

January 31, 2009

Winter time in Mississippi. Some days it's in the 70's, some days it's in the 40's, some days it goes from the 70's to the 40's in one day! But, I'll tell you this, it's a whole lot warmer here than in the northern states! It's no surprise that Jan, Feb and March are our busiest months. We know you love us, and you come to serve God, but it sure helps that we rarely have ice or snow here!

We had 180 volunteers come through in the month of January. Praise be to God! We dedicated two houses, and two more will be ready in a matter of days. In addition to our weekly volunteers, we are blessed with a several long-term volunteers, such as Alex Curtiss, Ella Kliger, Reinaldo, Lee Struck and Bill Bratz. (We'll tell you more about them in our upcoming newsletter).

The transition of Project REHAB to the new Fuller Center Disaster ReBuilders (FCDR) is complete, but the latest news is that the council of Bethel Lutheran Church (BLC) has approved our transition of the Bethel Volunteer Ministry to FCDR. We will finally be one operation! We have been in partnership and committed to the same mission for the past 3 years, but legally we operated as separate organizations. Now we'll officially be one organization with the ability to carry out our mission in a more seamless manner. Primarily, this change will be transparent to all of you as volunteers. What this does mean for upcoming teams is that all donations (including housing, sponsorships, construction etc) will be made to Fuller Center Disaster ReBuilders. We are grateful for all the support you have provided us and we are so excited about our continued ministry to those in need.

Camp Gospel is a beautiful location for our volunteers. We are only 20 minutes from our construction sites in Hancock County, and we are right across from the beach on Highway 90. We've discovered all the best restaurants and watering holes in the area, but many of the volunteers choose to just sit under our majestic oak tree. To be able to serve God and reach out to those in need, and do it in such a beautiful setting is a testimony to the grace of God.

Lives continue to be transformed by the work that He has called us to do. Every week we experience the smile of a homeowner, the expression of gratitude from a 'local', and the awesomeness of being His hands and feet, His light and love, here on the gulf coast. Every week we, the staff at FCDR, wonder if we could be so lucky to have another week as good as the last, and every week God calls you here and we are awe-struck again.

We are thankful beyond words.

Peace & Warm Weather,

Heather