



THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN PEACE OFFICERS (CANADA)

FRATERNITE CANADIENNE DES AGENTS DE LA PAIX CHRETIENS

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"Building A Strong, Visible, Christ-centred fellowship, mobilized to reach out to the needs of all peace officer families"

Project Katrina: The Year in Review

(September 2006):

Over the past 11 months, many people across Canada and the USA have worked diligently to make a difference in the lives of police and firefighter families who call the Gulf Coast of Mississippi home.

I would like to begin by, both on behalf of the National Board, FCPO (Canada) and myself, by saying thank you for your dedication, hard work, steadfastness in prayer and financial support. With God moving ahead of us and opening doors during this Project, we have accomplished much, made a difference in many lives and most of all, done it all to reflect by that which guides our lives.

One of the greatest parts of this whole project are the relationships that have been formed with families in the Gulf Coast, between team members that headed down and the impact that the time spent had on individuals as they returned home. Approximately ½ of the 60 plus Canadian team members that went down with FCPO (Canada) were not members of FCPO (Canada) or affiliated with any church groups. This shows the bond that police and firefighters have with each other: when the chips are down there isn't an officer or firefighter that I know who wouldn't risk it all to help a brother or sister in need.

FCPO (Canada) members, the individuals who answered our many reports and requests for assistance, along with those that committed faithfully to supporting the organization financially and prayerfully can without a doubt feel a sense of pride in what has been accomplished over the past year. It is clear that these individual actions, when multiplied, made an enormous impact in many areas. 11 months ago many Southern residents had never met a Canadian never mind having traveled to Canada. One example of the personal impact that these teams have made is in the Weatherford house where the recreation room is nicknamed "the Canada room". The room is complete with a large Canadian flag, pictures of the "Weatherford crew", and other assorted Canadian accoutrements which adorn the walls.

The parable of the small boy, the fish and the loaves of bread comes to mind as I write: God took individual talents, a small amount of funds, coupled with a short period of time and multiplied it all across an entire part of the State of Mississippi. Recently, our Executive Director traveled to Gulfport to visit a number of homes that FCPO teams had worked on. I was amazed to find out that 63 families (30 police officers, 25 firefighters and 1 civilian who joined the FCPO group as a volunteer and 7 others chosen for assistance) had been helped. In addition to these police and firefighter families, there were dozens of other area families ministered to, assisted, and given help in smaller,

specific ways during the year. What has been said time and time again by families is that many would still be a guest of FEMA and the all too familiar white single-wide RV trailer without someone in Canada dropping what they were doing and getting involved.

This Project started out with a desire to share and serve as the Bible calls to do with families in need. From the faithfulness shown by many over this year, God applied leverage which that only He can do to the resources so generously provided by many behind the scenes. FCPO (Canada) raised approximately \$20,000 in donations which enabled a number of teams to travel to Gulfport as well as assist in keeping 4 retired officers in the Gulfport region from Canada, at various times, to coordinate logistics and work directly with the affected families. FCPO (US) and the Gulf Coast FCPO Chapter raised \$100,000 in cash donations and secured materials and tools at significantly discounted costs to assist in the rebuilding. This coupled with volunteer labour coming from north of the border and quantities of donated materials, FCPO (US) and the Gulf Coast FCPO Chapter, was able to multiply their funds into assistance to families valued at over \$1.5 million at the end of the day. I would beg us all to find any major organization or government agency with limitless funding and huge personnel resources to match what prayer, listening to the call and letting God take the lead can do.

How do we know that a difference has been made? Here are some comments given to Hank Harley in July when he visited Gulfport a second time from some of the 63 families helped:

- We thought we had had it, and then the FCPO stepped in.
- “Heaven sent”....teams from Canada came with special loving care. We had lost hope but those Canadians gave us hope, God bless them all!
- FCPO “saved us” I don’t know how we could have coped without the assistance the FCPO gave us. They’re great!
- Firemen are close to each other but I never knew this friendship to be like this.
- From the time they entered our home we became very close friends. We couldn’t have done it without them.
- I never knew people from so far away would care about people so far away. The FCPO deserve a lot of credit. Nobody asked for anything in return they just wanted to HELP!
- I never knew there would be so many “God Things” happen. It has been great! God Bless y’all!

The efforts of members on the ground have not just been in repairing drywall or pounding nails. There have been friendships established, tears shed and laughter shared. One example is the work that was done in the background by an FCPO member and many prayer partners to secure a Foundational grant for families affected by the storm; as of last week, four Pass Christian police families each received confirmation of a \$15,000.00 grant they would be given by the Angel Relief Foundation. This is, overall, a small amount of money in the grand scheme of the billions of dollars

being spent on rebuilding; however, on a personal level, it is a huge amount to an individual family that lost everything.

There are simply too many people to mention that have played a part in rebuilding lives down South. I will, however, make mention of several people that gave much in both time and resources to go down multiple times or for an extended period:

Kevin and Deb Mcinness
Mike Holland
David and Vernie Greenhalgh
Russ and Sharon Ideson
Alec and Laurie Dutt
Hank and Andrea Harley

To everyone who gave their time, energy, resources and supported things daily in prayer, our thanks goes out. This project was born literally on a wing and a prayer without any idea as to how things would get done at the time and a task that some days seemed insurmountable. To tell about the specifics of so many miracles that were preformed would take the writing of a book; let it simply be said that the past 11 months has been one "God-incidence" after another.

As time has passed, the events of August 29, 2005, will fade in many minds. There is however, work still going on as there will be for years to come. The Gulf Coast of Mississippi is a beautiful part of the United States and an area that for me and nearly 60 other Canadians, who were part of Project Katrina, will hold a special place in our hearts.

On behalf of FCPO (Canada) Board of Directors, thank you for getting involved and making a difference in the rebuilding of lives

For His Glory;

Andrew Cowan
FCPO (Canada), National President