



City of Slidell

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department of Cultural and Public Affairs ♦ P.O. Box 828 ♦ Slidell, LA 70459

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For more information, call 985-646-4375

Operation Blessing Continues to Serve Hurricane Katrina Victims

There are hundreds of individual stories that Operation Blessing volunteers can share. At the conclusion of each week, volunteers from all over the country sit at Operation Blessing's command center in Slidell and share their experiences of the week. Tears roll down faces, with volunteers saying "We will never be the same. We came to give to others and our lives were forever changed." A typical day for these volunteers is to transform homes back into livable conditions. A job that would have cost a family \$30,000 was instead done by Operation Blessing volunteers in one day for free. In one week, this small team donated over 576 man hours and counseled countless people as a steady stream of devastated hurricane victims came to the center for help.

Operation Blessing International has been in Slidell since the first few days after the storm. On August 25, 2005 they began staging staff, trucks, and resources in the outlining areas of Hurricane Katrina's path. This enabled Operation Blessing to be on the ground literally hours after the storm providing relief and assistance to thousands of individuals. Here are few of their programs that have served Slidell and the Gulf Coast since the storm.

To date, Operation Blessing has distributed over \$4 million in cash grants to 242 nonprofit and faith based organizations of the Gulf Coast states who are actively doing disaster relief. They have distributed over \$1.8 million in Louisiana alone.

Operation Blessing partners with other non-profit organizations and churches from across America to provide skilled and unskilled labor to hurricane victims. They have donated almost 44,000 volunteer hours since Katrina.

In addition, Operation Blessing has transported over 132 truckloads of food and relief supplies totaling over 5.3 million pounds to the disaster areas. They also donated medical supplies to the LSU Health Care system worth \$23 million for triage relief support for Hurricane Katrina medical patients.

The organization has given \$4.1 million for food distribution to the Gulf States and has three kitchens that have served over 324,000 hot meals to residents and volunteers in Orleans, St. Bernard, Jefferson, and St. Tammany Parishes.

In response to the catastrophic nature of Hurricane Katrina, Operation Blessing pulled many of its full-time directors and managers to be on the ground serving, responding, and managing their efforts to ensure the most effective disaster relief services possible. Operation Blessing has made a commitment to have a strong presence in the affected area with staff on the ground for one year with continuing relationships for years to come. Slidell has truly felt their generous assistance throughout this disaster, and these volunteers have greatly affected the lives of many of our citizens. On behalf of our residents, the City of Slidell offers a sincere thank you to Operation Blessing International.