

REPORT FROM THE PSL DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM (DRT)
February 13, 2017

The members of the PSL Disaster Response Team are: Jean Marie Peacock (Chair), Chip Chiphe, Betsy Irvine, Zach Sasser, Donna Gay Anderson, and Caroline Cottingham. Ron Sutto (ex-officio). Staff: Christina Drake

FLOOD RECOVERY

1. All 3 of our Volunteer Hubs in Hammond, Lafayette and Baton Rouge are now operational and have volunteer teams scheduled. Each Hub includes: 1) a Host Site where volunteers receive housing and hospitality; and 2) a Work Partner that supplies project and worksite oversight, materials and instruction/supervision of volunteers on the worksites. Our partners are:

Hammond Hub

Host Site – First Presbyterian Church of Hammond

Work Partner - Ginger Ford Northshore Fuller Center for Housing

Baton Rouge Hub

Host Site – University Presbyterian Church

Work Partner – Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge

Lafayette Hub

Host Site – First Presbyterian Church of Lafayette

Work Partner – Rebuilding Together Acadiana

Several PDA work teams have already come and 15 teams are scheduled for January through March. An additional 4 work teams are scheduled in June. As the number of volunteers increases, PSL's Disaster Recovery Coordinator is identifying additional partners to expand our capacity as needed.

2. PSL submitted a Special Project Grant to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) requesting \$75,700.00 for our long-term recovery effort to assist with those rebuilding from the floods. The grant is for the period of September 1, 2016 until December 31, 2017. The grant was approved by PDA and will be used to cover the costs of compensation and travel for our Disaster Recovery Coordinator.
3. PSL submitted a grant proposal to Volunteer Louisiana for their Volunteer Generation Fund Grant. We were awarded \$7,500 to assist in the setup and expansion of our volunteer Host Sites where our PDA volunteers are housed. This is a reimbursement grant.
4. The DRT approved a Damage Grant Fund application to PDA on behalf of Amite Arcola Presbyterian Church. The grant was approved and funds have been remitted to the church Treasurer.

5. PSL has an AmeriCorps member serving with our flood recovery efforts. His name is Marvin Given and he is filling the position of Site Supervisor in Baton Rouge. He directs the work that volunteer groups do on worksites. His term of service started in January, and he will be serving 10 months.
6. PSL's Disaster Recovery Coordinator launched the PSL Flood Recovery website featuring information on the 2016 Flood, volunteering, donating and applying for AmeriCorps positions. The URL is: <http://pslfloodrecovery.com>. Additional plans are in place for a mass email campaign to raise awareness, secure donations and recruit volunteer groups.
7. As of January 4, 2017 the PSL Flood Recovery has received the following donations :
October: \$25,596
November: \$29,266
December: \$24,542
TOTAL DONATIONS: \$79,404

TORNADO RECOVERY

1. The DRT held a meeting on February 13, 2017 in New Orleans to address the tornado damage in East New Orleans which occurred on February 7, 2017. Over 300 homes have been destroyed, leaving families homeless. A Federal Disaster declaration has been made, so that FEMA assistance is becoming available. The meeting discussed our presbytery's potential response to assist those impacted by the tornadoes. We are assessing the capacity of local Presbyterian congregations to house volunteer work teams and have identified at least two potential work partners to coordinate the work of the volunteers. Initial work would focus on clean up, while we assess our capacity to support long-term recovery efforts. Several churches in the New Orleans area have expressed interest in hosting volunteer teams.
2. The Presbytery-owned property (formerly Eastminster Presbyterian Church) which is leased to Project Homecoming for their use as a volunteer village was severely damaged by the tornado and is uninhabitable. The PSL Disaster Recovery Coordinator enlisted the help of Team Rubicon, a volunteer group of ex-military and first responders, who installed blue tarps over the extensive roof damage to the sanctuary building. They also secured the building and boarded windows that were blown out.
3. Project Homecoming has set up the rooms in the upstairs of their office space to house up to 30 volunteers a week, but will be needing assistance to house groups larger than 30. If your congregation can help with housing volunteers for Project Homecoming, please contact them at 504-942-0444.
4. PSL requested an initial grant of \$7,500.00 from PDA to support our immediate response to the tornadoes. This request has been approved by PDA. We discussed hiring a temporary part-time assistant for the PSL Disaster Recovery Coordinator who would help with organizing our tornado response effort.

Respectfully submitted by Christina Drake, Disaster Recovery Coordinator and Jean Marie Peacock, DRT Chair