



Project Homecoming, Inc.

“Building Resilient Neighborhoods”

www.projecthomecoming.net • 504.942.0444 • Fax: 504.942.0408

2012 Summer Youth Mission Information Packet

Hello and thank you for your assistance in this time of need for the Gulf Coast area. Your efforts and the efforts of all the volunteers in the area will go towards helping to rebuild communities and lives of the people of New Orleans and nearby communities. Thank you for your servitude and commitment.

This packet contains some of the things that will prepare you for a successful and meaningful trip. Please read it over and contact us with any questions.

We look forward to your arrival!

This packet contains the following:

- Background information about Project Homecoming
- Olive Tree Volunteer Village Orientation and Introduction
- Project Homecoming Rules and Expectations
- Registration forms
- Safety Packet

You will need to fill out and return the following forms:

- Skill Sheet (one per group)
- Individual Registration Form (one per volunteer)
- Individual Medical Release Form (Must be notarized, make one copy to leave at housing site)
- Participant Activities and Hold Harmless Release Form (Must be notarized)
- Agreements Form, found at the bottom of the Individual Registration Form, to indicate that each volunteer has read the Rules and Expectations and Safety Packet and will abide by the standards outlined in these documents (one per volunteer).
- Covenant (one per volunteer)



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The History of Project Homecoming

Project Homecoming began its existence as a ministry of the Presbytery of South Louisiana with the support through a partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. In 2005, following hurricanes Katrina and Rita, churches in our presbytery began to offer housing to volunteer groups from around the country who came to South Louisiana to assist with the massive cleanup and rebuilding efforts in severely impacted communities. Initially, the work of the volunteer groups focused primarily on clearing debris and gutting flood damaged homes. As the clean up progressed, the churches began to focus their attention on ways to assist low income homeowners with the rebuilding of their hurricane damaged homes.



In New Orleans, the presbytery worked with local congregations to organize an infrastructure of staff and resources to facilitate the construction management, community restoration, volunteer coordination, and client intake needed to sustain a long-term recovery effort. The presbytery opened offices for this recovery ministry in April, 2007 in the education building of Gentilly Presbyterian Church. The name “Project Homecoming” was given to this ministry, which from the start has provided assistance to hurricane survivors who are low-income (defined as 80% of the average median income of New Orleans), giving priority to those who are uninsured, underinsured, elderly and/or disabled. Additionally, Project Homecoming seeks to build resilient communities by working on community projects in storm damaged neighborhoods that have been identified by neighborhood associations, social service agencies and other partners as important to the recovery of the New Orleans.



Recognizing the longer-term needs of the recovery, the Presbytery of South Louisiana decided to begin a process of spinning off the ministry of Project Homecoming as a 501(c)3 nonprofit. The Presbytery developed Articles of Incorporation and by-laws, defining Project Homecoming as a faith-based community development organization that is affiliated with the Presbytery of South Louisiana. A percentage of the board must be members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) nominated by the Presbytery. The Presbytery



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incorporated Project Homecoming as a nonprofit organization in the state of Louisiana in April of 2010, and in August of 2011, Project Homecoming, Inc received the long awaited letter from the IRS stating that 501(c)3 tax exempt status had been approved.

Since opening in April, 2007, Project Homecoming has rebuilt over 150 homes with the assistance of thousands of volunteers. We work in partnership with neighborhood associations, nonprofit organizations, city agencies and various faith-based organizations as we focus on rebuilding homes, lives, and communities impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Project Homecoming approaches long-term recovery from a community development perspective. We are focused not only on assisting individual survivors of the hurricane, but we also work within distressed, flood-damaged neighborhoods to stabilize and strengthen the resiliency of the larger community where individuals live. Project Homecoming is committed to facilitating a culture of care in targeted communities in the greater New Orleans area through: safe, durable, and environmentally sensitive construction; community driven partnerships; service and fellowship.





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Working with Project Homecoming

Since there will never cease to be some need on the earth, I therefore command you, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbors in your land.” (Deuteronomy 15:11)

We are privileged to have the opportunity to serve by being a partner in this vital recovery mission. Our primary purpose is to share love, joy and hope by rebuilding homes and communities and by building relationships. We are sent into neighborhoods as ambassadors of our particular faith communities, organizations, and universities; and we recognize we are also ambassadors of Project Homecoming and all others involved in long-term recovery. Our behavior and relationships in the community where we work will directly reflect on our partners long after we have left – for good or ill. It is by virtue of our partners that we are blessed with the introductions to these communities. Our partners will remain long after we are gone.

We will be flexible, adaptive, sensitive and patient. We will make the best of quiet times to rest, to get acquainted with others doing this mission and to build relationships with the people we are blessed to serve. We will be mindful of our own and others safety. We will make time to play and to praise God.

We will be sensitive to those we are helping. We are here to build relationships as much as to complete work projects. We will focus on building mutual relationships. We are here at the request of the community – to render assistance where needed. We are working in people’s homes and communities, where we will be sensitive to their concerns and privacy. We recognize that we may be party to confidential information and will keep such information confidential. We will ask permission before taking any photos. We will not take any mementos from work sites without permission.

The extent of damage caused by Hurricane Katrina and its lasting impact on survivors is notable. We come to listen, to support the journey to recovery, and to serve in any capacity needed during the time we are here. We do not come merely as onlookers. We will do whatever needs to be done, according to the wishes of those persons and communities we seek to assist.

Cooperation is the key. We will cooperate with many varied persons and conditions. We will consider the welfare of the whole over personal needs. We will build community within the volunteer village, tending to the needs of each other, as we do the same in the neighborhoods we are helping to rebuild.

“All are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. This care is primarily offered as the community of faith worships together. It is also provided as people interact in community and as they come together in groups for nurture or to carry on ministries of the church.”

(Presbyterian Church USA - Book of Order - W-6.3002)



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Olive Tree Volunteer Village

Housing:

Project Homecoming manages a volunteer village where your team will be staying in facility known as Olive Tree. Olive Tree village can accommodate up to 90 volunteers in 6 rooms with bunk beds. A common room offers sofas and games. All rooms are air conditioned and heated. All volunteer groups share the same sleeping, lounging, and kitchen facilities and the cleaning responsibilities of these areas. Olive Tree has village managers on staff that will provide orientation and organize the volunteer teams who are staying at Olive Tree each week, since the volunteer groups share in the cooking, chores, and other responsibilities around the village.



Contribution:

Each volunteer is asked to make a financial contribution of \$300 a week to help cover our costs in providing room and board as well as all of the great activities we will have planned at the Olive Tree. We ask that you send a nonrefundable and nontransferable deposit of \$200 per group at the time of registration, an individual deposit of \$100 per person by March 15, and the final amount a month prior to your trip.

Food:

Food and all cooking supplies will be provided by Project Homecoming, but the cooking responsibilities will be shared between volunteer groups. The Olive Tree staff will help to lead each group in meal preparation.

Showers:

The showers at Olive Tree are located in a trailer separate from the dormitories.

Cleaning:

Cleaning responsibilities will be shared by all volunteer groups throughout the week.

For more information including pictures of the facility, visit the Project Homecoming web site at www.projecthomecoming.net.



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Life at Olive Tree

As is stated in the Project Homecoming Covenant, staff has overall responsibility for all activities at the village. Directions given by the staff are to be strictly observed. Please emphasize the importance of abiding by these guidelines.

All volunteers must plan to participate in the activities that are held at the village, including meals and chores, as well as the evening programs that are conducted each night. Volunteers are expected to help keep the village clean, to help with loading and unloading of building materials, and to keep the tool and supply area organized.

Chores at the village will include meal preparation and cleanup, emptying trash cans, cleaning bathrooms, etc.

Each group will be assigned chores to complete every day. Chores will be done in the morning and in the evening. Olive Tree chores include:

- Breakfast prep
- Breakfast clean-up
- Lunch prep
- Sweep and mop lunch prep room
- Sweep and mop dining hall and common room
- Clean shower trailer
- Clean toilet trailer
- Collect trash and recyclables
- Dinner prep
- Dinner clean-up



At the end of your workweek you will have additional chores to help get the village ready for the next group of volunteers.

The address, phone number, and Village Manager information should be provided to your church office and family members in case of emergency. Important phone numbers include:

- Olive Tree: (504) 684-1034
- Village Manager on call cell phone: (504) 289-0337
- Project Homecoming office: (504) 942-0444 (ext. 242)

The address at Olive Tree is:

4523 Read Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70127



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Trip Preparation

Insurance:

Volunteers are responsible for any medical costs incurred as a result of volunteering with the Project Homecoming. Project Homecoming has very limited accident insurance for worksite-related minor medical attention, but volunteers should not plan on this insurance to cover their medical costs in the case of an accident.



Transportation:



When you arrange your group’s transportation, plan to have one vehicle for every 7-10 people. This is necessary because the work sites may not be in close proximity to each other. There is no extra transportation available at the village. Vehicles should be able to transport up to 7-10 people with coolers and lunches each day.

Items to bring:

Personal Items –

- Bedding or sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Towels
- Flip flops for showers
- Sleeping attire
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Razor & shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Personal medication for the length of stay Bible
- Travel clock
- Books or magazines
- Extra changes of clothes; you will go through several outfits a day because of the heat.

Work Site Items –

- Heavy work shoes and tennis shoes
- Leather or heavy duty work gloves
- Rain gear
- Hat, visor, bandana and/or sweatband
- T-shirts, casual or work shirts
- Jeans or cotton trousers, shorts
- Sunscreen and sunburn relief lotion
- Insect repellent
- Water bottle
- Fanny pack or backpack
- Safety goggles, work gloves, earplugs, and dust masks **will be provided**, but feel free to bring personal equipment if preferred.



Things to Leave at Home:

- Laptops, iPods, iPads,
- Personal gaming devices
- Radios, CD players, mp3 speakers



We ask that cell phone use be limited. Youth will be participating in invigorating activities and therefore will not have time to use them.



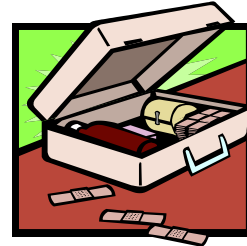
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Group Items Needed at Worksite

- **First Aid Kit:** you are responsible for purchasing and bringing with you a First Aid kit for each job site where you will have volunteers working. .
- **Medical forms:** 2 copies – one to keep on site, and one to leave with the Project Homecoming staff
- **Safety Packet:** Each crew member must have read and signed the Safety Packet included in the volunteer packet.
- **Covenant:** Each crew member must have read and signed the Covenant prior to arrival
- **Project File:** The project file that is given at the beginning of the week is to stay with you and be returned to Project Homecoming staff at the end of the week.



Pre-Trip Communication with Group Leader

Be prepared for a phone call 10-14 days before your arrival to confirm some general information about your trip. This is a good time to ask any questions you may have as you are making preparations.



Team leaders will receive an email the Thursday before arrival with crew and project assignments. Group leaders will be responsible for dividing groups up based on the numbers provided on the deployment.

If any of the following information changes, please contact the Project Homecoming staff immediately.

- Total number of volunteers
- Male/female breakdown
- Number and type of vehicles
- Travel plans and approximate arrival time
- Specialized equipment
- Special needs of the group (medical needs, dietary needs, alternate travel plans)



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Job Site Information

Community Projects:

Blight Reduction

Project Homecoming partners with neighborhood associations to identify blighted, storm damaged properties that are impacting the safety and welfare of the community. Our volunteers have been involved in clearing overgrown vacant lots, boarding vacant properties, and clearing rubble and brush from neighborhood parks. Project Homecoming has been partnering with a neighborhood association to transform a blighted vacant lot into a community garden and citrus grove. We are also identifying storm-damaged houses that we acquire and renovate into affordable homes for low-income households. Volunteers working on these projects are helping to stabilize storm-damaged, distressed neighborhoods.

Community Volunteer Projects

Project Homecoming partners with schools, churches, and other neighborhood organizations to identify additional projects that improve the welfare of storm-damaged communities. Volunteers working on these projects are supporting the long-term recovery of these neighborhoods as we facilitate a culture of care in flood-damaged, distressed areas of the city. Some organizations that we have worked with in the past include:

- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Green Light New Orleans
- ReNEW Schools
- Edible School Yard
- Berean Presbyterian Church
- Paris Oaks Neighborhood Association

Project Homecoming Work Sites:

Home Rebuilds

Project Homecoming works with low-income survivors of Hurricane Katrina who need assistance rebuilding their flood-damaged home. The homeowners have been screened through case management to determine their need for assistance. The rebuilding of homes has been and continues to be a primary activity for many volunteers who work with Project Homecoming.

New Home Construction

Project Homecoming has been selected by the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority to develop 11 new homes and renovate 2 storm damaged properties in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans. The 11 new homes are being constructed on lots resulting from the demolition of flood damaged houses. Both the new construction and renovations are part of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP2) which is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This subsidy will be passed on to low-income homebuyers to make the houses affordable. Preference will be given to survivors of Hurricane Katrina in the disposition of these homes. The assistance of volunteers in building these homes helps to make them even more affordable.



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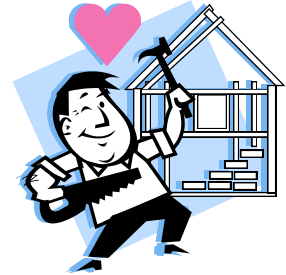
Daily Life

Overview:

Each day will begin around 7am with breakfast and morning chores at Olive Tree. Volunteers will then head off to the worksite where they will work under the supervision of the worksite manager till the mid afternoon. When they return to Olive Tree, they will have some down time before dinner and evening activities.

At the Worksite:

Each site will have a Work Site Manager that is in charge of the project. Each site will also have a Construction Manager that is a professional and in charge of 3-5 worksites. The Work Site Manager will be onsite with you every day. You will talk to your Work Site Manager daily about your projects and any needs and/or questions you may have. The Work Site Manager will be available to answer questions and assist where necessary.



Project File:

Each work crew will receive a project file for the project where you are working. You will take this project file with you to the worksite and use it as a resource. The project file contains the following:

- Directions to the worksite.
- Directions to the nearest hospital.
- Injury Report Forms
- Project Homecoming Contact Information
- Blank Sheets to leave messages to the homeowner or neighborhood association

Tentative Schedule

Sunday

Arrival and Orientation

Monday – Friday

Morning: The day starts at 7:00 am with chores, breakfast, and morning activities at Olive Tree.

Volunteers will then go to the worksites with their own transportation. (On Monday morning there will be Project Homecoming orientation at Olive Tree before groups head off to their worksites.)

Afternoon: Volunteers will be under the supervision of the worksite manager during the day. Lunch will be at the worksites. Volunteers will return to Olive Tree for free time in mid-afternoon before evening activities begin.

Evening: Dinner will be served. Following dinner, evening chores will be completed. Evening activities will be hosted every night. These activities may require groups to take a fieldtrip outside of Olive Tree. Volunteers will have quiet time and lights out following evening activities.

Saturday

Clean-up and Checkout