



Vermilion Faith Community of Care

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Vermilion Faith Community of Care Annual Report 2007 Jim Grant, Ph.D., LCSW, Executive Director

Direct Service Programs

Housing assistance

During 2007, VFCC provided some form of direct assistance with construction activities to 25 families, in the form of purchasing materials, providing and supervising volunteers, collaborating in joint efforts, and providing construction work. The total amount of money for materials and labor that went directly through our bank accounts was \$110,885.

In addition, we engaged the services of 137 volunteers, working a total of 5,979 hours on these houses. At an average value of \$18 per hour, the estimated value of this labor is \$107,620. Many other volunteers were engaged by partnering organizations, and significant other funds were contributed to most of these houses. We were also able to leverage building materials worth \$30,170 for three of these homes. Altogether, the value of these in-kind goods and services was \$137,790.

Of these 25 houses, 15 received grants from Church World Service (CWS), as part of a very successful collaboration process that involved several partnering organizations – Southern Mutual Help Association, United Way of Acadiana, Catholic Diocese of Lafayette, Volunteers of America, and American Red Cross – with VFCC acting as fiscal agent and project coordinator. Near the end of 2007, we were awarded an additional grant of \$64,085 to work on nine more houses in 2008.



College students putting pre-framed wall in place on Katrina Cottage.



Homeowner Karen Keeve and volunteers as Katrina Cottage project nears completion.

VFCC supervised, in collaboration with other agencies, construction efforts on two major projects – one a repair/addition, the other a new home. The repair/addition was to the home Bertha Levy and Ernestine Moore in Mouton Cove. Besides repairing areas of the house damaged by Rita, we added a new addition to the house that gave these sisters indoor laundry and bathroom facilities for the first time. Elbert volunteered his services for many

Executive Director: Dr. James Grant *Program Director/Treasurer:* Mrs. Liz Touchet
Board of Directors: Father Keith Milligan, President, Rev. Kevin Williams,
Mrs. Marilyn Mitchell, Mr. Elbert Dawson, Mrs. Becky Broussard, Mrs. Rebecca Shirley

facets of this process, both in doing the labor and in supervising others. On this and other projects, he volunteered 480 hours of labor.

The new construction was a home for Karen Keeve in Abbeville, whose Rita-damaged home was eventually determined by SMHA to be beyond repair. From the point of that decision, Jim and SMHA's Judy Herring began exploring other options, and came upon Katrina Cottage plans. Together, they developed a comprehensive plan to take the process to completion. After the rest of the house was torn down, a collaboration process that involved VFCC, SMHA, United Way of Acadiana, Mennonite Disaster Service, Lowe's, Massachusetts Local Aid, and volunteer groups from around the country commenced. Father Keith took on the responsibility of coordinating a major portion of the work of volunteers and professional contractors. This was the first Katrina Cottage built for a client on the entire Gulf Coast.

Furniture, appliances and household goods

As homeowners repair their homes and move back in, they are often in need of new furniture and/or appliances, and few organizations have been in a position to assist with these items. Since 2006, this has been a special focus of VFCC work. Liz has investigated many such needs. In 2007, we were able to provide 63 major appliances, including washers, dryers, A/C's, hot water heaters, ranges and refrigerators, as well as new furniture, to 40 families. \$22,356 in funds donated to VFCC was used for these purposes. In addition, we developed partnerships with St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Project A-Manna) and the Abbeville Rotary Club that provided additional funds for purchases of \$10,200 and \$8,769 respectively.

Donated goods.

At the beginning of 2007, we had many goods that had been donated in previous years sitting in our warehouse. In the spring, a truckload of hotel furniture, valued at \$4,500, was donated from Connecticut. Throughout the year, these items were donated to needy Vermilion Parish clients, or passed on to other organizations, such as the Christian Service Center and Love Inc., who could more effectively distribute them. Some furniture remains for future distribution.

VFCC program staff

Throughout 2007, except when noted above, Liz Touchet, serving as our Program Director, coordinated our direct services. In 2007, we received a second grant of \$25,000 from Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), which had \$12,000 earmarked to continue to pay her a contract fee of \$1,000 a month until August 2008. Early in the year, she was assisted with this work by Ms. Julie Mazo, a volunteer from Massachusetts who contributed 130 hours of volunteer work. Later in the year, Michelle Landry of New Life Church in Abbeville gave her 70 hours of much appreciated assistance.

Service Coordination and Community Development

Vermilion Parish Long-Term Recovery Coalition

The Vermilion Parish Long-Term Recovery Coalition was established in November 2005 to bring together and coordinate the work of provider agencies assisting families with their recovery from Hurricane Rita. VFCC Executive Director Jim Grant was elected chair of this coalition, and he continued to serve in that capacity throughout 2007. Though the coalition has at times addressed a broad range of issues, by the beginning of 2007 its function as a coalition had been reduced to focusing on addressing the recovery needs of individual families. Case managers in the various agencies were kept up to date on emerging trends and available resources through meetings of the Case Managers Roundtable in Lafayette.

To provide for unmet needs of Vermilion Parish families, agencies submitted requests to the Unmet Needs Review Committee, which met at the office of the United Way of Acadiana, under the direction of their Hurricane Recovery coordinator. Jim attended these meetings regularly. When a case was worked out enough for

presentation, Jim called meetings of all organizations of the coalition able to provide money, materials or manpower. In this way, a number of families had significant needs met.

The Church World Service process described above was also part of the work of the coalition. Funds were given to CWS by Habitat for Humanity, to be made available to long-term recovery coalitions. Since the Vermilion Parish coalition does not have 501(c)(3) status, VFCC needed to be the responsible party. Jim coordinated the application process and oversaw the implementation. We were held up for our model collaboration process by the CWS representative.

In the last few months of 2007, we have been gathering information about changes in the programs of coalition agencies to be offered in 2008, especially the conclusion of existing programs. We will be using this information to redirect the work of the coalition in 2008, as well as to reassess VFCC service programs.

Throughout the year, we have been pleased to note that a warm spirit of openness, mutual trust and collegiality has characterized the relationships between organizations in the coalition. In this way, we have been able to significantly enhance the quality of services that we have provided to families in need. We believe that VFCC has had a meaningful role to play in this regard, by the manner in which we have exercised our leading role in the work of the coalition. Some ways that this can be seen are in our collaboration on renovation projects and in the way that we have shared our resources with others. Throughout 2007, SMHA has been utilizing three of our trailers, at the Katrina Cottage worksite as well as elsewhere, and United Way of Acadiana and Rebuilding Together have been using the other closed trailer. The Methodist Storm Station has been sharing our warehouse for storing building materials since the last quarter of 2007.

Louisiana Speaks

At the beginning of 2007, the Louisiana Speaks program had processed community input from public forums in the previous year, and was working toward a Regional Vision, for which they needed some additional input on focused questions. Jim noticed that Vermilion Parish was getting little coverage. He worked with Louisiana Speaks personnel to arrange presentations in several outlying areas, and to make sure that local people learned how to participate. Extensive participation throughout southern Louisiana resulted in the development of a clear Regional Vision and plans to implement it, which are now passing through state and local government processes. Jim continues to serve as a Louisiana Speaks Champion.

Louisiana Interfaith Disaster Recovery Network

The movement to develop an organization that would help co-ordinate the efforts of faith-based organizations around the state continued into 2007, with Summit III being held at the Methodist Conference Center at Woodworth in January. Jim and his primary collaborator on the Day of Prayer, Emilia Bellone of Lafayette, made a plenary presentation there on the Day of Prayer, and continued on the steering committee. In May, a gathering was held in Baton Rouge to officially inaugurate the organization, named Louisiana Interfaith Disaster Recovery Network (LIDRN), and to take membership applications. VFCC signed on as a charter member. A couple of months later, when it became incorporated, both Jim and Emilia were incorporators, and they were also elected to the Charter Board of Directors. Jim has continued to take the lead in organizational development, by preparing material for the 501(c)(3) application. LIDRN continues to be a co-sponsor of the Day of Prayer, which is clearly becoming a signature program for both VFCC and LIDRN.

Among the ways in which LIDRN can assist faith-based groups, they have chosen to focus on resource development and advocacy in the coming year.

Expressing our Faith

Day of Prayer

In the aftermath of 2005's devastating hurricane season, VFCC initiated a call for a Day of Prayer for Protection from Hurricanes on June 1st, 2006, under Jim's leadership. The result, in a year that weather forecasters

predicted a severe season, was that no hurricane reached the US mainland. This was, we believe, at least partly due to our efforts and our prayers.

We began 2007 with both VFCC and LIDRN again supporting a similar process on June 1st. We did our best, with limited means, to spread the word, throughout Louisiana and beyond. In Vermilion Parish, all municipalities gave their support. Jim was able to again speak with Governor Blanco after her prayer breakfast, and she responded with a second Proclamation. The sunrise service on the Gulf near Intracoastal City was attended by a small but enthusiastic prayer group. Catholic Churches around the state continued to actively support this process through regular encouragement of their parishioners to join in prayer throughout the hurricane season. After the season was complete, Jim also had the opportunity to personally thank Governor Blanco for her support after a talk she gave about her faith at the groundbreaking for SMHA's Teche Ridge development in New Iberia.

The storm season had a few anomalies – a Subtropical Storm off the coast of Georgia/Florida in May, and a hurricane going into the South Atlantic – but unfolded as a moderate year, despite continued forecasts as another severe season. Two Category 5 storms impacted Central America in less than a month's time. Eventually a single hurricane did make landfall in the US – Humberto, crossing over Texas and passing through Northern Louisiana. Total estimated damage for all storms was over \$5 billion – serious for areas damaged, but still below expectations. Another unusual feature of the year's weather was the severe drought conditions that plagued many areas of the Southeastern US, and continues to do so to this day. All of these events give us much food for thought as we prepare for the 2008 hurricane season, with expectations of a much more robust process for involving others in the Day of Prayer, and for making a greater impact on the weather. Of course, not our will, but God's!

VFCC Administrative Staff

Jim continues to serve as the Executive Director, a position valued at \$3,000 per month. While we have sought grant funds to pay appropriate compensation, we were only able to pay \$16,800 in 2007 out of general revenues, resulting in a donation of \$19,200 in volunteer efforts. Liz continues as VFCC Treasurer, a volunteer position, donating her services, valued at \$12,000. Geri Marceaux was hired in mid-year to take some of the bookkeeping load off of Liz. We also had her assist us with the task of bringing order to our filing system. She has charged only \$550 for all of her services, donating additional time.

Jim reports that both Liz and Geri deserve high praise for the quality of their work. Liz's financial records also received excellent comments from a CRWRC audit team that audited them during 2007.

Financial summary

We estimate that the value of VFCC's contribution to community efforts in 2007, which include \$172,220 in cash and \$207,860 in kind, totals **\$380,080**.

Vermilion Faith Community of Care Financial Summary 2007

	CASH	IN-KIND
Beginning balance January 1, 2006	\$ 108,390	\$ 4,000
Income		
Hurricane relief donations	\$ 18,111	\$ 53,640
Volunteer Labor		\$ 142,420
Use of space		\$ 10,800
Grants		
Church World Service	\$ 120,079	
Christian Reform World Relief Committee	\$ 25,000	
Interest	\$ 495	
Total	\$ 163,685	\$ 206,860
Expenses		
Administration		
Contract services	\$ 17,305	\$ 31,200
Dues/subscriptions/conferences	\$ 384	
Insurance	\$ 875	
Professional fees	\$ 570	
Office supplies/postage/printing	\$ 1,133	
Travel - contractors	\$ 1,745	
Utilities/occupancy	\$ 1,076	\$ 10,800
Miscellaneous	\$ 387	
Total	\$ 23,457	\$ 42,000
Program		
Contract services	\$ 12,000	\$ 3,600
Housing assistance - rebuilding	\$ 110,885	\$ 137,790
Appliances/household goods	\$ 22,356	\$ 21,970
Travel – contractors	\$ 104	
Other direct client assistance	\$ 2,775	
Partner donations		\$ 2,500
Miscellaneous	\$ 625	
Total	\$ 148,745	\$ 165,860
Total	\$172,220	\$ 207,860
Total value of contribution to community efforts		\$ 380,080
End of year balance, December 31, 2007	\$ 99,855	\$ 3,000