

REPORT FROM THE GULF (Week of October 11-16, 2005):

David Greenhalgh, reporting from the Gulfport Police Department:

The following is part of an October 2005 update on the situation in Gulfport from FCPO member David Greenhalgh. David is part of the relief effort and has volunteered the next 4-6 months to help coordinate things for the Gulfport Police Department, freeing up one of their members to go back on the road. This liaison position is now part of the management team and crucial to the recovery of the PD's lives, homes and family.

Thanks in no small part to the work and commitment of Officer Caleb Williams & Sgt. Eddie Lovitt (Gulfport PD) FCPO members arriving by air will have a "reception committee" and transportation when they arrive.

In the coming weeks, Alec and Laurie Dutt are travelling to Gulfport to supplement Dave for a period of about 2 months. The Surrey FCPO Chapter has been hard at work liaising with several US Police Departments to have tool caches collected by Alec and Laurie along with way. The FCPO is California is also putting together a team to spend a week around the US thanksgiving (mid to late November).

Howard Eddy FCPO CA arrived bearing many gifts including a bike renamed "TAC 1", the FCPO Katrina projects' first form of transportation. In an appalling display of callous disregard for a valuable piece of police kit, the dumb operator (yours truly) dumped it in a gravel laneway next to the YFC office within the hour. Fortunately there were no photos (that I know of) taken and the only thing injured was my pride. Howard's thoughtfulness and his fellowship were a blessing. Howard has digital photo's that have been put onto a DVD of which a copy can be obtained by emailing FCPO Canada Executive Director Hank Harley (go to www.fc pocanada.com for the link to Hank's email).

Youth for Christ (YFC) has been a big provider of local support in many ways and have been tasked out to a number of GPPD employee's houses for cleanup and repairs. Two YFC (Youth for Christ) clean up teams from Parker CO start work Saturday 15th on houses owned by officers Charles Bodie and Greg Herman. These officers are extremely pleased with the help and assistance being provided by total strangers. It is my solid conviction **that FCPO is in the right place, with the right project, in the centre of God's will for both the ministry and maturing of this organisation.** Gulfport PD is led by two Christian officers and the entire organisation responded magnificently to this crisis typifying the highest standards of our profession. God selected this City for our help and they richly deserve it.

Howard & I took photo's of the Long Beach & Pass Christian PD buildings. Hard to believe the officers all survived out of these buildings. My heart goes out to these officers as well. Pass Christian until recently was working out of a tent. Three of their cars are up in trees in a cemetery and all they have to maintain policing services is donated. The sea came in on three sides onto this peninsula. Older buildings floated up then were dumped on top of cars/trucks.

Our team has sourced covered, secure, gated, dry storage at the Gulfport/Biloxi airport. Our GPPD contact there, Officer Williams is living in a FEMA trailer while his family remains in Texas (complete with a new baby born only a few weeks ago). Considering the storage problems that exist locally this is a miracle and a direct and specific answer to prayer. Effective the evening of Tuesday 18th the region of the main Police Building will be blanketed with a free secure wireless access point for internet access, independent of city interference. This will be a resource for police, relief workers, fire department staff and savvy city hall staff. The signal may also reach our friends at YFC two blocks away. All donated by a local Businessman.

Kam Breitenbach, a civilian employee of Parker CO PD arrived tonight to clean yards and pull sheetrock. I found out she is an expert in Federal funding grants for PD's, also Department records. She also brought a microwave for donation (you won't believe how much of a difference small things make here)!! . We (Caleb, Kam & I) are planning to visit Pass Christian PD who were working out of a tent until recently and make a point of contact with them.

In terms of considering volunteering your services consider partnering with one or two other able people. That makes a team. If by chance you have to rent a vehicle that cuts the costs. I believe there will be tasks right through March. Katrina is 10 times bigger than Andrew with 275,000 homes lost. It took 10 years to clean up after Hurricane Andrew and the Baptist Disaster Service working out of Pass Rd Baptist Gulfport told me yesterday that they are committed for 2 to 3 years. There is work to do! The situation here is fluid and information valid three weeks ago is not valid today eg. some communities still need clothes, locally there appears to be a surplus. What applies in New Orleans does NOT apply here, but may in Pass Christian. My current challenge is not only to source materials, construction skills but balance the available resources. As insurance resolutions appear some homes are coming off my list as they will be contracted. We will also be looking at Long Beach & Pass Christian PD's to see if we can help them to some small degree while we are here. They are much smaller and were more devastated.

Every person who reads this is part of a team that I am privileged to represent. The FCPO reputation here is like Gold and began with "those Canadian officers" Kevin, Deb & Mike" who God first called. You don't have to be here to help. If you are praying you are helping. One person on our "team" spent an afternoon on the net and from the list of contacts he found, I sent emails out. Joe Miller from Biloxi responded to one and so we will get wireless access. Another "team member" is busy sourcing tools. Don't think you have to be here to be on "the team" but we sure would love to see you here swinging a hammer sometime between November and March 2006! **Our concern is that as the months of October and November end, people will start to pull out and move on to the next project. If you can't come now, you are needed just as much, if not more, in the winter months.**

Skill testing question: You can spend a week or two in January and February in Saskatchewan, Northern Alberta, the rain of Vancouver or in the company of thankful families, new found friends and the tourist town of Gulfport, Mississippi!!

October 16, 2005

Teams from Parker Evangelical Presbyterian Church (PEPC) of Parker CO started work on PD employee's houses yesterday under the Youth for Christ banner. They are enthusiastic and well led. Please remember there is not just the damage to repair. PEOPLE are damaged and sensitive. One very independent lady Patricia, with an invalid husband had refused all offers of help. She finally cracked when I pointed out she could not install ceiling materials without help. The PEPC team goes back tomorrow to fix her fence. The family of Lt. Herman have been devastated. When the house is cleaned up he will see the improvement and feel much better about repairing it. The PEPC team is a literal Godsend and will be blessing the Police Dept., all this week.

Kam Breitenbach, from Parker Colorado, has been tasked to me for the week. She will help the PD with applications for Federal grants and we are hoping she can help other local PD's. Coincidentally she worked on Patricia's house, bonded with her and may be working with her at the PD this week. She also brought two boxes of uniforms. In another "God-incidence", an RCMP member was sent an email from a co-worker giving the name of a local Gulfport resident they knew who wanted to find out who she had to contact to offer to help with laundry and occasional home cooked meal. A message sent from Gulfport to Vancouver, to Victoria and back to Gulfport, what a small world.

That is it for today - prayer requests:

1/ For a load of gyproc and excellent sources of insulation, plywood and roofing materials.

2/ For an electrician who can stay for a while and provide free services.

3/ For Patricia, Greg, Ray and Leonard all families grievously financially damaged by this storm.

4/ For permanant use of a van to transport tools, materials and workers. I actually need a vehicle now to go and assess and set priorities for worksites.

5/ For wisdom for 'staging' arrival of workers/trades people.

6/ For safe passage for Alec & Laurie leaving by motorhome Monday 17th and for donations/purchase of the appropriate construction tools.

7/ For continued use of the FCPO "Command Centre" a donated 29ft trailer.

8/ Vernie & I need wisdom for personal plans. The plans we had are not working out so God must have something else in mind, we just don't know what it is yet.

If you are RV equipped please consider coming down for a while if you can help. I believe there are several places you can park an RV. With an electrician and a little money for parts I think we can do some 30 amp hookups and do a weekly run for dumps. Bear in mind that Gulfport was a destination resort town but the beaches and casino's will not be open for quite a while yet. The water is back on here but tastes chemical so fit only for washing etc. I have been brushing teeth with it for 10 days no problem!!

Blessings upon you all and thank you for your support.

David M. Greenhalgh - Liaison - FCPO Katrina project