

VOLUNTEER 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 the homes and lives of the people of Slidell and nearby communities. We, and the people of Slidell, are grateful 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:

- Center Orientation and Introduction
- Presbyterian Community Outreach Rules and Expectations
- All the Forms You Will Ever Need...
- Volunteer Safety Packet

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

- Group Registration Form (one per group)
- Individual Registration Form (one per volunteer)
- Individual Medical Release Form (one per volunteer)
- Participant Activities and Release Form (one per volunteer)
- Rules and Expectation Sheets (read and signed by each volunteer)



A COVENANT FOR SUCCESS FOR PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH OF SLIDELL

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 our LORD, by being a partner in this vital recovery mission. Our primary purpose is to radiate the steadfast love of the LORD, by rebuilding homes and communities and by building relationships. We are to invest ourselves in this work and honor God in all we do. We are sent into communities as ambassadors of our particular churches, synagogues or organizations; of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) 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 are sensitive to those we are helping. We are here to repair relationships as much as to repair homes. We are here at the request of the community – to render assistance to an extremely vulnerable population. We are working in their homes and may be party to confidential information. We must respect their right to privacy. We ask permission before you take any photos. We do not take any mementos from the sites without permission.

This is an area with a staggering amount of suffering. This is not the place for those who wish to come merely as onlookers. Be willing to serve in any capacity for the entire time you are here. We are here to do whatever needs to be done, according to the wishes of recipients.

Cooperation is the key. We will need to cooperate with many varied persons and conditions. We will serve within the village, tending to the needs of others who are volunteering within our service to the LORD. We are willing to build community within the village as well as within the area we are helping to rebuild. Being together for morning and evening devotions as the larger community is essential.

“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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THE STORM'S SURVIVORS

In each geographic area of this disaster there are unpredictable emotional results, presenting unique sets of circumstances. Persons who have survived a disaster may react with a muted awareness and their sense of security and well-being may be seriously disturbed. Many survivors will want to talk, and they will need to tell of their experiences. We need to listen without judgment and without interjecting our own tales of “disaster”. We must not minimize a survivor’s story by having to also tell one of our own. It is very OK to react with our own emotions – to cry with those affected. Your team is to listen with open hearts.

It is important to realize that disaster survivors may be unable to make simple decisions regarding themselves, their recovery and their personal property. These survivors may become dependant upon volunteers. Please be careful about giving advice. Gently direct survivors to disaster officials who are better trained to help.

Please understand that some survivors are unable to help with clean-up and repair because they are physically and emotionally exhausted. Trauma can show up in many forms.

Volunteer workers must respect all personal information obtained from disaster survivors. Please ask permission before taking photos. Share your experiences concerning survivors in a general way with others. Do not accept any gifts or cash from survivors.

Types of Survivors

Direct survivors: Someone who lives in the affected area of the disaster and has suffered or witnessed a traumatic loss – physical, emotional or spiritual. These survivors are often unable to make rational decisions, and may experience difficulty letting go of the volunteers who have come to help. Many may be unable to assist in recovery issues due to disaster fatigue.

Indirect Survivors: Persons who live on the fringe of the impacted area and may be a neighbor, relative or friend of a direct survivor. Indirect survivors may experience guilty feelings that they were spared while others were so deeply hurt. They are sorry that others were affected but happy they were spared. Some of the indirect victims will physically try to remove themselves from the disaster scene to avoid their feelings of guilt and/or their feelings of being overwhelmed.

Hidden Survivors: This person may be a disaster response worker, the volunteers – or you. Having seen the destruction and heard survivors’ stories, some disaster response workers may internalize the pain and become victims themselves. This can be somewhat lessened by sharing with others what you have experienced. Debriefing is critical.

CENTER ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION

Housing:

We currently have 2 sleeping rooms, one for males and one for females. Each room can sleep 26 people. We also have overflow accommodations on the ground floor. A common room offers sofas, a game table, a TV, a computer, and internet connections for laptops. All rooms are air-conditioned. All volunteer groups share the same sleeping, lounging, laundry, and kitchen facilities. The center is located near shopping and business. Security has returned to pre-Katrina levels for a mid-sized city. We have had no major incidents at the center so far.

Food:

Volunteers are responsible for providing their own food. P.C.O. has a kitchen available with refrigerators, stove, microwave, pots & pans, and cooking & eating utensils. Larger groups use paper plates and disposable utensils. ***We encourage groups larger than 8 to designate a food coordinator for kitchen and food organization.*** There are plenty of restaurants and grocery stores in the area the staff can suggest.

Showers:

P.C.O. has a total of 4 showers for women and 3 showers for men on its campus.

Laundry:

P.C.O. has a total of four (each) washers & dryers for volunteer use.

Cleaning:

P.C.O. has limited cleaning services, you will be asked to clean up after yourselves. We will also ask you to be considerate of the church environment and expectations.

Evacuation:

In the event of a need to evacuate, center staff will inform volunteers of evacuation routes. Each work team will have the *St. Tammany Parish 2006 Hurricane Evacuation Map* and the *Louisiana Citizen Awareness and Disaster Evacuation Guide*.

ITEMS FOR YOU TO BRING

Bedding:

- Bedding or sleeping bag; pillow
- Flat sheet (sometimes it's too hot to sleep in a sleeping bag)
- Towels
- Heavy work shoes and tennis shoes; flip flops for showers
- 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
- Sleeping attire (remember, you are in a site with both genders)

Personal Items:

- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Shower shoes & robe
- Razor & shaving cream
- Sunscreen and sunburn relief lotion
- Deodorant
- Personal medication for the length of stay
- Poison ivy lotion
- Insect repellent
- Cornstarch or powder for heat rash
- Small, individual first aid kit with band aids, etc.
- Neosporin and 1% Hydrocortisone (1 small tube each)
- Hand sanitizers

Miscellaneous:

- Bible
- Travel clock
- Books or magazines
- Water bottle
- Fanny pack or backpack

If you have hand tools that you would like to use while you are working with us, please feel free to bring them with you. Be sure to put your name on them just in case they get packed up with the PCO tools.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

- Be prepared for a phone call 10-14 days before your arrival to confirm some general information about your trip.
- If any of the following information changes, you must contact the P.C.O. 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)

CREW PREPARATION

- Crews will be on site together all day. They will have daily visits from the construction site coordinator, but will be working most of the day on site by themselves.
- Split your crews up into groups of 5-8 people, each crew should have one crew leader. The crew leader will communicate with the staff on supplies and work site questions.
- Spend time with your crew discussing talents and desires.
- Each day, the crew leader is responsible for turning in a list of which volunteers are at their work site, in case of emergency contact.

Supplies each crew needs:

- First aid kit
- Medical forms (2 copies)
- Each crew member must have read the Safety Manual included in the volunteer packet
- Each crew member must have read and signed the “Rules and Expectations” form prior to arrival
- Project file

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Most materials and supplies should be at worksites ready for you to work. You will meet with the Construction Site Coordinator to acquire any other materials and supplies needed to finish projects. **We have been asked several times about bringing materials for donation. We would never turn down materials, however, we find it easier to bring monetary donations and then buy materials here. We have a specified budget to use at each house, unfortunately, when that money runs out, we can no longer work on that home. Any extra help is greatly appreciated.**

WORK DAY

The work day will begin around 8:00 and go until around 4:00. These times can vary depending on activities and group. Most volunteers will work at work sites, however, there are always things to do around the center preparing for future volunteers and keeping the center running smoothly. ***Please inform staff if there are people in your group who would like to work at the center.*** We are working on some homes that suffered large amounts of damage. Because of the nature of the project, you will typically work on the same project all week. As we finish some projects, we will begin others.

We have the privilege to come in at a time when the gutting and tearing down is slowly finishing. Many volunteer and church groups before us have put in the hard work of getting these homes ready to be rebuilt. The next exciting major step is to rebuild and get these families back in their homes. You will be tentatively assigned a work site over the phone a few days before your arrival, once you get here, you will speak to the Construction Site Supervisor about your project.

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

- The application the family turned in to the Northshore Disaster Recovery Agency.
- Directions to the worksite.
- Directions to the nearest hospital.
- Injury Report Forms - to be filled out in case of any injury.
- Work Order Form - detailing the scope and order of work at your site. ***Check with center staff before deviating from this work order.***
- Family Work Agreements – P.C.O. signs a few agreements with the families concerning type of materials used, photo release, rules for having work done, and the work itself.
- Supply Request Forms - to be filled out daily and given to Construction Site Coordinator. Fill these out with supply orders a few days in advance.
- Continuity Form - If there were previous groups working on your project, this form will be filled out with valuable information on your project. You will fill this form out at the end of your time here.
- Construction Cheat Sheet – A few pages of tips and rules for common construction projects, refer to these pages before beginning work.

The Construction Site Coordinator will visit your worksite most days. You will also talk to the Construction Site Coordinator daily about your projects and any needs and/or questions you may have. The Construction Site Supervisor will be available to answer questions and assist where necessary, but most of the work day you will be on the worksite with your work team alone.

P.C.O. Paperwork

The following is paperwork that needs to be completed and returned to us. We would prefer to have this paperwork two weeks prior to your arrival at our facility. They can be email, faxed, or mailed. If they are sent via email or fax, please be sure to bring the originals with you when you come.

Please have all volunteers complete these forms, even if they have been to our facility previously. Files are purged every year so we need complete packages for each group for every visit.

- **Group registration form:** this form needs to be completed for the group. This form should be returned as soon as possible.

The following forms should be completed by each volunteer and returned to us two weeks prior to arrival at our facility.

- Individual registration form
- Medical release form
- Participant activities & release form
- PCO rules & expectations



GROUP REGISTRATION FORM

Group Contact Information

Group Name: _____

Contact person: _____

Contact address: _____

Contact home phone: _____

Contact cell: _____

Contact person E-mail: _____

Requested Dates: _____

Expected arrival time: _____

Number in your group: _____
(If the numbers will change throughout your time note that here)

Number of males/females: _____ **males** _____ **females**

Number under 18: _____



MEDICAL RELEASE

In the event of an emergency or non-emergency situation in which medical treatment is required as a result of participation with Presbyterian Community Outreach of Slidell, every reasonable effort will be made to contact the persons listed on the Emergency Medical Information form. If unsuccessful in contacting the persons listed, consent/permission is given for treatment by competent medical personnel.

Further if a volunteer is under 18 years of age, unless specified otherwise, consent is hereby given to all accompanying adult volunteer leaders on the trip to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and to order injection, anesthesia, or surgery (under recommendation of qualified medical personnel). If possible, adult contact person for your group should make final decisions in cooperation with medical personnel.

I understand that Presbyterian Community Outreach of Slidell does not carry accident or medical insurance on participating volunteers. I agree that my insurance company will be used for such medical expenses. The medical provider may bill me for any medical treatment expenses not covered by my insurance. If I do not have medical insurance coverage, I am responsible for the payment of any medical bills.

Volunteer aged 18 years or older

Volunteers less than 18 years of age

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Relationship: (circle one) Parent or Guardian

Name of participant (18 years & older) **OR** name of parent/guardian of minor participant

Appeared before me _____, a Notary Public of _____ in the State
(Notary's Name) (County/Parish name)

Of _____, the person whose signature appears above and with whom I am
(State)

personally acquainted and acknowledge that he/she executed the within instrument for the purposes therein contained.

Witness my hand and official seal this _____ day of _____, 200__.

(Notary Public) My commission expires: _____



PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES & RELEASE

Please read before signing as this agreement constitutes the understanding of your working relationship as a volunteer with Presbytery of South Louisiana Disaster Relief and Presbyterian Community Outreach of Slidell.

I, _____, acknowledge and state the following:

I have chosen to travel to perform clean-up/construction work designed to repair disaster damage.

I understand that this work entails a risk of physical injury and often involves hard physical labor, heavy lifting, and other strenuous activity; and that activities may take place on ladders and building framing other than ground level. I certify that I am in good health and physically able to perform this type of work.

I understand that I am engaging in this project at my own risk. I understand that this is a “grass roots” activity to support individuals adversely affected by hurricane/flood disaster and that are receiving assistance to repair or replace substandard housing. I assume all risk and responsibility for any damage or injury to my property, any personal injury which I may sustain while involved in this project, and any related medical costs and expenses.

In the event that my supervising disaster organization arranges accommodations, I understand that they are not responsible or liable for my personal effects and property and they will not provide lock up or security for any items. I will hold them harmless in the event of theft or for loss resulting from any source or cause. I further understand that I am to abide by whatever rules and regulations may be in effect for the accommodations and worksite at the time.

By my signature for myself, my estate, and my heirs, I release, discharge, indemnify and forever hold harmless Presbytery of South Louisiana together with their officers, agents, servants, and employees, harmless from any and all causes or action arising from my participation in this project and travel or lodging associated therewith, including any damages which may be cause by their negligence.

Signature

Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under 18)

Date

Home Street Address

City

State

Zip

Church or Organization Name

Dates of Work Team

Emergency Contact Information (name and phone)

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Presbyterian Community Outreach of Slidell Rules and Expectations

(THIS SHEET MUST BE READ AND SIGNED BY ALL VOLUNTEERS)

- Drug and alcohol use is prohibited both at the center and at the worksite.
- Firearms are prohibited both at the center and at the worksite.
- Each work team must have its own vehicle. Please communicate with the staff if this is not possible.
- All volunteers must follow all safety rules as outlined in the safety packet and given through staff instruction.
- Do not promise or perform any work on homes outside the scope of assigned work without first talking to a staff member.
- Each day, the crew leader is responsible for turning in a list of which volunteers are at their work site, in case of the need for emergency contact.
- Wear proper attire at the worksite and at the center
 - Proper attire at the worksite includes:
 - Sturdy work boots
 - Long sturdy pants when working around a lot of debris
 - Hard hats when working around any above hazards
 - All other safety equipment required by the safety manual.
 - Proper attire at the center and in the community includes: If you wouldn't wear it around your pastor/preacher/priest/grandmother, don't wear it around here.
- No pets are permitted at the center.
- Remember that you are a representative of the Presbyterian Community Outreach while in the community. Please act accordingly with appropriated manners and sensitivity.
- Use stewardship with tools and materials (measure twice, cut once).
- Presbyterian Community Outreach does not tolerate abuse or harassment of any kind. Sexual, verbal or physical abuse will be grounds for immediate dismissal/removal from the center and/or worksite.

- ❑ Please respect the privacy of our volunteers; females please stay out of male sleeping quarters and males please stay out of female sleeping quarters.
- ❑ Presbyterian Community Outreach has limited cleaning services, you will be asked to clean up after yourselves. We also ask that you be considerate of church environment and expectations.
- ❑ Common Room: We have a common room upstairs. It is not to be used for sleeping. Pick up after yourself. Put personal items back in your sleeping area. Take dishes to the dishwasher or wash them by hand. Do not leave dishes in the sink.
- ❑ Kitchen: Store your dry food on the racks in the gym (your name will be on these shelves). Mark your refrigerator food with name and date. Dispose of food before you leave. Any mess you make in the kitchen must be cleaned immediately. This includes wiping down stove/microwave, etc. Do not leave dishes in the sink!
- ❑ Laundry: Do not leave clothes in washers or dryers for extended periods of time. OTHERS need to use them.
- ❑ Trash: If you see a trash can full, take it to the gym or to the green dumpster. The dumpster is located in the back corner of the parking lot behind the church.
- ❑ Bathrooms: Do not leave personal items in the showers or public areas. Wipe down the sinks and mirrors. Do not leave towels or clothes in the shower and bathroom area. If you notice any paper products low or out please refill such. Products are in the closet on the first floor.
- ❑ We expect that you treat all Presbyterian Community Outreach tools with respect, cleaning and returning them to their proper location.
- ❑ Report any and all injuries to center staff.
- ❑ Each crew must have at least one cell phone available in the event of an emergency.
- ❑ Remember that we are not just rebuilding a house; we are restoring homes for the people of Slidell and surrounding areas. If the family you are working for is available, we encourage you to take time to get to know them! ☺
- ❑ Basic rules of communal living: *If you broke it, fix it. If you use the last of a dispenser, fill it up. If you get it dirty, clean it before you leave the room. Be nice to each other!*

By signing this document you are agreeing to abide by these rules and expectations. Presbyterian Community Outreach of Slidell reserves the right to terminate the participation of any individual or entire group that does not honor these rules and expectations.

Signed _____ Date _____

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