

**Bethel Lutheran Church, ELCA
Biloxi, Mississippi**



**Bethel Volunteer Ministry
Ministering in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina
*March 2008***



**Bottom row (L to R): Nick Farnum, Jonathan Sofsky, Karleen Ernst, Amy Slater, and Jamie Carpenter.
Second row (L to R): Nick Prechel, Jen Whitten, Jesse Miller and Maggie Taylor.
Top row (L to R): Justine Bohlman and Kristen Harris**

Another AmeriCorps Team

AmeriCorps offers 75,000 opportunities for adults of all ages and backgrounds to serve through a network of partnerships with local and national nonprofit groups. On March 6th, we received another team of eager, enthusiastic youth to work with Project Rehab to restore homes for South Mississippians. This team will be with us until April 25th.

Our current team, Water 6 from the Denver Central Region, is led by Nick Prechel from Buffalo, New York. Nick graduated from Fredonia State College in 2005 with his BS in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing and a minor in History. Since graduation, Nick has worked in retail woodworking and wholesale electrical supplies.

Justine Bohlman is from State College, Pennsylvania. She graduated high school this past summer and plans to attend college after serving with AmeriCorps NCCC. Justine has volunteered at various animal shelters and with animal rights organizations.

Jamie Carpenter is from Rushville, Nebraska. Jamie received her BA in English from Colorado College with minors in Anthropology and Linguistics. Jamie has volunteered as a tutor and mentor. She has also volunteered in a soup kitchen and knitted blankets for the homeless.

Karleen Ernst is from Concord, New Hampshire. She attended Hesser College in an excelled program for Medical Assistants, but left to join AmeriCorps. Karleen plans to return to her studies after completing her AmeriCorps service. Karleen plays the flute!

Nate Farnum is from Northfield, Massachusetts on the Vermont/New Hampshire border. He received his BS at Bridgewater State College, majoring in Geography and concentrating on City Planning. While at Bridgewater, Nate spent a week on the Gulf Coast working with Habitat for Humanity in Hattiesburg and New Orleans.

Jesse Miller is from Wheeling, West Virginia. Jesse attended West Virginia University for three years, concentrating his studies in English and Sociology. Nate has worked as a camp counselor for four years, supervising groups of 15 children for three weeks at a time for the duration of the summer.

Amy Marie Slater is from Newburgh, New York. She graduated from Ithaca College this past May with a BA in Legal Studies and minors in Sociology and Politics. Amy has volunteered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Tompkins County Office of the Aging, Habitat for Humanity, and at an after-school program for underprivileged youth.

Jonathan Sofsky is from Atlanta, Georgia where he attended Georgia Southern University for 1½ years to study business Administration. He is a certified auto mechanic and locksmith!

Maggie Taylor recently graduated from high school in Dayton, Ohio. Maggie enjoys star gazing and has a horse.

Jen Whitten was born and raised in Vermont. She graduated with her BS in Secondary Education with a concentration in Social Studies. In addition to serving as an office for a gymnastics club at the university, Jen has volunteered at schools, through local agencies and internationally with Volunteers for Peace.

We are so happy to have the Denver team work with us over the next six weeks. They have already proven to be energetic and eager to learn. They are team players and we feel very fortunate to have them as part of our Ministry to help South Mississippians rebuild.

We will welcome two additional AmeriCorps teams to Project Rehab and the Disaster Ministry. A Sacramento team will arrive on April 17th and another Denver team will arrive on April 24th. They are welcome additions as we reach out further west to help Hancock County residents rebuild.

Clinic News

Our South Mississippi Hero

It wasn't a very pleasant few moments around Bethel when Judy Jones received a telephone call from our local television station to inform her that she had been selected as a South Mississippi hero and would be featured on the weekly spot. "I'm not a hero – I am just working here in the clinic alongside the volunteers."



Judy Jones

When we finally made Judy realize that the "air time" could benefit the clinic (perhaps another local physician would see the story and volunteer or perhaps a community minded citizen would learn of our need to raise money to use in renovating space within which to move the clinic and offer a donation) she agreed to participate.

Rebecca Powers profiled Judy on March 18th. "With just 40 church members, Bethel Lutheran Volunteer Ministry has accomplished amazing feats. They've built 61 homes, refurbished 21 damaged houses at no charge, and their free pharmacy and medical clinic has cared for almost 20,000 people. Judy Bultman said the director of Bethel "helps give free medical and emotional care to patients, because she is their tireless champion!" That's why we choose Judy Jones as a South Mississippi Hero."

Take a look at the television clip. The link is provided at the end of this article. (Point to the link with your mouse. Hold down the Control Key and click the mouse.) You'll see how Judy and Heather Westcott, our Director, told the story of the amazing work that has been accomplished through Bethel for Mississippi Coast residents. Way to go, ladies!

http://www.wlox.com/global/video/popup/pop_player.asp?ClipID1=2304130&h1=Rebecca%20Powers%20Profiles%20Judy%20Jones&vt1=v&at1=Promotion_9&d1=198433&LaunchPageAdTag=Promotion_9&activePane=info&playerVersion=1&hostPageUrl=http%3A//www.wlox.com/Global/category.asp%3FC%3D80298%26nav%3Dmenu40_11_7&rnd=91329915

We Say Goodbye to Chris



Chris Cannedy

Chris Cannedy first came to Bethel under her employment with Project Recovery. Project Recovery was a special program of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health designed to assist Coast residents in coping with the stress caused by Hurricane Katrina. Project Recovery also provided outreach services throughout the community, public education services and information and crisis counseling referral services. It was funded by a FEMA grant and facilitated with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Project Recovery offered services out of our clinic which is how we came to know Chris. She was helpful, compassionate and had knowledge of plenty of resources for our patients.

The funding for this project ended just as our clinic received a grant from AmeriCares to hire a resource worker. Chris was the most experienced choice!

With the funding for that grant now exhausted, we had to wish Chris “goodbye”. She and her services to our clinic patients will be sadly missed by all.

God Bless Our Long Term Volunteers



Charlie and Dee Jewell

Dee and Charlie Jewell recently completed their third trip to Bethel. They were previously with us in April and October of 2007. This time we were fortunate to have them for a month and a half!

Dee worked in the kitchen and around the Bethel facility, keeping everything clean and well-organized. In addition to running errands, washing and folding towels, cooking and cleaning Dee found time to paint the entire Bethel hallway and doors as well as all of the door frames around the church building. Dee worked from before sunrise to long after the sunset. And did we mention her wonderful peanut butter and chocolate bars? She could never make enough to meet our demand.

Charlie worked construction with Project Rehab. He spent the majority of his time working on three houses on Bellman. And, of course, he became a fan of Biloxi's Burger Burger! Charlie enjoyed working on the job site with the various groups of volunteers and trained the newest AmeriCorps “material girls” before leaving.

We look forward to Dee and Charlie's return and hope they bring back Bev (Dee's sister) and her husband Marv. They stayed with us this time for two weeks, with Marv working construction with Charlie and Dee and Bev cooking up lots of goodies in the kitchen!

Not Just Another Birthday



Casie Lynch

Many volunteers celebrate their birthdays with us at Bethel, but we can't recall a volunteer other than Casie Lynch of Grace Lutheran Church in West Minister, Maryland who has celebrated her past three birthdays with us!

Casie traveled to Bethel with her father, Rodney Lynch, to volunteer on the Gulf Coast this month just in time to celebrate her 16th birthday. She worked alongside her father during each of her volunteer trips.

Casie plans to return again with her dad to celebrate her 17th birthday at Bethel. Thank you, Casie, for your hard work and giving nature. What a special gift you are to us. We also salute Casie's dad who's made it possible for her to volunteer with us by working alongside her.

To Keep You Posted



THE NUMBERS FOR FEBRUARY

We hosted 367 volunteers this month. At the end of February, there have been over 7,215 volunteers serving the people of south Mississippi through Bethel.

Although we don't have a count on the number of home rebuilds we completed in partnership with Camp Biloxi, we know that through Project Rehab, Joining Hands, and NuCastle we have rebuilt 61 homes. With Project Rehab, Joining Hands & through our partnership with Lagniappe Presbyterian we are in the process of rebuilding 19 additional homes in East Biloxi and Hancock County!
Thank you, volunteers & sponsors!

464 patients were treated in our clinic this month. We have had 22,374 patient care visits through the volunteer services of 179 doctors, 422 nurses, 330 other volunteers, and 217 student nurses.
Thank you, volunteers & sponsors!

Our Needs as We Continue to Minister

We close each update with a short list of the most pressing supplies that we need either to support our volunteers, which ultimately serves the people of south Mississippi or to directly support the people of south Mississippi.

- 1. URGENT NEED: Our Clinic is out of Wal-Mart gift cards that we use to purchase medicine for the clinic. Your help would be so appreciated!**
- 2. Volunteers are always needed! Long-term, short-term, skilled, semi-skilled, those able to serve in the medical clinic (PHYSICIANS!! & nurses, non medical folks who can help type or file), in the kitchen, on work crews, case advocates, clerical support, etc. – any and all with the willingness to serve – we invite you! Any licensed craftsmen - plumber, electrician, HVAC installer, etc.?**
- 3. Of course, we always continue to ask for your prayers for south Mississippians, this ministry, and all sponsors and volunteers.**

A full list of current medical and ministry needs are available on our web page.

New volunteer tee-shirts are on order! We even have ordered boomerang tee-shirts! As soon as they arrive, we'll place photos of them on the webpage. In case you haven't heard, you can now access the webpage by typing www.bethelvolunteers.org.

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