first meeting because we have found that there is so much that needs to be done for the Latino community here. Victoria is the only advocate for the Latino workers and many of them are rightly afraid of seeking help from government agencies. Our first direct support of MIRA occurred Thursday night October 6th.

The assessment team met MIRA (Victoria and her husband, Elvis) at the Red Cross shelter in D'Iberville at 6pm. We assembled there because Victoria had learned that the shelter supervisor was evicting all residents of the shelter who were not or could not prove that they were 'disaster victims.' I will define the term 'disaster victims' as those people who lost or are unable to live in their home because of hurricane damage. Almost all of those people have, of course, turned out to be Latino workers. There were about 20 people congregated in the parking lot, us and some of the Hispanic residents of the shelter. There were two people from Oxfam also supporting MIRA at the shelter and one freelance writer, Alex Beech (contact #: 908-294-5441), from New York. Victoria spoke with the people there to get a sense of the true nature of the situation. After speaking with the Latinos, Victoria was able to meet with the shelter supervisor about the situation. While she was inside, several police cruisers arrived. I don't remember how long Victoria was inside, but she was able to negotiate a one day extension for those people who had been told previously that they were kicked out. Everyone was happy that Victoria was able to extend their stay even if it was only for one day. Immediately after Victoria had her minor victory, she was back on the phone calling people in DC, specifically the Hispanic Congressional Caucus about the situation. A phone call was placed the next morning to the CEO of the Red Cross detailing the situation in

D'Iberville and asking where the directive to evict those persons from shelters was coming from. The head of Red Cross said that they were unaware of any such directives or actions and that evicting people, who need housing, from Red Cross shelters was against their policy. Calls were made and the people in the Red Cross shelter in D'Iberville were allowed to stay. Many left the shelter the next day anyway because of the perceived dislike for Latino residents. That was the first MIRA struggle that I witnessed during my stay here, but it would certainly not be my last.

My next encounter with MIRA occurred Monday, Oct. 10. After meeting with a local community leader, Antonio and I stopped by the FEMA and Salvation Army centers at Yankee Stadium on Division St. in East Biloxi to pass out bilingual flyers for MIRA. We gave our flyers to volunteers manning the front desks at both operations and inquired about Spanish language translators. Neither FEMA nor the Salvation Army had any Spanish translators at their sites to help people complete forms and answer questions. In fact they asked Antonio if he could come volunteer for them because they didn't have anyone. While we were there, we helped a couple Hispanic families who were receiving aid from the Salvation Army. They didn't even have any forms with a Spanish translation to help the people fill out the forms. After we left Yankee stadium, we met up with Victoria and her husband to respond to a call from an illegal immigrant who was being harassed and threatened with eviction and deportation by his landlord. We went to the address in Gulfport to talk to the family in person. Jose was not there, but his fiancée Tammy, who is white, and their three children were at the trailer. Almost all of their belongings were outside their trailer on the ground because the landlord told them they had to move out or the police would come and move them out. Victoria spoke with Tammy for a while about the situation and then we searched through their stuff to find Tammy's lease. Tammy and Jose had been living in the trailer, making monthly rent payments, for the last three years. They had missed the last month's rent due to some recent financial trouble and mostly due to hurricane Katrina. Tammy also reported that police, a unit from Oklahoma assisting local police, had come to their trailer, searched through their home without a warrant and told them that they had to leave. We stayed at Tammy's home for a while, but we had to move on to another crisis that Victoria heard about. Jose never arrived, but Victoria left a message with the landlord saying that MIRA and whatever resources she could muster would fight against the landlord's harassment.

Monday was certainly an exciting day because after we left Tammy and Jose's, we rushed to a trailer park in Gulfport that was housing Latino workers. We stopped at Wal-Mart on our way to the trailer park to pick up twenty blankets that were needed for the workers. Alex Beech was the person who alerted Victoria to the trailer park. Alex has had a continuing relationship with a couple Mexican missionaries who have worked in the region for many years. The missionary nuns are from the Holy Infant Jesus of Good Health Church. They had come upon the trailer park, Arlington Heights Trailer Park in Gulfport, earlier in the day after speaking with some other Native American workers who were in the same trailer park. What they discovered was truly sickening. Hispanic workers were living 10 to a trailer with no furniture and one of the three trailers didn't have electricity and had to run an extension cord from another trailer. Most of the workers had been brought in from North Carolina and Arizona with the promise of good

paying work. They were all Latino and could speak only a few words of English at best. We learned that while a couple were being paid regularly, some hadn't been paid in over a week and some hadn't been paid in three weeks. They were paying \$10 a night to live in the trailers. Multiply that by ten for the number of people in each trailer and by four for the number of weeks, you get \$2800. They were paying \$2800 per month for a dingy trailer that would normally rent for at most \$500. I walked through two of the trailers and the people are packed like sardines in those trailers. The blankets we brought were the only bedding that some of these men were going to have. The workers didn't actually pay the landlord themselves; their rent was withheld by their contractor. In fact some of the residents hadn't had a meal in three days because they didn't have the money to buy food. Nobody cared about these people and nobody would have found out if these nuns hadn't come across the community. Antonio had brought down some food and supplies from NC and we distributed them all to the residents. The contractor for a lot of men is KBR Contracting and they had a contact number but nobody was responding to a call that was made.

Appendix 7: David Robinson's interim reports

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #1

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for the period Thursday, September 29, through Saturday, October 01, 2005.

Thursday, team members David Robinson and George Brown arrived at MOWA Choctaw Friends Center and Academy (MCFA), near McIntosh, Alabama, in the afternoon, and team members Darryl Jordan and Tony Nguyen arrived later in the evening accompanied by Betti Knott, Executive Director of AFSC/SERO.

Friday morning Betti provided an orientation that reiterated the purpose of the assessment effort, and some housekeeping details were addressed (petty cash/reimbursement, sharing of cell phone numbers). In the afternoon, Darryl and Tony took Betti to the Mobile airport for her flight back to Atlanta, and proceeded to visit some of the most severely affected areas of Mobile County (west of Mobile Bay, along the gulf coast), specifically including Bayou La Batre. Meanwhile, George and Dave visited the clerk of Fairhope (AL) Friends Meeting (Bertha Battey), and then drove through coastal Baldwin County (east of Mobile Bay, south of I-10). Due to car problems, George and Dave were rescued by Darryl and Tony for the return to MCFA. John Rogers arrived after a four day drive with the 31 foot van that will serve as a mobile base of operations as the team moves west into Mississippi and Louisiana.

Friday findings: Bayou La Batre is severely damaged, having experienced extensive flooding and wind damage including beached shrimp trawlers. Darryl and Tony established contact with a network already active in providing relief, and learned of a public meeting scheduled for the next day (Saturday). By contrast, conditions in Baldwin County south of I-10 were minor, with no indication of areas or groups whose needs were not being addressed by existing programs. Bertha Battey welcomed the visit, and indicated that Fairhope has been and will continue to be steadfast supporters of AFSC and its programs, and that they are also actively involved in the Mobile Interfaith Alliance.

Saturday, September 30, Darryl and Tony attended the meeting at the Vietnamese Community Temple in Bayou La Batre and spoke with many of the 30 or so persons who were there. Following the meeting, they visited a distribution center in Mobile operated by Save Our Selves (S.O.S.) in cooperation with other NGO (non-government organization) network members. They also stopped at a Kinko's for internet connection and copy making. John, George, and Dave spent a couple of hours of storm cleanup and repair at MCFA, clearing falling limbs, removing 'widow maker' branches, and mending part of the damaged fence. They then drove to Mobile to ransom George's truck from the repair shop, drive through Bay Minette (Baldwin County, north of I-10) to check out reports of damage there, and then crossed to Mobile County to drive down the west side of Mobile Bay and then through Coden to Bayou La Batre, taking some digital photos for documentation and reporting purposes.

Saturday findings: The damage in Bay Minette was less severe than our source suggested, although there are certainly opportunities for community service. Damage appears to correlate with economic status. The damage in Bayou La Batre is profound. Red Cross has been serving about 3000 hot meals a day since Katrina at both stationary and mobile locations. One van stationed near the center of town has been serving about 300 meals twice a day (600 meals). The last day this service is being provided is Sunday, October 02, 2005. One of the aspects of needs versus available relief is the plight of residents who rent rather than own. FEMA can readily provide trailers to owners, while renters require consent of the owner to have a trailer placed on the same lot as the damaged dwelling. A 'catch 22' is that a landlord may receive assistance to repair a structure, and then raise the rent beyond the reach of the tenant.

The meeting attended by Tony and Darryl was attended by many Vietnamese residents, who came to the area following the end of the Vietnam War. The community also includes a significant number of Laotians, Cambodians, Afro-Americans, and Mexicans. There were representatives of FEMA present to provide information about assistance available through FEMA. Tony happened to personally know one of these FEMA reps. There was also a contingent of students from University of Maryland who had come as volunteers, and a Vietnamese lawyer from California was there.

Tony and Darryl were quite impressed by what they observed at the distribution warehouse in Mobile. They had a very informative meeting with the director of this facility/activity.

Looking ahead: The sixth member of the assessment team, Antonio Vasquez, is expected to arrive on Monday. Once the entire team is together, we plan to spend at least a couple of hours reviewing efforts thus far, sharing our individual perspectives of our assignment, and making some decisions for our approach to the next few weeks (where, when, how, deploy ourselves in 2's or 3's each day, interim reports, and formulation of the final report).

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #2

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Sunday, October 02, 2005.

Darryl and Tony returned to Bayou La Batre to pursue additional local contacts involved in the current relief efforts. John and George headed for Mobile to assess conditions in an area at the northwest edge of Mobile Bay, near the west end of the Bay Bridge on Alternate US 90. This is an area designated as Africa Town on at least one tourist map. Dave spent the day initiating this sequence of interim reports in electronic form (on the computer), and making a first cut at a proposed format for the final report due which is to be available for the Corporate AFSC meeting a week after the end of the assessment effort.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #3

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Monday, October 03, 2005.

With all six team members now present, thanks to arrival last night of Antonio Vasquez, a meeting was held with the following agenda:

Intro

Roles of team members

Recap [expectations and outcomes]

Regular meetings: at breakfast daily, more formal every ~2 days.

Dynamics/Interactions

Logistics, Mechanics/Timeframe

Contact assignments

Intro:

David Robinson: member of AFSC Corporation for SEYM, former SERO Exec. Committee member, Quaker

John Rogers: Quaker, Miami MM/SEYM, former SERO Exec. Comm. Member, construction experience

Antonio Vasquez: Latino, AFSC/SERO staff with migrant affairs, will depart field October 15

George Brown, Carnegie-Mellon student, volunteer, leaves October 20. Public Policy and Management studies

Tony Nguyen: Vietnamese-American, AFSC Staff, Oakland, CA, Asian/Pacific Islands (API) program, working with youth, refugee, immigrant activities. Will depart October 12

Darryl Jordan: African-American, director of AFSC Third World Coalition (TWC), one of only Philadelphia-based programs (other two are Affirmative Action and Women's Program)

Recap:

In Bayou La Batre, Tony contacted Boat People S.O.S., a coalition of 117 organizations, including One for Life (Ex-prisoners), and Veterans for Peace.

Meetings: tentatively agreed as noted above

Dynamics/Interactions: some team building effort was led by Darryl

Logistics/Timeframe: plan to get into Mississippi coastal communities of Gulfport, Biloxi, Pascagoula, Pass Christian, and Hattiesburg suburb of Palmers Crossing, and then to proceed westward into Louisiana. Intent is to adapt schedule to earlier departure of staff and volunteers, hoping to provide maximum time for these members to pursue contacts of special interest to them.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #4

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Tuesday, October 04, 2005.

Darryl, Antonio, Tony went into Biloxi and established contact with a number of relief providers, including the Vietnamese community, Some of the specific locations were a Katrina Relief Resource center (Oxfam and others), Salvation Army (at Yankee Stadium, with a free medical clinic, and a FEMA center), Red Cross, and the Buddhist Temple.

John, George and Dave contacted Sandra Peters (National Black Caucus of States Institute), and then met with her, Nathan Jordan (her husband and a local pastor), and two local women (Lisa and Linda) working at a community distribution center. While there, boxes of donated items were being unloaded. Quixotically, a significant number of cases of mini-witches hats and yoyos were included in the shipment. Some of the specific community needs cited were wanting to dig their own well for drinking water, installing sidewalks and street lights, and obtaining a generator capable of running the ice machine (they already have) to better (more independently) deal with any future lengthy interruptions of electrical power. They reported that Red Cross appeared only for a couple of hours on a single day during the second or third week after the storm passed. The local medical clinic simply closed for days after the storm, citing lack of electricity, but providing no information posted and no personnel present to assist with the needs of those normally using their services. The Red Cross then opened a center of some sort in the community, but it is continuously guarded by National Guard (why??). Phones are still out for the most part, with cell phone capability restored first. The average age of dwellings in Palmers Crossing is 52 years old. The community of about 3000 is about 99% black (according to Sandra) with Mexican and other persons of color comprising most of the balance. Nathan reported that he had observed regular (weekly) arrivals of Mexicans apparently being brought in to work in local poultry operations (Tyson?). Suffice to say that Nathan seems to be a keen observer of what is transpiring around him. To characterize his capabilities, it should be noted that he has successfully arranged for the construction of a new church in the community, with the walls and roof completed in only 3 days. It withstood Katrina unscathed.

During the afternoon, we drove to Wiggins, and encountered volunteers with the Friends Disaster Relief who were repairing roofs in the community.

In the evening, we returned to Palmers Crossing to attend a PTA meeting. We met Principal Chris Furdge, and he identified a (desperate) need for books and other reading material for the library. The name of the school is Earl Travillion Attendance Center (ETAC). [Mississippi denotes a school that has a kindergarten as an 'attendance center', rather than a school.]

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #5

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Wednesday, October 05, 2005.

Darryl, Antonio, Tony, and George went into Biloxi to further pursue contacts from the previous day.

John and Dave drove to Palmers Crossing for a meeting with Nathan Jordan. We then went with Nathan to inspect 7 homes that his church had vetted for roofing assistance. The arrangement, if the owners agreed, was for owners to provide all or most of the materials (using FEMA funds they received) and labor was to be provided by the church. John's insight as to the actual requirements each home was clearly of value to Nathan. In fact, 5 of the 7 homes were deemed reasonable candidates, while two of the homes were deemed unsuitable, given the condition of these homes. In one case, it was unsafe to work on the roof because the rafters were widely spaced, and were not lumber but raw timber. In both cases, it was John's opinion that the money would be better spent tearing down the existing structure and building anew. In both cases, space on the lot was sufficient to permit building the new structure before razing the existing one. All of the homes were probably at least 50 years old, with maintenance less than ideal. They then visited the new church that is under construction, under Nathan's guidance. Over lunch, Nathan spoke with passion about his commitment to promote education, noting that the community is entering a second generation of adults lacking a high school education.

John and Dave then drove to Biloxi where they were impressed to see some of the casino barges well across US 90, on dry land. It is estimated that one of these structures was as much as 500 feet long and at least 100 feet across, and two stories tall. As an aside, Mississippi had required casinos be 'on the water', hence the barges, but is revising the rules to allow them on land – which further encroaches on the available space for non-casino businesses, and residences. It was learned that an attempt had been made to shut down the free clinic operating in Yankee Stadium, staffed by out-of-state volunteer medical professionals, and stocked by donations from pharmaceutical firms. The basis was lack of liability coverage, and personnel not licensed by Mississippi. These issues were resolved by having liability assumed by IMA, and certification was resolved by an on-site visit that resulted in on-the-spot certification based on the excellence of care being provided. Their innovation was apparent, for example, regarding wheelchairs: initially they were told that they could be provided 10 wheelchairs by the Wheelchair Foundation, but were soon told that they could have 317, and they could pick them up anytime they wanted!

One of the highlights was meeting Bill Stallworth, councilman for Ward 2 of Biloxi, and going with him to visit a school that has been unused for the past two years, and is now being considered for use as a common location for many of the displaced agencies and service providers. A formal proposal regarding this is receiving favorable consideration by the Council, which would have some participation in funding the facility, but would

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #6

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Thursday, October 06, 2006.

Darryl, Antonio, and Tony, returned to Biloxi to further pursue contacts from the previous day. They learned of an event scheduled for 6 pm concerning the announced expulsion of people from a shelter. Initial reports attributed this to Homeland Security (HSA), with the concern being that the shelter was being raided with the aim of deporting undocumented immigrants, against Red Cross policy.

John, George, and Dave drove through Ocean Springs, and learned that flooding in the homes there was at least 6-8 feet, then met with (?) as arranged by John. They then drove eastward along the coast through Gautier, Pascagoula, and Moss Point. The 30 foot tidal surge at Pascagoula Bay demolished all homes within the first block of the waterfront. Some of the photos document this. Considerable damage further inland was also quite evident.

All team members came to the D'Iberville Red Cross shelter at 6 pm, in anticipation of an announcement. Inside the shelter, a sign was posted stating that all who could not show residency in the Katrina damaged area prior to the storm would be asked to leave no later than 8 pm October 6 (that day). Around 8 pm, word was received from Red Cross Headquarters in Washington that the expulsion would be deferred for 24 hours, allowing a little more time for alternative shelter/housing to be arranged.

Contacts made within the gathered crowd included a stringer for the New Yorker, and Victoria (last name?) with MIRA, who provided translation for Spanish speakers.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #7

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Friday, October 07, 2006.

All six team members went to Denny's in Ocean Springs for breakfast/lunch (your choice), and held a team meeting. Afterwards, we drove to D'Iberville to rendezvous with Rubye Braye, as arranged. We spent the waiting time at Wal-Mart's and other nearby shops. With Rubye, we met and ate at Chili's for the evening meal. John, George, and Dave returned to the base camp, while Darryl, Tony, and Antonio went with Rubye into Biloxi to show her where the contacts are located, and what the conditions are in the area, and then returned to the base camp (Deer Park Lake RV Park, Janice, Mississippi).

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #8

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Saturday, October 08, 2006.

In three vehicles, all six team members and Rubye drove to Slidell, LA, and had lunch at Cracker Barrel. Following lunch, we sat in front, using their famous rocking chairs, and

confabbed for an hour or so. Rubye conveyed her concern that we supply information for use by HQ for web content and for communication of assessment team activities to AFSC supporters. The team assured her of our commitment to share to the best of our abilities given the obstacles inherent in operating in an environment where communication is difficult, at best. Rubye then departed to meet Betti for a Quarterly Meeting being held in Baton Rouge. Darryl, Tony, and George proceeded to Houma to pursue a contact there, and John, Dave, and Antonio drove to Gonzalez to meet with a contact Antonio had (Fernando, at Iglesia Sanidad). Team members all returned that night to the RV base camp.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #9

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Sunday, October 9, 2005.

Darryl and Tony drove to Mobile (AL) for computer activity, then to Atlanta, leaving the field at this time. Tony will not be returning to the field, but will be participating actively in the report creation. He will prepare his own report, hoping to submit it by this Wednesday (October 12), and possibly will be on-site in Atlanta with some of the other team members to compile report(s). Darryl is (I believe) planning to return to the field after a few days (or possibly joining us in Atlanta for reporting efforts).

Antonio also drove to Mobile, and returned to base camp late in the evening.

John, George, and Dave did laundry at 'base camp', and then drove to Hattiesburg to use a Kinko's for network connection (permitting the emailing of some of these reports), and also went to Best Buy to purchase a digital camera for John's (and other's) use, as we found ourselves without either one of the two cameras (AFSC's and George's).

By day's end, the in-field strength was reduced to four.

Contacts still to be made include:

Oxford, MS: Lena Wiley, Oxford Worship Group, and Interfaith Compassion Ministries (phone 662.281.1002)

Gulfport, MS: Jeremy Eisler and Carol Burnett. Jeremy is State Director of Litigation for Mississippi (228.697.0395). Carol is with Child Legal Defense (228.669.4827) (email: cburnett@mschildcare.org)

Starkville, MS: Humphrey Costello (H) 662.615.6252, (O) 662.325.8655

Hammond, LA: Michael & Nancy Comeaux (cell 985.634.4089), referral by Bertha Battey, Fairhope MM

Rip Daniels, WQIP 94.5, N. Gulfport (228.896.5307), referral by Sandra Peters, Palmers Crossing (Hattiesburg) (FAX: 228.896.5703) [station may actually be WJZD]

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #10

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Monday, October 10, 2005.

In two vehicles, all four remaining team members drove to Biloxi. Enroute, contact was made with Carol Burnett (Moore Community House, children's defense). Rendezvous was arranged at East Biloxi Relief Organization (618 Division Street). We met with Carol, who is most definitely an excellent contact/resource/liaison for AFSC (or anyone concerned with children's services).

Significantly, one of her first questions was, "What can I do for you?" Her own home was destroyed, and they are fortunate to have sub-let from someone whose dwelling survived, but will be absent from the city for a while. Moore Community House was destroyed by flooding waters about 12 feet deep, and they are hoping to be one of the tenants in the Howard Avenue School building project. Moore Community House is a project of the United Methodist Church.

Her laundry list of needs for her organization (things she is working to address NOW):

- . dealing with immediate needs of the staff members and their families
- . Locating, and serving the needs of the children that have been in the program
- . demolition and reconstruction of the current facility
- . arranging (hopefully) to be a tenant of the elementary school facility on Howard Ave.
- . housing for the community
- . stemming the looming trend to remove lower income housing from the area (a concern shared by the Mayor, and by Bill Stallworth, councilman)

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #11

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Tuesday, October 11, 2005.

In two vehicles, all four remaining team members drove to Biloxi. Antonio went directly to the East Biloxi Coordination/Communication Center (incl. Oxfam, Islamic Relief, International Relief and Development.). John, George, and Dave stopped at the Wiggins Wal-Mart to purchase some supplies that were then delivered to the Buddhist Temple (Rice, toilet paper, diapers).

Antonio met at EBCC with Victoria Cintras (MIRA), and several affected persons, about evictions and shelter problems. During this, phone contact was made with Jeremy Easley (Miss. Dir. Litigation Services, and husband of Carol Burnett), and he conversed both with Dave and with Antonio regarding problems immediately at hand. Jeremy offered suggestions for approaching the situation, which Antonio found highly relevant and

useful. In his closing comments to Dave, he volunteered that he views one of the greatest challenges to the community is the strong impetus behind “redevelopment” efforts, that would have the result of fundamentally altering the community make-up, meaning reduced housing (particularly accessible to low-income persons) and increased tourist focus (he called it “Disney-ification”).

Yielding to the urging of Antonio, the party of eight (4 AFSC team members, Victoria, her husband, and two local residents with shelter problems) lunched at Barnhills Buffet. This was definitely a ‘working’ lunch that included many conversations at the table and on multiple cell phones. Much effort was directed at the situation of the individual who is a fully legal resident of the U.S., a person whose home was destroyed by Katrina, and who happens to look Mexican. Evidently, the only attribute of interest was the part about Mexican.

Returning to the EBCC, Antonio, Victoria, and John discussed matters that MIRA was/is involved in, while George and Dave utilized the computers and internet access to catch up on reports and emails. It should be mentioned that John stopped on the way back from Barnhill’s to purchase a couple of small tents for immediate use as needed.

As if things lacked for drama, a copy of a notice that had been posted on many houses (owned and rented) with the following text:

THIS HOUSE IS SCHEDULED TO BE DEMOLISHED!!!!

ANYONE LIVING IN OR NEAR THISHOUSE IS SUBJECT TO BEING ARRESTED FOR TRESPASSING. TENANTS WERE ADVISED 9/23/2005 TO VACATE THE PROPERTY. ALL PERSONAL PROPERTY WILL BE TREATED AS DEBRIS.

JORDAN DEVELOPMENT LP

The message is raw intimidation, based on little, if any, factual content. But, of course, anyone wishing to confront or challenge subjects themselves to the risk of unwanted attention, such as INS operatives. The threat of deportation is regarded, with justification, as quite real.

Antonio requested that George and Dave attend an Interfaith Task Force (ITF) meeting being held in Ocean Springs (immediately east of Biloxi) at 10 a.m. tomorrow (Wednesday), as he and John were going to Jackson (state capitol).

Upon return to the RV, it was found that an internet connection (very weak signal) was available using the wireless capability on the loaner PC, which permitted additional opportunities to send/receive email.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #12

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Wednesday, October 12, 2005.

Note: omitted from yesterday's reports telecom with Rip Daniels, with radio station WQIP (and/or WJZD) 94.5 FM in North Gulfport (ref. by Sandra Peters, Palmers Crossing) to inform of shelter eviction reports. He requests material be faxed for consideration: include statement identifying AFSC as 501 (c) 3, and information to be considered for investigation/reporting by the station. FYI, Rip is also involved in a real estate firm.

John and Antonio went to Jackson for a press conference, and George and Dave went to Ocean Springs (MS) for a 10 a.m. meeting of the Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force (IDTF). Its proper name is Mississippi Gulf Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force, Inc., and it is a 501(c) 3 organization. It has responded to Hurricanes Frederick (1979), Elena (1986), George (1998), and now Katrina (2005). This event was attended by approximately 40 persons representing at least 25 organizations/groups involved in Katrina relief. Roberta Avila was our primary contact. In past, Church World Service provided funds to this group exclusively (in this geographic area), and will again provide funds to this group as well as some others in the area. Participants included Lutheran, Mennonite, Islam, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches. Others present represented International Relief and Development, Inc. (www.ird-dc.org), FEMA, Americorps, and, of course, AFSC.

Before departing the RV, Dave was able to submit 2 interim reports and 25 digital photos using wireless internet connection compliments of an unknown nearby RV.

Following the IDTF meeting, George and Dave proceeded to E. Biloxi, first to the DuKane school that will hopefully serve as a one-stop location for many community service providers, and then to the coordinating center on Division Street

John and Antonio drove to Jackson for a press conference being held by M.I.R.A. (Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance) with media, to address concerns affecting migrants regarding shelters and employment issues. The remainder of the day was spent on responding to immediate problems, including a report of 'lots' of migrant workers being 'housed' in a New Orleans Naval base, and being prohibited from departing the facility without permission of their 'employer'. Verifiable facts were scant at the outset. A complaint by an injured worker we had first encountered outside the D'Iberville Red Cross shelter were researched and found to be less than entirely valid, providing a classic example of the need for rumor control. A situation involving about 30 migrant workers being housed in a single trailer, without food, blankets, or pay, was investigated. With intervention, these individuals were relocated to churches (nuns, and Victoria Cintra's), and employment assistance was provided.

The needs for immediate assistance for migrant conditions are huge.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #13

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Thursday, October 13, 2005.

John voiced a suggestion that AFSC consider placing at least 1 to 2 staff in Biloxi ASAP to sustain continuity of AFSC presence/involvement, especially with Latino issues, as crises continue to emerge daily.

Antonio went to Biloxi to deal with a specific situation involving a Honduran family whose mother perished in the storm.

John, George, and Dave set out for Pass Christian, Waveland, and Bay St. Louis (MS). In Pass Christian, we re-contacted Joe Wilson (a school administrator) near the new city hall (a double-wide trailer). At the same location, there were at least 30-50 tents being erected that looked like they could provide barrack style housing for many people. Each tent was 32 x 16 feet. There was a large white tent with tables and chairs, and food service. At this location there was a mobile shower trailer brought in from Oregon (Granny's Alliance, owner Gary Heisie, his wife Susan, aka Granny, phone 971-207-0035).

We also met Dr. H.L. Toussaint of Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church. His wish is for a FEMA style trailer for use as a temporary church meeting place, as his church was destroyed and cannot be rebuilt sooner than a year or so. (Such a need surely exists for many churches in the Katrina area.)

Leaving Pass Christian, J/G/D went to Waveland and Bay St. Louis, a trip that required going back up to I-10, across, and down again, as the US 90 bridge has washed out. In both of these municipalities, as in other coastal towns, all buildings within the first half-mile of the coast were destroyed or damaged beyond salvage. For the next mile or so, some structures survive, but almost all sustained serious damage or worse.

J/G/D then drove to Purvis (MS) to personally observe a reported FEMA trailer staging area, and confirmed the presence of many trailers there (estimates range from 1300 to 5000 trailers). We were told that these trailers are subsequently moved to staging areas closer to their destination, and from those locations are finally taken to be installed for use. Each unit required a work order for individual installation. We were told by one of the contracted truckers that his firm alone had 60 trucks capable of 4 installations/per day, each. In addition to their capability to place at least 240 trailers a day, other contractors could provide at least that much again, for a total capacity of at least 500 units per day. On the day we spoke with that driver, he said that only 125 work orders had been issued that day. This could certainly be a factor in reports of sluggish delivery of units...

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #14

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Friday, October 14, 2005.

All four team members, in two vehicles, drove to Louisiana, stopping first in the Algiers suburb of New Orleans, and then through Houma to DuLac.

In Algiers, we stopped at two Common Grounds sites. The first was a medical center, and the second was the home of an individual (Aaron) who has set up a center for meals, a distribution center for food and other supplies, and creating and administering work orders for local repairs. A truly grass-roots activity.

At this site, we met Jessica Azulay, a reporter. <http://newstandardnews.net> in Syracuse, NY. Her card identifies her as Civil Liberties and Security Editor. She appears to be a relevant contact for the migrant issues in the Katrina area.

We continued to Houma and then to DuLac where we met briefly with the head of the community center there, who is a former Chief of the Houma Nation (verify this?).

Antonio received a call from Rubye Braye requesting that all Quaker contacts be completed, and that photos be submitted.

Several calls established that Joyce Miller intends to connect with us, but was in Georgia and would not arrive before Saturday.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #15 rev. 1

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Saturday, October 15, 2005.

Antonio drove to D'Iberville to follow-up on a pending concern, and then drove up to Forest for a multi-cultural fair being held there.

John, George and Dave did some laundry at the RV camp, and then departed for highway 49, and, following phone contact with Antonio, elected to go to East Biloxi, buying some supplies on the way to be taken to Versailles). They then volunteered to assist with tree removal from the roof of a house off Main Street, for a citizen (Chester Hicks), to fulfill a work order created by the East Biloxi Relief Center. Returning to the center, they responded to a request to relocate 4-5 people who had been tenting outside a Methodist Church. This effort required two trips to convey the people and their belongings about a mile away to a location closer to the waterfront (Beach Street/US 90). Finally, they delivered six tents Islamic Relief had donated to Victoria Cintra (MIRA). We did not connect with Victoria as planned, as she left unexpectedly to attend to a reported removal of a family from their home..

Phone contact with Joyce Miller was made. She was in Hattiesburg, having met with Antonio in Forest. He had given her directions to the RV location. We learned from Joyce that Antonio had left for Atlanta directly from Forest.

John, George, and Dave returned to the RV camp, finding Joyce had arrived and had retired for the night.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #16 rev 1

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Sunday, October 16, 2005.

Following breakfast at the RV, Joyce, John, George, and Dave departed for Versailles, in St. Bernards Parish near New Orleans. They traveled in two vehicles to Mary Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church. As they arrived, they encountered a New Orleans council member, Cynthia Willard-Lewis, District E of New Orleans, who was trying to intervene to arrange for water/sewer/power for the neighborhood, which had none of these services some six weeks following the storm. A reporter for the New York Times was also present, as were some FEMA representatives who could provide English/Vietnamese assistance with forms. Many local residents had returned and were actively trying to remediate damage from flooding (2-3 feet) and winds (roofs, trees). The church is taking a very proactive role in encouraging residents to return, as well as striving to restore those services necessary to enable them to resume their occupations. A day-care center run by the nuns was working to re-open, to enable working parents to return to work. As to housing, the church was trying to arrange for a number of FEMA trailers to be placed on a large field directly across from the church. No FEMA trailers appeared to be in the community thus far. After being shown some of the church facilities and the damage they had sustained, and talking with Fr. Luke Nguyen (504-287-1090 cell), and another priest, Fr. Vin. Joyce then left the others to drive down La 23 in Plaquemines Parish to observe conditions in that area. La 23 runs more or less parallel to the Mississippi River below New Orleans. John, George, and Dave remained in the area to provide several hours of direct assistance, by removing damaged drywall (sheetrock) from two of the classrooms, removing ceiling lights that had dropped from the leak-damaged ceilings, picking up roofing shingles that covered much of the grounds, and installing a large tarp to supplement others that community members had installed earlier that same day. After working for a while, they were treated to a meal prepared by the nuns. As the sun was setting in the west (doesn't it always), the threesome deftly installed temporary covers over two openings (wind turbine blown off, and another similar opening) in the roof of one of the parishioners. They returned to the day care center to collect their tools, and went in search of food. They were able to rendezvous with Joyce at a Japanese restaurant in Slidell, and thence back to the RV camp. Dave took this opportunity to chat with Joyce, as her passenger.

At Mary Queen of Vietnam Church, Joyce spoke with two women representing FEMA, and learned that they were there to provide English/Vietnamese language assistance with the requisite forms for assistance, and that their term of employment was estimated to be from 6 months to 2 years.

The pressing needs for this community were identified as Porta-Potties, and potable water. Clearly, electricity, water, sewer, and phones are high priority items. And then the

appearance of debris removal crews could help to reduce the pervasive smells of decay and rot. Returnees have removed some water-damaged contents to the curb. In most cases, this includes a refrigerator that has been taped closed, with the pre-storm contents still within.

Joyce Miller drove through New Orleans before heading down La 23. She noted very few people in evidence. She spoke with several, and found that there was a distinctly different perspective depending on whether the speaker was an owner or a renter. On the way to La 23, she stopped in a town near Gretna where she saw considerable damage that appeared to be caused predominantly by hurricane spawned tornados, but very little "hurricane" damage. That is, damage was not particularly uniform, and did not involve flooding. She then stopped in Belle Chasse at a disaster relief center. The contact person there, who she did not meet, is Poppy Cooper (985.634.5297 cell). The only activity at the time was meal service being provided by Hammond and Baton Rouge churches. The main problem identified to her was transportation. Few or no vehicles were available, and little public transportation exists to people to food centers. Mobile meal delivery seemed to be unavailable in the area. Another problem identified was communication. Poor or absent phone service makes it difficult for residents to contact FEMA or anyone else. Most relief assistance appeared to be provided by local church-based groups.

Continuing down La 23, Joyce observed some families were in their damaged homes, coping somehow. The citrus crop is reportedly destroyed. She saw a barge high atop a river bank. She saw cattle standing in flooded fields about 13 miles into her travels down La 23. Some phone poles were standing erect, while many were partly or completely blown down. A lot of the houses appeared to be of fairly recent construction. In Ironton, a small black community, she was told that FEMA (and others) didn't respond to a resident's report of a levee break. She drove beyond Myrtle Grove, where she was finally turned back by a sheriff at a checkpoint some 28 miles down the road.

Joyce feels the need to 'raise up' the fact that the poorest evacuees simply cannot afford to return to this area because of the price of gasoline and/or lack of a working vehicle. This concern is closely related to the concern that 'recovery' may translate to 'gentrification', which will have the effect of purging neighborhoods of the working poor. Consequently, these workers will be obliged to relocated further from their employment, and incur increased transportation time and costs.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #17

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Monday, October 17, 2005.

Joyce Miller drove to Hattiesburg/Palmers Crossing to meet with Sandra Peters. She met with some of the members of the community at the community center. A prime focus of her time was legal issues, with discussion also centering on education including the community's desire to create/expand a day-care program. Some discussion also centered on the changing demographics: Palmers Crossing is largely black, with the historic 'class' issue being black/white. More recently, there has been a significant influx into the

larger Hattiesburg area of Latinos, many of whom are employed by the poultry producers. Consequently, there is a stimulus to create an increased capability to for training people for skilled labor jobs. As an aside note, an article in a newspaper yesterday noted that 17% of Mississippians hold a college degree. As previously mentioned, very few residents of Palmers Crossing have obtained a high school degree or GED.

John, George, and Dave first did some laundry and moved to RV to empty the gray water and black water onboard storage tanks. They then drove to Biloxi, where John and George addressed 5 work orders that the E. Biloxi Coordinating and Relief Center had collected. (There are far more than 5 work orders!). They were able to resolve all five, clearing trees and brush, among other things. Dave completed and emailed more interim reports, and assisted the Center with setting up a new fax machine.

In the evening, Joyce returned to the RV, and John, George and Dave drove to Waveland (about 30 miles west of Biloxi) to attend an informal gathering of disaster relief volunteers active in different communities along the Mississippi Gulf coast. The location was the site of a Sunshine Coalition event that is providing hot meals, medical services, a mart, and a community focus. About 30 people assembled in a circle, and exchanged names, organizational affiliations, and what it was they, or their group, was providing, what community needs they saw as unfulfilled, and what ideas they had for responding to these needs (housing, transportation, food, showers, assistance with forms, etc.). The invitation/encouragement to attend this came from Eric Klein of Can-Do. Returned to the RV arriving around 11:30 pm CDT.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #18

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Tuesday, October 18, 2005.

In two vehicles, John, George, Dave, and Joyce drove to E. Biloxi, stopping first at the E. Biloxi center. John and George proceeded to the Buddhist Temple to pursue John's desire to set up temporary housing on the grounds of the DuKate School grounds, if permissions and cooperation of other groups that had requisite resources could be arranged. The vision is to set up Quonset structures for lodging, showers, and food prep, along with the necessary water supply, drainage, sewage, etc.

Enroute to Biloxi, received (2nd) call from an individual in Biloxi who given the number by Carol Burnett. The caller actually works with Carol at Moore Community House. She was referred to the E. Biloxi Coordination and Relief Center for assistance with her storm-related problems, and was very grateful for the lead, as she was getting nowhere otherwise.

Dave rode with Joyce to visit various locations in E. Biloxi, and to speak with residents at various locations. Joyce took many photos using 'throw-away' cameras, that will require development, and scanning, prior to being distributed electronically. Her photos should

provide a valuable supplement to the photos taken by team members. Joyce did what she could to spread the word of public 'town meetings' to discuss redevelopment plans proposed by a Governor's commission the preceding week. These sessions have not been particularly well advertised, and are at locations not readily accessible without a working auto. The risk is that low turnout will be interpreted as low interest and/or concurrence with proposed plans.

Dinner with Joyce was a delightful conclusion to her stay with us. She departed for Atlanta, and we returned to the RV.

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Project: Assessment Team Interim Report #19

Purpose: This interim report provides information regarding activities of the team for Wednesday, October 19, 2005.

John, George, and Dave drove in a single vehicle to Slidell, LA, planning to rendezvous with Angel and Eric of Can-do.org as arranged the previous day. During a wait period, several phone contacts were completed to local Quaker Worship Groups (Humphrey Costello of Starkville WG, and Michael Comeaux of Hammond WG). Humphrey Costello expressed a specific concern that the needs of children in shelters could have been better met than they were, by providing more diversions and 'comfort' items. He also noted that he had been troubled to have encountered disturbing (inaccurate) preconceptions of 'victims', which he saw as evidence of cultural divide. Note that he is a sociologist by profession. Humphrey may also be a good resource for local knowledge regarding the poultry industry.

Phone contact with Betti addressed web issues, and concerns regarding hurricane Wilma, which poses a threat to the homes of both John (Miami) and Dave (Melbourne).

When contact was made with Can-Do, it was found that there was time to revisit Common Ground in Point Algiers. While there, a wireless connection was found and used to send emended reports (15 & 16), and to send report #18, as well as to check for emails. Another resource for porta-potties was identified, and checked out. Unit prices were about \$500, plus transportation. Transportation for 28 (a full trailer) was estimated to be about \$1000. This information is to be forwarded to Queen Mary of Vietnam Church in Versailles, should this be of interest to them.

Rendezvous with Can-Do was accomplished about 3 pm, and we proceeded with two vehicles to travel down La 23. We saw those items previously reported by Joyce, and were able to proceed another 20 miles or so beyond the checkpoint, thanks to a letter of authorization Can-Do had received from FEMA. We were detoured onto route 11 as a result of a couple of shrimping vessels blocking La 23. The destruction in this area is absolute. Some residents have been returning during the daytime, and leaving each night, in order to try to deal with the mess. No outside help of any sort was seen. Passing a location that had debris piled roadside, we stopped to investigate (most debris lies where the storm left it). It was the site of a couple of businesses owned by a couple (Byron and

Kelly). They are owners of Black Velvet Café, and had set out a hand-painted “Happy Hour” sign, and were selling canned and bottled drinks from Styrofoam coolers. (They still owned the liquor license.) They had managed to get a tractor going, and used it to clear the areas they hoped to reoccupy. They also ran a gun shop, and had spent a lot of time trying to recover inventory, and were routinely being brought live ammunition by neighbors who had found it scattered about at varying distances away. Their reported treatment by FEMA borders on the absurd: they were told that a visit to their site had occurred, but when they asked what airboat they came in, it became clear that they had not visited, as the site was still submerged under eight feet of water at the time of the alleged visit.

All five drove back up 23 after dark (also after official 7 pm curfew), and had a meal in the Vieux Carre of New Orleans. Those streets were alive and functioning, with many MPs visible, and many police from varying distances as well, including Washington DC capital police. As we departed for our return to the RV, almost no lights were visible in any other parts of New Orleans. John, George, and Dave arrived back at the RV after 1 pm CDT.

This next interim report may be deferred for a few days, as the remaining three members of the team will be splitting up tomorrow. George will return to Pennsylvania, Dave will drive the RV to Florida, and John will remain in the area for another day or two.

Post-field: Oct 20-21, drove RV to Melbourne Beach, FL. Oct 24, rode out hurricane Wilma. Oct. 25 drove to Atlanta. Oct. 26-27, report writing in Atlanta with John, Darryl, Joyce Miller, Betti Knott.

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