

# FCPO CANADA: PROJECT KATRINA UPDATE

**February / March 2006**

*What is Project Katrina? It is our response to the police and firefighter families in the area of, and surrounding Gulfport, Mississippi. Overnight on August 29, 2005, many families' lives were changed following Hurricane Katrina and the flood surge that hit the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.*

*FCPO Canada and FCPO US have committed to rebuilding lives, homes and making a difference to all the Police and Firefighter families in the area that we can. In order to do this, we need your help. This can be done in three ways: Prayerfully, Financially and Personally.*

*We need your help to answer this call for help from our brother and sister emergency services personnel.*

It is hard to believe that it is now nearing 6 months into Project Katrina. Spring is just around the corner, which means a respite from the winter in Canada and the turning on of air-conditioning units in Mississippi. What has been happening, and where are we going? In a nut-shell, here it is.

February ended with Hank and Andrea Harley wrapping up "their winter vacation" and 2 months in Gulfport. Their assistance at the warehouse was immeasurable and many jobs would not have gone off quite as smooth without Hank's truck delivering drywall and Andrea's contagious cheer. Russ and Sharon Ideson also headed back to BC after their tour of duty leaving a host of friends, completed jobs and hopes that they will return soon.

For David, our resident volunteer, Vernie was able to come down and they both had some more than well deserved rest in Florida before ramping up with meetings and presentations in Washington State and Oregon, making sure that people don't forget there is still work to be done and teams/resources continue to flow.

The local Chapter is now in full control of the Project and the management team is comprised of the Chapter Executive and other Chapter members. As there is lots of work to be done and only so many hands on station, it is exciting to see other organizations and ministries coming alongside the FCPO Chapter in Gulfport. While the Chapter leadership and resources continue to focus on finishing the homes of Gulfport City employees, these other organizations are helping the Project advance in leaps and bounds by leapfrogging (no pun intended) to Pass Christian. If you understand the makeup of the area, you will see that Gulfport is surrounded by a number of smaller towns with police and firefighters families who have also been impacted by the hurricane. As of 31st January there were 26 employees at Pass Christian PD, of which 9 have only slabs and 2 have totally gutted houses. The Chief of Police John Dubuisson is also a total loss victim and his house rebuild has just started. Without some help he will be heavily mortgaged through age 85. John has requested the assistance of the FCPO and expressed appreciation for anything that can be done for his officers and employees.

One such organization is a newly formed construction company called "Res-Erecting" that is owned and operated by Christian business people in Florida. Res-Erecting is offering a variety of rebuild services for police/fire across the Gulf Coast and has a flexible approach to working with owners, donors and volunteers to keep rebuild costs down. Another of these is "First Call Families" from Portland OR. They are a small group but are committing all their resources to Pass Christian PD. The Methodist "Men in Mission" rebuild group is also committed to police/fire families in the Pass and are already working alongside. Men in Mission is raising funds with a goal of building five houses 2 for Fire, 2 for Police and 1 for an individual in the Pass.

And what about the firefighter families? Recently, a project member met with two Pass Christian Firefighters who lost houses. One of them lost his father in the house next door during the storm when they all had to swim out to trees. The family members searched and found his body when the waters receded. The other young firefighter, a believer, is struggling to understand how a loving God could allow this storm. Each encounter produced opportunity for fellowship, prayer counsel and encouragement. The Pass Christian FD was devastated and we now have a list of 11 names of full time and part time firefighters who lost houses to work with. The entire staff of 17 full time firefighters has been put on notice that they may be laid off in November as this City is basically bankrupt. . Five of these are full time and only a couple were fully insured. One firefighter interviewed this morning has 22 years seniority, the other has five years.

As we head into April, the FCPO US National Board will be down for their spring board meeting with a team from California staying the week following. A Canadian challenge, by leaving the Maple Leaf indelibly marked on houses worked by Canadian teams, has gone out to our US counterparts and they will do their best not to be outdone. The lure of Tim Horton's coffee at Camp Canada seems to be too much and it is great to see many US teams leaving their mark around the Gulf Coast.

The stories can go on and on. The Project, however, can only continue with your help and support. Please consider being part of a team, or even organizing a team to come down and help. If you can't make it, you can both donate financially, encourage others or your church missions committee to consider a donation and provide prayer support. You can contact the FCPO (Canada) via email at [projectkatrina@fc pocanada.com](mailto:projectkatrina@fc pocanada.com) or the FCPO US at [grant@fcpo.org](mailto:grant@fcpo.org).

God Bless

David Greenhalgh