



CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST

WESTERN PA CATALYTIC

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Spring Break in the Ninth Ward...

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What images does the phrase 'Spring Break' evoke? Beaches, sunshine, maybe a week home to work and sleep off the studying? This spring, even CNN came to get a glimpse of 3,500 of us with something else in mind... cots, mold, showers in a trailer or tent, stench, drywall and grime.

At 5pm on March 10th 41 students, 4 staff and 3 volunteers (including our director's dad) boarded a chartered to New Orleans to help with the recovery effort. We would be staying in a warehouse that had only been gutted, fumigated and cleaned a week prior. Each student had raised or paid about \$250 to spend their break *working*. The ride down was fun and relaxed, but as we approached the 24-mile Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge, the mood became more somber and the destruction wreaked by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita painfully apparent. Navigating the city streets, we encountered block after block of abandoned and probably uninhabitable houses spray painted with messages and death tolls – only part of 17 square miles of the same, in New Orleans alone.

God loves NOLA...

As Katrina was making landfall on the Gulf Coast in August, plans were already being put into motion at Campus Crusade's headquarters in Orlando to send staff and students to the affected areas. Although the specific level of destruction was yet unknown, it was obvious that the effects would be significant. And while Campus Crusade for Christ has historically chosen to focus energy on people's spiritual life and health rather than 'humanitarian' efforts, it was clear that in this case, God was providing a definite leading.

By September 2nd, less than a week after landfall, students from around the country had already arrived to aid in feeding and caring for the now-homeless Gulf Coast residents. In the months that followed, hundreds took weekend trips to help gut and rebuild homes and churches, even after other aid groups had left for lack of funding. Some students even withdrew from classes for the year to administrate, seeing that the thousands of workers had meals, clean water and porta-potties, and proper safety training.

Higher ground...

Upon arrival at the "Light City" warehouse on the 11th, we knew a long week was ahead. In 5 days, our team gutted 7 apartments, a market, a home and a church – a gift of labor that would have easily cost the owners at least \$30,000. That week, the entire camp in New Orleans helped gut more than 750 buildings – more than \$2 million worth of labor!

Conversations with residents were encouraging and humbling – their faith that God has not forgotten them is pervasive. The simple joy to be alive and the reminder that material possessions matter far less than eternal treasures gives the city a deep hope. Friday as we left his house (barely visible from the curb through the mountain of destroyed belongings), Mr. Johnson – a jazz musician and retired longshoreman – thanked us over and over saying that he hadn't known what

- For God's continued work in the Gulf Coast, that more people would be drawn to Him during the recovery from this tragedy.
- For safety as students continue to travel and work, as well as for the Summer Projects that are taking place in May, June and July.
- For our senior students who will be graduating in about a month, that they would follow God's lead into their post-college life.
- For a strong finish to the semester. Pray that we would not "coast" until the end of May.

he was going to do, but now he knew he could "handle the rest of this." The bus pulled away as he waved and gave us a thumbs up – then turned to go back into the house that had been his life to begin to rebuild that life anew.

Grace & Peace,

Jayson & Carrie

(PRAYER NEEDS)

PS. Again, we lack space for all details & photos of the trip that we'd like to share - take a few minutes to visit the "newsletter extras" section of our website.