

Community Report from Livingston County CARES, Inc.

April 23, 2008

Mission

The Mission of Livingston County CARES is to help communities and individuals locally, regionally, statewide, nationwide, and globally in humanitarian projects, including disaster relief and recovery efforts. Livingston County CARES provides a central repository for resources and information for individuals and organizations wishing to contribute to disaster relief efforts.

A Brief History of Livingston CARES

Livingston County CARES, Inc. is a collaborative effort among groups and organizations at SUNY Geneseo and in the Geneseo and Livingston County community that started in September 2005 to focus relief and recovery efforts on helping people in Harrison County, Mississippi. The initial group of organizations that endorsed and are working on this project include SUNY Geneseo students, faculty, and staff, the Livingston County Administrator, the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Geneseo, the Village of Geneseo, and the Livingston County Coalition of Churches. Individuals, organizations, schools, local municipalities, and interested citizens are invited to participate in Livingston County CARES projects and programs.

Livingston County CARES, Inc. was incorporated and registered as a New York State non-profit organization in 2006. In March 2007 the IRS granted CARES tax exempt status under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Gifts and donations to CARES are now tax deductible. Donations may be given as restricted gifts for specific projects or to the general fund. Livingston CARES board members are volunteers and there are no employees and very minimal administrative overhead. The headquarters for Livingston CARES is in the Center for Community at SUNY Geneseo; the Center for Community in the Division of Student & Campus Life supports CARES through its commitment to volunteer work, leadership development, civic engagement of students, and outreach to community organizations. Organizations and individuals interested in volunteering or making contributions should contact Tom Matthews at 585-245-5857 or by email at matthews@geneseo.edu or Kay Fly at 585-245-5898 or email fly@geneseo.edu

Six Projects Approved for Harrison County, Mississippi

Livingston CARES has concentrated on recruiting volunteers to sign up for trips to Mississippi to work on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of homes for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Thirty two months after the hurricane we have sent 292 volunteers on ten work trips to work on houses; an eleventh is scheduled for May 2008. Another round of trips will occur in the winter and spring of 2009.

The total value of the volunteer efforts using the National Corporation for Public Service guidelines of \$16.50 per hour and 50 hours of work by each volunteer on the trips is estimated to be \$240,900.00 of volunteer contributions to our work in Harrison County, Mississippi. In addition to the time, the volunteers have paid their own expenses or obtained donations for the trips at an average cost of \$550.00 per person. The work trip fees paid by the volunteers currently

totals approximately \$141,000.00. Livingston CARES has also received gifts and donations to assist volunteers with travel expenses and for projects in Harrison County. Since the Hurricane in 2005 Livingston CARES has received \$26,712.61 in gifts and donations from individuals and organizations. In 2006 the Division of Student & Campus Life also contributed \$12,250 to help pay for transportation and to assist students with expenses on the January and March trips. Donations directly to HOPE Unites to assist volunteers with expenses are not reflected in these figures. Livingston CARES funds have been used to assist student volunteers with travel assistance. The balance of the funds have been held pending the identification of appropriate projects by officials in Harrison County. Although projects have moved slowly, CARES identified six projects. These projects are described below. Additional projects will continue to be evaluated and supported as funds become available.

Livingston County Coalition of Churches Tools for Katrina Project

The Tools for Katrina Project was organized by the Livingston County Coalition of Churches as a Livingston CARES project. Doug Wilson, pastor at the Geneseo United Methodist Church and member Charlie Becker served as the coordinators of the project. The project was organized in the spring of 2006 by local churches and tools were collected at The Geneseo United Methodist Church, Geneseo Central Presbyterian Church, Livonia Church of Christ and the Avon Methodist Church. Smith Lumber in Lakeville and some contractors also contributed money and tools. **Dave and Erin Bills** from the Livonia Community Church delivered the tools in July to two recovery centers in Biloxi--Hands ON Gulf Coast and Volunteers on Gulf Coast. Church related items were delivered to the Biloxi Methodist Church.

In addition to the tools collected and delivered in July, the Tools for Katrina project collected \$893.84 from Geneseo United Methodist Church, \$153.00 from Central Presbyterian Church, a \$24.75 cash donation, and \$75.00 from a donation to the Chamber of Commerce for a total of \$1146.59. Expenses included \$83.78 to Avon Lumber for purchase of tools, \$105.89 to Harbor Freight for purchase of tools, \$172.83 to Avon Penny Saver for an ad in the Penny Saver, and \$400.00 gas for the trip to Biloxi. The remaining cash of \$384.00 was donated to the Hands ON Gulf Coast recovery center in Biloxi to be used for recovery work. The project delivered 630 items to the recovery centers as well as 4 boxes of sheet music, 300 hymnals, and choir robes to the Biloxi Methodist Church.

Woolmarket Youth Football League

Harrison County Board of Supervisors President, Connie Rockco, identified the Woolmarket Youth Football League as an organization that needed assistance. Steering committee member Kurt Christiansen made contacts with the equipment manager for the program and learned that all of their newly purchased equipment in the summer of 2005 had been destroyed in the hurricane. The steering committee approved a donation of \$660 to purchase outfits for five students in the program. A check was sent from Livingston CARES in September and Susan Martel, president of the league sent a thank you letter at the end of the season with a photo CD album of the youth served by the program.

Harrison County Greenhouse Restoration Project

After several phone inquiries about possible projects that Livingston CARES might undertake, one of the suggestions that surfaced was the need to restore vegetation along the Gulf Coast. The Harrison County Beautification Director, Cindi Simmons, identified a greenhouse area damaged by Katrina that could be restored and used to propagate plants and trees for replanting public parks and grounds in the county. Members of the steering committee agreed that this project could involve garden clubs and other organizations in the county. Kathleen Jones volunteered to begin reaching out to the garden clubs, the biology department at the college, and others interested in gardening to enlist support for the greenhouse project. During the January 2007 work-trip, Jones, Lehman, and Matthews met Simmons at the greenhouse area and recommended that CARES proceed with the project. In March 2007 all 49 volunteers on the spring break trip spent their first day in Gulfport clearing the debris from the greenhouse area. Two gifts have been received from the Geneseo Garden Club and Livonia Garden Clubs. Individuals and organizations interested in this project should contact Kathleen Jones. A recent change in administrators in Harrison County has delayed the implementation of this project. Kim Savant, newly elected supervisor for Harrison County District 2 committed the county to reactivate this project and Livingston CARES will make a donation when the project plans are complete.

ARC Connections to the Gulf Coast

Steering committee member Lyle Lehman has been working for the past year to make connections between the Livingston-Wyoming ARC and the ARC in Harrison County. Lehman met with board members of The ARC of the Gulf Coast on both trips to Mississippi and was instrumental in securing a \$4,000.00 donation from the local ARC Foundation to Livingston CARES to forward to The ARC of the Gulf Coast to assist the Harrison County ARC programs and projects. The transfer of the gift was approved in March and the funds were received by The ARC of the Gulf Coast. Additional monies have been collected by ARC residents to be sent to the Gulf Coast residents of ARC.

Woolmarket Youth Recreation Complex Project

Supervisor Connie Rockco requested our assistance with restoration of the youth recreation complex in her district north of Biloxi. Lehman, Jones, and Matthews met with the staff of the complex on the January 2007 work-trip and reviewed possible project assistance. Several options were considered and the one that the steering committee felt made the most sense, given our limited funds, was to pay for the replacement of a flag pole at the complex. The committee approved a donation of \$2,000.00 for the purchase and installation of the pole. A plaque on the pole will recognize the gift from the people of Livingston County, New York. A check was presented to Supervisor Rockco at the Share and Care Dinner on April 18, 2007. The flag pole was purchased and installed and a photo taken in January 2008 appeared in the Livingston County News. A photo is also included in this report. Plans are underway to dedicate the flag pole and present a Livingston County and New York State flag during the January 2009 work trip to Mississippi.

Moore Community House

Prior to Katrina, Moore Community House in East Biloxi was the only center serving low income families with day care and other pre-school programs such as head start. Katrina destroyed all but one of the buildings in the complex. Last year members of CARES work teams visited the center three times and met with the director, Carol Burnett. After hearing her story and learning about the critical services provided by Moore Community House, the steering committee voted to

donate funds contributed by the Central Presbyterian Church to CARES. A donation of \$2,000 was made and the funds were used to purchase equipment for the classrooms in the renovated facilities. The Livingston County Coalition of Churches is planning to provide additional support for the services provided by Moore Community House. Volunteers again visited Moore Community House in January and February of 2008.

Senator Volker Secures Special Member Item for CARES

Senator Dale Volker provided a member item in the 2007-2008 New York State Budget of \$10,000/00 to assist students with travel expenses for participation in volunteer work trips. The funds were used to pay for the cost of the bus trip to Biloxi in March 2008, to support the student volunteers on the Ohio River clean up during the March 2008 spring break, and to provide financial assistance to students who could not afford the full cost of the student rate. The grant enabled Livingston CARES to reduce the student cost for travel approximately \$200.00 per person. Livingston CARES thanks Senator Volker for his support of our programs.

Katrina Story Fades But Recovery Work Continues

Livingston CARES made a commitment to continue working in Harrison County, Mississippi long after the stories fade from the media. Participants in the six work-trips have seen the destruction and how important volunteer assistance is to those affected by Katrina. We feel it is very important for contributors and volunteers to know that help will be needed for several more years. Please help CARES with the work and the continuing friendships we have established with the homeowners and leaders in Harrison County, Mississippi.

Livingston CARES Financial Statement

LC Donations Received as of 4-23-08	Cash & checks from individuals and organizations	\$26,712.72
SUNY Geneseo Contributions	Student & Campus Life support for 2006 trips	12,206.00
Senator Volker Member Item from State Budget	NYS 07-08 Budget Allocation	10,000.00
Total Donations		<u>\$48,918.72</u>
LC Projects as of 4-23-08		
Tools for Katrina		1,146.59
Woolmarket Youth Football League		660.00
Woolmarket Recreation Complex Flag Pole		2,000.00
ARC of the Gulf Coast		4,000.00
Moore Community House		2,000.00
Total LC Donations		<u>\$9,806.59</u>

Volunteer Contributions	Calculation	Amount
Work Trip Volunteers	292 x fees paid	141,000.00
Donated Volunteer Hours	292 x 50 hrs = 9,350 hrs x \$16.50 per hr	240,900.00
Total LC Volunteer Contributions		<u>\$381,900.00</u>

Livingston CARES 2007-2008 Chronology of Events

April 18, 2007

The 2nd Annual Livingston CARES Share and Care Dinner was held at the Geneseo United Methodist Church. The Philanthropic Chefs (Gary Towsley and Lynn Kennison) catered the pasta dinner. Connie Hurlburt and Charlie Elliott were honored for their outstanding contributions to Livingston CARES. Connie Rockco, Harrison County, District 5 Supervisor was the guest speaker. Rockco spent the day meeting with college and county officials. Participants contributed \$2,227.00 for Livingston CARES.

May 16-23, 2007

The May 07 work trip to Biloxi included ten SUNY Geneseo students and six community representatives. Dan Dimpfl was the trip leader. During the week the group worked on three Habitat for Humanity houses. The group also worked with Chip Carter, son of President Jimmy Carter.

May/June 2007

Genesee Valley *BOCES News in Brief*, profiled Tom Wilson, a BOCES teacher who participated in the February 07 work trip with Livingston CARES. The article reported on the volunteer work during the February trip group on Jewel's house in Gulfport and their stay at God's Katrina Kitchen in Biloxi.

Summer 2007

Livingston County Coalition of Churches published an article in their quarterly Newsletter by Rev. Dr. Doug Wilson on Livingston County CARES projects and trips to Mississippi.

June 29, 2007

Livingston CARES formally established a board to manage the 501(c) 3 not-for-profit public charity corporation. The meeting of the original incorporators (Kurt Christiansen, Kay Fly, Lyle Lehman, Cynthia Oswald, Kay Fly and Tom Matthews) was scheduled to create Livingston CARES as a formal organization, approve by-laws under Sections 602 and 702 of the Not-For-Profit Law, establish officers, and elect members to serve on the first Board of Directors. Fourteen of the possible 19 members of the Board of Directors were elected to serve as the first board. Board members elected included: Jerry Alonzo, Nils Christiansen, Joan Ellison, Kay Fly, Richard Hatheway, Connie Hurlburt, Kathleen Jones, Wes Kennison, Lyle Lehman, Tom Matthews, Cynthia Oswald, Doug Wilson, Dan Dimpfl, and Jennifer Delcourt.

July 10, 2007

The first annual meeting of Livingston County CARES was held. The board elected Tom Matthews to serve as chair, Kay Fly to serve as Secretary and Lyle Lehman to serve as Treasurer. In addition to establishing organizational policies and procedures to guide decision making, the board approved four trips for 2008 in January, February, March, and May. The board also authorized the Chair and the Treasurer to establish a bank account at a local bank and move the holding account funds from the college accounts to the new bank account. Tom Matthews announced that Senator Dale M. Volker provided a member item in the New York State budget of \$10,000 to assist students for CARES volunteer work.

July 27, 2007

Livingston County News published a story on the "Return to Biloxi" that featured work by Livingston CARES in Mississippi and announced the 2008 work trips to the Gulf Coast.

Sept 26, 2007

The Livingston CARES Board of Directors held its second meeting. The board approved the purchase of two insurance policies from the Chanler Insurance Agency to protect the organization in the event of claims or lawsuits, Directors and Officers Liability and Employment Practices Liability. CARES has no employees but the insurance includes coverage for actions by volunteers. The board approved a donation of \$2,500 to Moore Community House for purchase of classroom furniture and \$500.00 to the Harrison County Greenhouse Project, and approved a Livingston/Harrison County Cookbook project. The board also approved policies relating to processing checks, established the annual meeting of the board in November, authorized July 1 to June 30 as the CARES fiscal year, created a financial assistance committee to approve assistance to volunteers, established a policy requiring evaluations and reflections from all trip participants, approved trip coordinators for 2008, accepted the Salvation Army Volunteer Village in Biloxi for the four 2008 work trips, set the fees for students and non-students for the 2008 work trips, set aside \$1,000.00 of the Volker member item to be used for grants to student organizations for humanitarian projects, and established the fourth Wednesday for monthly meetings. BJ Scanlon, the AmeriCorps VISTA in the Center for Community, was elected to the Board of Directors for a one year term ending in July 2008.

Oct 24, 2007

The Livingston CARES board of directors held its third meeting. The board approved chartering a bus with Kemp's Bus Service for the March trip to Biloxi, approved an allocation of \$3,000.00 for financial assistance to volunteers and a policy of a minimum payment of \$150.00 for all trip participants with exceptions made by the Financial Assistance Committee, established a policy permitting gifts honoring individuals or groups, authorized four levels of giving, and established an audit committee consisting of board members Hatheway, Christiansen and Oswald. The board also approved an account with www.goodsearch.com that supports non profit agencies by donating one cent for every internet done under its name.

BJ Scanlon reported on Students CARE, a group of SUNY Geneseo students who have been active with Livingston CARES, was established at the College. The group will raise funds for students participating in Livingston CARES trips to Mississippi as well as serving in an advocacy role for the recovery of the Gulf Coast region

Nov 28, 2007

The Livingston CARES board of directors held its fourth meeting. Amanda Flannery, a SUNY Geneseo student was elected for a two year term to fill the second student seat on the board of directors. The board approved registration and insurance offered through HOPE Unites for all 2008 trips to Biloxi, and reviewed plans for all four 2008 trips to Mississippi. Spaces were filled for the January and March trips. The board also approved soliciting contributions in December as an alternative form of gift giving during the holiday season and established giving levels: CARES giver from \$1.00-\$249.00, CARES Doner from \$250-\$499, CARES Good Samaritan from \$500-\$999.00 and CARES Humanitarian \$1,000.00 plus.

January 5-12, 2008

The first work trip of the 2008 included 24 volunteers. The group flew to Gulfport and rented cars to drive along the Gulf Coast to Biloxi. Highlights of the first day included lunch at Sonic, a pizza party, and greeting by Connie Rockco, Harrison County Supervisor. Work projects included assisting the Salvation Army with work on the Volunteer Village and a satellite facility and work on seven houses under the supervision of the Beaverton Four-Square Church from Oregon.

January 5, 2008

The local Biloxi television station, WLOX, highlighted the 8th visit by Livingston CARES volunteers to the region by putting together a news piece that included interviews with work participants. The story ran on the late evening news.

January 24, 2008

Livingston County CARES was featured in the *Livingston County News* with a story "Livingston CARES Back From Biloxi" with almost a full page spread showing pictures of the flag pole donated by CARES to Harrison County, work on a house in Biloxi, a visit with Daisy Guyton from a previous work trip, and a group photo at Yankee Stadium of the 24 volunteers on the January 2008 to Biloxi.

January 30, 2008

The Livingston CARES board held its fifth meeting. The January trip participants reported on the experiences of the 24 volunteers at Yankee Stadium working with the Salvation Army and the Four Square Church, reviewed plans for the upcoming February trip coordinated by Chris Lynch with 10 college and community volunteers, reviewed plans for the March alternative spring break trip with 55 participants, approved the third CARES fundraising dinner for April 23 with Kathleen Jones serving as coordinator, and authorized Dimpfl and Matthews to set fees for the May trip depending on the cost of airfares.

February 16-23, 2008

The second trip to Mississippi scheduled during President's Week included 10 volunteers with one from the college and nine community members including two high school students. The group traveled on Sunday and returned on Friday night in order to save money on airfares. Chris Lynch served as the trip leader. The group worked on the final stages of reconstruction of one house in Biloxi.

March 12, 2008

The Livingston CARES board held its sixth meeting. The board reviewed plans for the Annual Share and Care Dinner and agreed to a free will offering instead of charging for tickets, confirmed an agreement by Dimpfl and Matthews to reserve up to 20 plane tickets for the May trip with unused deposits to be credited to final list of participants, heard a report from BJ Scanlon on outreach initiatives to Livonia and Avon, and continued discussion on contributions to work sites in Biloxi.

The SUNY Geneseo Outing Club requested assistance from Livingston CARES for a spring break trip to Louisville to continue its work with the Living Lands and Living Waters Foundation project cleaning up the Ohio River. The board approved designating funds from the Senator Volker grant to assist the students with travel expenses.

March 14-22, 2008

On the third trip of 2008, 55 individuals including 4 staff members from the college traveled by Kemps Bus to and from Biloxi, Mississippi for the alternative spring break work trip. Volunteers worked with the Salvation Army and at Popp's Ferry elementary school, doing an overhaul of their grounds, and sprucing up their playground. Volunteers also worked on three other homes during their week in Biloxi.

April 3, 2008

The Lamron reported on the alternative spring break trips to the Gulf Coast and the Ohio River in a Knights' Life piece entitled "Fixing up on Spring Break."

April 15-17, 2008

Students CARE sponsored a Jail Break fundraiser on the Erwin Quadrangle during late morning and afternoon class break times. Several faculty, staff and student leaders were recruited to serve jail time and to ask passers-by to help them get out of jail with donations while Students CARE solicited donations to keep the volunteers in jail. The weather cooperated and faculty, staff and students contributed over \$500.00 to help fund Livingston CARES trips to Mississippi.

April 17, 2008

The Lamron reported on "Fundraiser puts students, staff in slammer" describing the Jailbreak fundraising activities organized by Livingston CARES board member Amanda Flannery.

April 23, 2008

The Third Annual Livingston CARES Share and Care fundraising dinner will be held on Wednesday, April 23 at the Geneseo United Methodist Church. Celebrity Chefs, Gary Towsley, Lynn Kennison and Glenn McClure will offer southern hospitality with a gumbo and pasta dinner. KC Bailey will be telling the story of the 2008 trips through a multimedia collection of photos and other volunteers will share some of their reflections on their experiences in Mississippi.

Report on Livingston CARES 2007 Mother's Day Trip to Biloxi

Prepared by Dan Dimpfl, Trip Leader

Participants:

The group was comprised of ten students from SUNY Geneseo and six others from the surrounding area. Two thirds of the group were early 20 year olds and the others were 60ish! Fourteen were females, two were males. The relative small size of the group had positive effects on the overall experience in terms of worksite participation, ease of travel, and cohesiveness. That all participants enjoyed their experience in Biloxi and on the trip, would be unquestioned.

Travel:

The group flew from Rochester to Gulfport/Biloxi on Airtran and the return trip was on Delta. Both flights required transfer in Atlanta. The cost of flying was slightly more than \$300 per person. The convenience of flying out of Rochester and into Gulfport was worth the few dollars more that a ticket out of Buffalo or into New Orleans would cost.

Three cars were rented at the Gulfport/Biloxi airport. We ordered three full-sized cars and ended up with a minivan, SUV and full-sized sedan. Renting full sized cars is significantly cheaper than minivans/SUVs. Our "upgrades" were free. It's necessary to be able to rent the cars with people over 25. Some rental agencies charge extra for listing a second driver. That is probably a waste of money. Cars rental in Biloxi is not the cheapest, figure about \$40/person for the week.

Accommodations:

Yankie Stadium in East Biloxi contains a Salvation Army facility and a Habitat for Humanity facility. We stayed in the "Habitat Village" at a cost of \$100/person/week. There are four bunk rooms, each the size of a "double-wide" prefab building. They have bathrooms (showers/toilets/sinks), heat/AC and electricity. Bunk beds with mattresses are provided. Each houses around 20 people.

Food is prepared in a Salvation Army "cooking trailer" with breakfast and dinner delivered to the Habitat side of the stadium. An eating and lounge area has been developed under the stadium itself. Lunch was "brown bag" prepared by each participant just prior to breakfast

and put in a cooler. The group would then transport the cooler to the job site. Food was plentiful, there was always fruit and water, and although "southern cooking" is not always "vegetarian friendly", our vegetarian participants were able to manage.

The Work:

Our group was assigned to a worksite with three houses be constructed. The tasks for the week included finishing some roofing and doing a lot of "siding". "F channels, J tubes, P tubes, soffits and vinyl siding became very familiar to us by the end of the week. We had a wonderful and talented site supervisor, Sean Hunter, as well as a very skilled Americorps participant, Greg. Also working with us for the week was Chip Carter, son of Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter. Working with Chip was an added bonus to our experience.

Summary:

This trip was a great time. We went out to dinner twice, out for ice cream once, to the emergency room for minor injuries twice, worked hard, got dirty, met nice people and felt good about making a contribution to the storm-torn area of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Many of us plan to return in 2008 on the May 18th to May 24th trip.

The Livingston CARES May 2007 Work-Trip Team included:

Leighann Cavanaugh, SUNY Geneseo Student
Joyce Chen, SUNY Geneseo Student
Dan Dimpfl, Community Volunteer & Trip Leader
Susan Dimpfl, Community Volunteer
Sara Giermek, SUNY Geneseo Student
Jennifer Delcourt, SUNY Geneseo Student
Jessica Cirillo, SUNY Geneseo Student
Kathleen Vokes, SUNY Geneseo Student
Megan Lee, SUNY Geneseo Student
Samantha Feldmeyer, SUNY Geneseo Student
Dana LePage, SUNY Geneseo Student
Megan McCormick, SUNY Geneseo Student
Alexander O'Connor, Community Volunteer
Kathleen Jones, Retired SUNY Faculty Member
Nancy Rider, Community Volunteer
Jacqueline Walters, Community Volunteer

Report on Livingston CARES January 2008

Work Trip to Biloxi

Twenty four Livingston CARES volunteers left for Biloxi, Mississippi very early on Sunday, January 6 and traveled on AirTran through Atlanta to Gulfport. We arrived around 10 am and rented three cars which meant that we needed to make two trips from the airport to Biloxi. We drove along the Gulf Coast from Gulfport to Biloxi so everyone could see the beaches and for the first time travelers to get a sense of the Katrina destruction and contrasting scenery of new high rise buildings, empty shells of former motels and amusement parks, and stretches of vacant beachfront lots. We checked in at our host site with the Salvation Army Volunteer Village at Yankee Stadium. The new site for Livingston CARES volunteers was a step above most other places that we had used on previous trips. We discovered well-built bunk beds, warm showers and a gathering place to eat, socialize, play games or just relax and watch television. Yankee Stadium had been a football and track facility used by all of the high schools in Biloxi. It was severely damaged by Katrina and has been used for the last couple of years to house and feed volunteer recovery workers.

Around noon we made trips to the D'Iberville Sonic for lunch, returned to Yankee Stadium to unpack, and had time for a leisurely afternoon to walk to the beach and an opportunity to get acquainted with other volunteers. Just before sunset, we gathered on the bleachers to meet Connie Rockco, Harrison County District 5 Supervisor, who has welcomed most of the Livingston CARES volunteer groups to Mississippi. Rockco also invited Tony Miles, a reporter from the ABC affiliate WLOX TV to join us. Several volunteers were interviewed for a story that ran on the late evening news about the Livingston CARES eight trips to Biloxi. The interview is posted on the CARES website. Since the Volunteer Village does not offer meals on Sundays, we took up a collection and ordered pizza from the local Pizza Hut. We were amazed that they never heard of sheet pizzas in Mississippi.

On Sunday evening we discovered that the work plans for the week that had included two faith based construction hosts was now down to one group known as the Beaverton Four Square Relief Church from Portland, Oregon. Projects with the other host had fallen through so we needed to find work for 24 volunteers starting Monday morning. The Beaverton staff had just returned from the holidays and needed time to regroup and catch up on the on-going projects in Biloxi. Fortunately our Salvation Army host needed several volunteers to work at Yankee Stadium.

On Monday morning after breakfast we organized the volunteers into several teams to work on projects at six different houses and at Yankee Stadium. One group affectionately known as the A Team was assigned to work on a house on Railroad Street to clear a lot of debris including concrete slabs and porches. A second group was sent to Thelma Street to do inside painting that turned out to also include redoing painting from previous volunteers. A third group worked on the outside of a house on Couevas Street removing and replacing wood paneling and soffits. Another group worked on mudding several rooms on Keeler Street while other groups did mudding and finish work on houses on Lee Street and Howard Avenue. Several volunteers worked at various times throughout the week helping the Salvation Army staff fix the leaks in the stadium, install an ice machine, dig holes and cement anchors for a large tent, do cleaning and routine maintenance, and clean and paint a living area at a satellite warehouse facility to house volunteers.

Each day the routine included early breakfast, travel to worksites, return to Yankee Stadium at noon for lunch, go back to the worksites until 4:30 or 5:00, return for showers, eat dinner at 6:00 pm and relax, play games, socialize, read, watch television, go for a walk in groups to the beach, or just sit around and share stories with other volunteers. We also shared the village with several other groups during the week including college groups from North Carolina, Wisconsin and Connecticut.

Despite some typical frustrations waiting for tools or supervisors to give directions, the Livingston CARES volunteers were able to finish many of the projects at several of the houses with some time to spare on Friday afternoon to enjoy a warm sunny day in Mississippi. We enjoyed working with our work site hosts from Beaverton Four Square Church including Tim Mueller, Dan Allen, Joe Banford, Curtis Munsen, and Kevin Goff. Edwin and Susan Britt were our hosts at the Salvation Army. Susan manages the Volunteer Village and Edwin organizes the work assignments in collaboration with the various faith based construction groups that oversee the rebuilding of homes. Edwin and Susan moved from Tennessee to live and work for the Salvation Army at Yankee Stadium with their family and home school their children.

On Friday afternoon, Jen Delcourt, Linda Hatheway, and Betsy and Tom Matthews toured the Moore Community House with director Carol Burnett. Livingston CARES donated funds to help replace classroom furniture and we were able to observe the staff organizing and preparing to reopen the day care facility; in January of 2006 we watched the demolition of other buildings at the same site. Later that afternoon we met Liz Tibler, assistant to Connie Rockco, at the Woolmarket recreation complex to take a photo of the flag pole donated by Livingston CARES. We also paid a visit to the Harrison County Court House in Gulfport to meet Kim Sevant, the newly elected county supervisor for district 2. We asked and Sevant committed the county to supporting the restoration of the greenhouse that is located in his district. Livingston CARES approved donations to assist with the greenhouse project. We also had an opportunity to meet briefly with Pam Ulrich, Harrison County Administrator who helped us launch our long-term relationship between Livingston County and Harrison County. During the week we also had an opportunity to pay return visits to home owners and deliver some New York State Maple Syrup made by CARES board member Lyle Lehman. Daisy Guyton on Fayard Street, Ruth and Lerrie Sanders on Magnolia Street and Augustine Powe on Magnolia Street once again welcomed us, shared a few highlights of their lives since Katrina, and made sure we passed on their thanks to friends from New York for helping them get back into their homes. Daisy Guyton shared her recent insurance bill that totaled over \$4,000.00 in premiums for her small home; she may be forced to go without insurance. The story repeated by many other residents we talked to on the streets is another blemish on the Katrina story and one we need to share with our politicians. Friday evening we went to The Shed in Ocean Springs to enjoy the great barbeque choices, the ambience of the popular restaurant, and story telling around the fire pit. On Saturday everyone was up, packed and in the cars and Salvation Army van in time to make our Air Tran flights back to Rochester.

January 2008 Livingston CARES

Work Trip Participants

Julie Butler, SUNY Geneseo Student
John Butler, SUNY Geneseo Student
Jennifer Delcourt, SUNY Geneseo Student
Jill Deltosta, SUNY Geneseo Student
Bridget Doyle, SUNY Geneseo Student
Emily Froome, SUNY Geneseo Student
Linda Hatheway, Geneseo Resident
Jonathan Hoose, SUNY Geneseo Student
Claren Kruppner, Geneseo Resident
Meghan Kukla, SUNY Geneseo Student

Tyler Manee, SUNY Geneseo Student
Tom Matthews, SUNY Administrator
Betsy Matthews, Geneseo Resident
Karen Merrill, SUNY Geneseo Student
Justin Mirsky, SUNY Geneseo Student
Phillip Natoli, SUNY Geneseo Faculty
Abigail Oaks, SUNY Geneseo Student
Kaitlyn Piper, SUNY Geneseo Student
Trevor Ramsey-Macomber, SUNY Student
BJ Scanlon, AmeriCorp VISTA
Karissa Setera, SUNY Geneseo Student
Leanne Sisbarro, SUNY Geneseo Student
Kyla Smith, SUNY Geneseo Student
Laura Smykla, SUNY Geneseo Student
Paul Strusienski, SUNY Geneseo Student

Report on February 2008 Livingston CARES Work Trip to Biloxi

Prepared by Chris Lynch, Trip Leader

During the week of February 17th, a group of ten from the Geneseo community became drywall “experts” under the supervision of Mike, a long term volunteer with the Salvation Army in Biloxi, MS. This was the fifth trip to Harrison County that members of our trip have led or participated in during the last three years!

We stayed at the Salvation Army Volunteer Village under the bleachers of “Yankie Stadium” in downtown Biloxi. Our quarters were some of the best conditions we have ever been housed in during a mission trip. Good food, warm showers, even foosball and ping pong, though the sixteen Amish youth claimed these for the week!

For the first two days we were scattered around to three work sites. One group put insulation in a house under renovation and then they began to prepare it for dry walling. Another small group went with some of the Amish to work on a new house under construction. The remaining three were the final group to work on a home renovation. Along with two Amish women, they painted three coats of white primer on the trim all day. By Tuesday afternoon almost all of us were working on the Nunley home, using our new found dry walling skills!

One of the highlights of this trip was the opportunity to work together in the same home. Last year we were split into different homes and crews serving in the kitchen for the entire trip. The downside of this year’s trip was that we had little interaction with any of the homeowners. The Nunley’s live about 55 miles away until their home is finished.

On Thursday evening we were able to drive the highway along the coast toward Pass Christian, nearer the eye of the storm, and see the extent of damage beyond the neighborhood we were located in. We were pleasantly surprised at the cleanup that has taken place since last year and overwhelmed at the amount of work still left to do. We visited Larry and Laurie from last year and they shared their story with us, again thanking everyone for their support of Harrison County. Many work sites have closed up or will be closing this summer, yet it is apparent at least a ten year recovery effort is still needed.

As Tom Wilson, a member of our group has said, the stream of volunteers coming from around the country continues to give the people in the Gulf hope. Most members of our group hope to volunteer again next year.

Livingston CARES February 2008 Work Trip Participants

Karen Bailey, Geneseo Resident

KC Bailey, Geneseo Resident

Craig Bolesky, Leicester Resident

Sharon Bolesky, Leicester Resident

Connor Creegan, Geneseo High School Student

Cooper Creegan, Geneseo High School Student

Becky Glass, SUNY Geneseo Admin. Staff

Beth Godfrey, Avon Resident

Chris Lynch, Geneseo Resident

Thomas Wilson, Geneseo Resident

Report on Livingston CARES Alternative Spring Break 2008 Work-Trip

Prepared by: Jennifer Delcourt, Student
and BJ Scanlon, Americorps VISTA

The group met in front of the MacVittie College Union around 10am on March 15th. We distributed t-shirts and journals and heard a few words from former participant Maureen Gillard before heading out just after 11am. The twenty-six hour bus ride was punctuated by frequent rest stops along the highway and at McDonald's. We arrived at Volunteer Village the next Sunday morning around 12pm, where Edwin Britt, Salvation Army site manager, was waiting to greet us. We unloaded and moved inside for our site orientation, after which we settled in and unpacked. We held a picnic at the site and spent some time unwinding by relaxing in the sun and playing Frisbee. Next, we boarded the bus again for an hour long tour down Interstate 90 into Pass Christian. Upon returning, we were met by Connie Rockco, Harrison County Supervisor, who said a few words and thanked the group for their commitment. Following this, most of the group went down to the beach to enjoy the sand and returned for a pizza dinner.

The following day was our first work day, and the entire group spent time at Popps Ferry Elementary cleaning the grounds to prepare it for the landscaping work we would be doing all week. In the following days, we worked on re-planting and mulching the front of the school, planting bushes along the fences, painting games on the basketball court, painting the gym and outdoor classroom, and other small projects. We worked with the PTA to decide exactly which areas to address and how to do it. WalMart had donated \$5000 to the Salvation Army's Go Green project, which provided the supplies we used that week. On Thursday, some volunteers got to play kickball with the kids on the back fields. Kids and teachers alike thanked us every time they walked by in the outdoor hallways. On Thursday afternoon, we assembled the entire group to enjoy a Southern style picnic provided by the PTA in the schoolyard, which included sweet tea, jumbalaya, red beans and rice, crawfish, and Cajun corn on the cob. The kids

presented us all with Mardi Gras beads and cards that they made in class, as well as large banners that they had all signed. Biloxi's mayor also stopped by to say hello and thank us for our hard work.

A rainy Wednesday put a halt on a lot of our work and we were forced to be flexible and find some new jobs. Some volunteers spent the day at Jimmy's house, a former contractor who lost his home and was injured after the storm, so that he could not do all the work on his own home. Sixteen volunteers assisted him with applying joint compound, sanding, and removing stumps in his backyard. We joined him and his wife at a local church for lunch, where the other volunteers at the site shared their food and stories with us. Some other volunteers remained at Volunteer Village to do some projects for Edwin, including re-flooring the men's bathroom and installing an air conditioner in the women's bathroom. Some volunteers went with Salvation Army employees for two days to move stuff and set up for a new thrift store, which provides necessary income for the SA. Several volunteers also went for one day to the home of a teacher at Popps Ferry, who had requested help doing some work on her mother's home, where she was living in a FEMA trailer. Other volunteers went with Hope Force, another organization residing at the site, to help make a local person's home handicap accessible and put up a fence over three days. The homeowner at this site cooked a large Southern meal, complete with crawfish, for the entire group on their last day. Others visited a local homeowner they had met the evening before, Phyllis, and found a new job doing roofing and home-wrapping for local resident Mary. One of the volunteers related how Phyllis showed them this home, and upon meeting the homeowner, Phyllis recognized her cousin, who she had not seen before the storm and lost contact with. Phyllis visited part of the group at the host site and gave an inspirational speech about the value of volunteers to the

recovery effort. The following day, she left three large, delicious cakes for all of us to share, in thanks for our work.

The volunteers had plenty of time to kick back in the evenings after a hard day's work. On Monday night, many of us went to check out the local casinos, which were within walking distance, and some went to the Hard Rock Café for dinner. On Tuesday night, we had a group meeting and played a great game called "Switch, If..." to help people get to know each other a little more. On Wednesday night we all went to the Shed, local hangout and now Livingston CARES tradition, to enjoy some real Southern BBQ.

And on Thursday, after our Southern dinner at Popp's Ferry, much of the group joined in a large ultimate Frisbee game for nearly two hours.

On Friday, at the end of the workday, we all returned to the site to clean up and pack. We were able to leave around 5:30pm and get a bit of a headstart on the return home. Before leaving, we thanked Edwin, who saw us off with a speech in which he said that we were one of the best (and largest) groups he has ever worked with and said that he thought of our organization (and only one other) as his own. He said that SUNY Geneseo had a special place in his heart. And then we began the long trip back home, again making frequent stops along the highway and at the ever-present and increasingly despised McDonald's. We arrived home about twenty five hours later, getting into Geneseo about 6pm on Saturday, March 22. We quickly unloaded and volunteers, after many goodbye-for-nows, returned home to rest up after a long week of good work before classes began again.

The Livingston CARES March 2008 Work-Trip Team included SUNY Geneseo Students:

Katie Allen
Chris Baker
Dave Balajthy
Jess Balogh
Chrissy Bates
Lea Bellomo
Kate Biamonte
Matt Booth
Katie Brown
Milissa Bryant
Jill Capewell
Ashley Coon
Molly Dardani
Katie Deierlein
Jen Delcourt
Kevin Duquette
Scott Eron
Marissa Evarts
Andrew Fisher
Amanda Flannery
Daniel Hart
Diana Hemm
Andrew Heyman
Breanna Hilko
Faith Kalucki
Corinthia Kotlar
Megan Lee
Alexa Leo

Marissa Lewis
Melissa Lewis
Laura Lonski
Kristen Malone
Steve Mayne
Matt McIntosh
Brooke Meckler
Shannon Nagel
Nick Nenni
Sarah Osterling
Marie Ostrander
Shanna Reulbach
Travis Sackett
Terry Saunders
Gina Sobotka
Lauren Spero
Lesley Sylvester
Rob Taylor
Chris Thomas
Jenny Whittaker
Shane Wiegand
Lynne Woodard
Abbie Wyman

SUNY Geneseo Professional Staff

Ben DeLozier
Heidi Levine
BJ Scanlon

Peggy Wirth

Geneseo Outing Club Alternate Spring Break Trip 2008 Ohio River Clean-up in Louisville, KY

Report prepared by Charlotte Abram

The following is a brief wrap-up of our week in Kentucky. It was an outstanding trip—we cleaned up tons of trash, learned a lot, and had a great time while doing it. Some college students like to spend their breaks on the water, but we would rather be making sure that water is nice to look at.

Who we worked with:

Living Lands and Waters is an organization that works to maintain and restore riverbeds all across the United States. Their mission, aside from removing garbage from the rivers, is to spread awareness about environmental issues, and encourage people to make change. Chad Pregracke, the determined founder, now heads a dedicated crew and goes from site to site cleaning up the seemingly endless trash. Geneseo Outing Club first became aware of Chad and his organization last year, when Chad spoke at Geneseo about his struggle and journey to get to where he is today. In addition to other specialized clean-up days, Living Lands and Waters runs special week-long programs geared for college spring breaks. This year was GOC's second spring break trip with Living Lands and Waters, and they hope to make it an annual occurrence.

Where we stayed:

We stayed in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. LL&W works with the seminary hotel to provide us with free room and board. Not only did we stay in these great accommodations for six nights, but we also received three meals a day, and had full access to the recreation rooms (which included a hot tub, sauna, gym, ping pong, etc.).

What we did:

We started off Monday morning a little colder than anticipated; even though it began to rain, there were no complaints as everyone was just excited to be there. The crewmembers boated us over to the barge (also known as their home), and a short safety talk, we went right to work. We sorted garbage (already collected and on the barge) into piles of trash, tires, scrap metal, and lumber. There was also a group of 16 from Hobart William-Smith, which resulted in a workforce of nearly 50 each day (including the crew). The morning went by quickly—and before we knew it, we had finished our first task.

The sun came out in the afternoon, and we were taken to our first site on the river. The amount of garbage was unreal—we saw everything from bottles and Styrofoam cups, to old refrigerators and children's toys. Without hesitation, everyone grabbed a bag and started collecting. We spent all afternoon there, and at the end of the day we had proudly collected about five boat-loads of garbage.

Tuesday morning we went to the Falls of the Ohio Visitor's center to learn about the Falls' rich historical side. We went to a fossil workshop, and explored the museum. Even though it was pouring rain the rest of the afternoon, we suited up in our ponchos, and collected another three to four boat loads of trash.

Since we were rained out on Wednesday, everyone was excited to get back in the trash on Thursday. The group split up that day: some went back to the barge, others went to a different site, and the rest grabbed their bags and did the usual. The area we worked on is visible from what will soon be a section of a new bike trail. It was nice to know that our hard work would be appreciated by many people for years to come.

Friday was a gorgeous day—and by that time, we knew the drill. This site had the most concentrated areas of trash we had seen all week; it was not easy to get to, as we were working in a huge field of honeysuckles. It was tough, but by the end of the day anyone could clearly see the difference we had made. To celebrate our last day of work and a successful week, LL&W got us pizza for lunch.

Memorable Experiences:

It was Monday afternoon and everyone was hard at work. A group of students stumbled upon a huge truck tire that was at least three to four feet underground. Suddenly it became their mission to remove this tire from the ground—so they got a few shovels, and started digging. They dug around the entire tire, and then used a thick piece of rope to heave it out of the ground (this took about 8 people pulling). Slowly but surely, they rolled the ungrounded tire over to the boats, and walked away proud and happy.

Tuesday was absolutely awful weather—it was rainy and windy, and the site we were working on was covered in slippery logs. Yet there were no complaints whatsoever—everyone grabbed their garbage bags, or found some tires, and went to work for about three hours in the less than perfect weather. It was nice to see the group continue to work together and focus on a common goal despite the conditions.

It was our last day of work, and as I was collecting garbage, I found a small piece of Styrofoam (a usual find). But I soon realized that it was part of a much larger piece of Styrofoam buried under the soil. I kept digging, and saw that a plant's roots had actually grown around this two foot long block of Styrofoam. All of a

sudden it hit me—just how much of an impact we have on our planet, and the consequences of our actions. Needless to say, I now have lost all respect (or what little I had) for Styrofoam.

What we learned:

The trip was more than just about picking up trash. We spent Tuesday morning at the visitor's center of the Falls of the Ohio, learning about all sorts of different things. We had a fossil workshop, and learned about how the Falls' fossil bed is among the largest naturally exposed Devonian fossil beds in the world. We saw some real fossils, and went over their identifying features. We also found out that Lewis and Clarke actually left from the Falls of the Ohio for their exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. We went through the history of the falls (and the area in general), and left with a better understanding of *what* we were cleaning, and *why* it is so important to keep it clean.

What we saw:

We learned about the area *outside* of the visitor's center as well. Both on Sunday and Wednesday (since we were rained out on Wednesday), students went all over Louisville to explore. Groups went to a variety of places: the Speed Art Museum, the Science Museum, the local Salvation Army, a jazz club called "The Jazz Factory," and more. It was great to be able to get a feel for a place other than Geneseo, and learn a little bit about a culture and location different from our own.

Who we met:

We learned quickly that southerners love to talk. Most of the people we encountered were very impressed with our effort (and desire) to clean the river. We talked with students (our age and older)

about their experiences at the seminary, and what their lives are like; we chatted with townies and shop owners, who told us the good places to go in town. Everyone was so friendly and eager to talk with us—not to mention grateful for our hard work.

Aside from making friends with the people we met, the group of thirty bonded as a whole over the week. Even though separate groups of friends came, in addition to individuals, everyone was very friendly and inclusive. It is safe to say that each person came home with a least a few new friends.

Participants in Ohio River Clean-up:

Charlotte Abram
Henry Adams

Zack Arno
Maggie Bangs
Stephanie Benway
Daniel Davenport
Nicole Frangione
Amanda Gidasi
Matthew Girtler
Anita Green
Alex Hillis
Evan Iacobucci
Ashley Jones
Andrea Leggett
Gwen Morien
Sarah Regner
Alex Romanowski
Dan Skahen
Chelsea Ward
John Zubler