

Weekend Warriors January 2007

Hello all!

This was the UCBR Weekend Warriors' first teaming effort with the dedicated group of volunteers from the Bay Area UU Church in Houston, TX, headed up by John McCorquodale. Nineteen volunteers, including UCBR members and friends, two members of the Bay Area UU church and another UU from California worked at four houses in New Orleans, one house in Violet, LA, southeast of New Orleans, and conducted a preliminary assessment of a house needing gutting in Gretna.

In the morning, David Earle, his grandson (who worked too, and wants to go back!) and friends Gary and Glenda Parks met John McCorquodale and former president of our congregation, Betty Crockford (the year Rev. Steve Crump was installed as our new minister), of the Bay Area UU church and another UU volunteer from California working out of the First Church, met to sand and float drywall at Reese Brewer's house. Nancy Gilbert, Karen Girardot, Sandra L'Herisson, and Irene Kato drove down to meet Linda Cooper and Dick Yeaw and Jeane at Augusta Butler's house in Violet to pull nails from studs, pull down a damaged fence, and remove debris from her yard and spruce it up. (Now that Reese has trained us, I see us helping Augusta with sheetrock at some point in the future.) The day before, Friday, John McCorquodale and his crew "blue-roofed" the house.

Phil Stouffer and Jeff Flynn drove down to meet Jeff's friend from Houma, LA, Mr. Champagne, to work at Celia's house, repairing and painting doors, some other miscellaneous work, and moving some furniture. Al Babbit and Mark Gilbert drove down to repair window screens at Angie Palazzolo's house. I drove to Gretna to inspect a house where gutting was requested, and then drove back to Reese's to help for an hour or so rearranging equipment and supplies in some of the rooms so that the walls were accessible for floating. In the afternoon, work continued at Augusta's, Celia's and Reese's house, and Al and Mark and I drove to Jolie Bonk's house to help paint the kitchen, trim, and repair /clean her front door.

Since November 2005, the UCBR "Weekend Warriors" have made at least once-a-month workdays to New Orleans to help NOLA UUs and others cleanup and rebuild. Including the estimated 50 hours of work put in by the BAUUC team on Friday and Saturday, the teams worked about 174 hours, not counting travel time or lunch break. To date, we've had about 38 UCBR members and friends, along with about 7 folks from out of town (Boston, Seattle, California, Houston) who have worked anywhere from 1 to 17 trips each, for about 1,000 total volunteer hours since our first trip in November, 2005, at about 31 locations in southeast Louisiana, including the 7 FEMA trailer parks in Baton Rouge.

Respectfully,
Michael J. Hebert
Weekend Warrior Wrangler & Gumbo Ambassador

Hurricane Relief and Social Justice Project
Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge