

Katrina Relief Task Force

Although New Orleans has recovered to some extent from the damage done by Katrina in 2005, there remains a vast amount of work to do to make homes livable again. Our government has done little to help meet this need, leaving most of the work to be done by volunteers. This task force exists to arrange trips to New Orleans, with volunteers from Bloomington and surroundings working at that effort.

So far, one group of ten went down in September 2008, another group worked March 14-21, 2009, and we are planning a third trip in October 2009. Here are some details.

We car-pool down, and work out of the Little Farms United Church of Christ in a suburb in SW New Orleans. We sleep there in bunk beds constructed by church members in three of what had been Sunday School rooms, and we cook breakfasts and some dinners in the church kitchen to keep food costs down. The church has a well organized program, with long-term volunteers who take groups to different homes needing repair and act as site managers.

In our September trip, we divided into two groups, and went to two homes to work. At one, we put new roofing on the carport (which had been leaking where it joined the house) and mudded and sanded drywall. At the other, which was closer to completion, we installed kitchen cabinets, painted, and did other finishing tasks. In both cases we met and talked with the homeowners, which added to the value of the experience.

What is needed

For our upcoming trip, we need two things:

- First, we seek volunteers who want to go with us to work for the week. We hope to have 20 in all. Construction or do-it-yourself experience is useful, but everyone is welcome. There is always work for everyone.
- In addition, we seek monetary donations to support the expenses of those who want to work, but don't have the funds to support their share of expenses. For our other work trips, generous donations from church members and IU faculty supported three of our ten volunteers in that way. Expenses include food, gasoline, motel for one night on the trip down, and a donation to the Little Farms church for housing.

To contribute in either of those ways, please contact the task force organizer, David Parkhurst, nola.dfp@comcast.net, 333-2945.

For further information on the Little Farms program, see <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/hurricane/>