



## Lutheran Disaster Response—Collegiate Corps At West Virginia University

# BACK FOR MORE!

### TIMELINE OF LDR-CC:

Grant Submitted	9/05
Grant Awarded	12/05
Biloxi Deployment	3/06
Biloxi Deployment	5/06
Welch Deployment	11/06
Biloxi Deployment	3/07
LYO Assist	4/07



Zach Kochy, Director of Operations

Nick Hornbeck, Field Commander

**Address:**

Lutheran Campus Center at WVU  
1497 University Ave  
Morgantown, WV 26505

**Phone:**

304-296-5388

**Email:**

Disaster@LutheranMountaineer.org

**Web site:**

Www.LutheranMountaineer.org

## LDR—CC RETURNS TO BILOXI

Eighteen months after H.Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, much remains to be done, but recovery efforts continue largely thanks to religious organizations. One of those organizations is the Lutheran Disaster Response—Collegiate Corps. Returning for the third time to Biloxi, MS, nineteen students and two advisors contributed 760 hours of labor to the effort.

Fifteen team members were first-timers in Gulf Coast Recovery Operations. They marveled at the level of devastation. Returning team members, however, could optimistically opine that things looked better than last year, and progress had been made. Estimates range widely from eight to fifteen years before normalcy returns to the region, but no one expects it to be just as it was before.

From its base at Camp Biloxi, the LDR—CC received assignments to various neighborhoods and communities. Splitting up into multiple work crews, the LDR—CC handled skilled and unskilled jobs, serving seven residences and the camp. While in camp, team members accepted camp assignments including KP and camp cleaning duties.

Not all was work. Some of the sights were taken in, and team members enjoyed evenings relaxing in the camp or on the beach. Time was even found for a night on the French Quarter. No single person on the team knew every other member prior to deployment. By the end, they had formed a strong bond: comrades in disaster recovery.



Adam cuts ceramic tiles for flooring.

Some team members asked Camp Biloxi staff if they could return as individuals. Most of the team expressed a desire to return, and no one regretted the decision to serve in Biloxi.

## BECOME A DISASTER TEAM MEMBER

Members of the LDR—CC commit themselves to assisting others in times of disaster and to ongoing recovery efforts, find opportunities for leadership and community service.

In order to become a member of the LDR—CC, volunteers must attend a series of training events to prepare them for the physical, safety, mental, and psycho-social challenges of disaster response. Volunteers also attend meetings where plans for future deployments are made and additional training and information is provided. Volunteers then become permanent

members of the team after a probationary period.

LDR—CC accepts volunteers with all abilities. The Disaster Team encompasses members from different areas of campus and different backgrounds. New members are invited to join anytime during the year by attending a meeting at the Lutheran Campus Center (across the street from the Wise Library), day and time announced on the website, by calling 304-296-5388, or by emailing the Command Staff at Disaster@LutheranMountaineer.org.



**Seth Hall, 23**  
Biology  
Bluefield, WV

*"One day I hope to serve on a mercy ship as a physician or pharmacist to help foreign countries in need."*

Today my group was assigned to work on a home that had uneven floors. We laid floor tiles after leveling the floors with baseboard. I came into this trip knowing no one yet I already feel like part of a team on a religious journey to do God's work. In order to prepare myself each day I like to read Ephesians 2:8-10 to remind myself of the true reason for why I am here which is not by merit but because of God's grace.



*"For God so loved the world." Alex does more than wear his faith on his sleeve.*



## WELCH DEPLOYMENT '06

Team members were getting restless—not that anyone wants a disaster to happen, but you don't train, check and recheck your equipment, and do your class assignments ahead of schedule to stare at The Weather Channel. So the LDR—CC took matters into its own hands, and after classes on Friday, November 3, 2006 the team headed to Welch, WV.

The weekend was spent working at two sites under the auspices of the McDowell Mission. The one site involved remediation of a mudslide. The site, a residence, involved work on siding, gutters, roof, and drainage.

Joining the WVU members of the LDR—CC were five members of the Lutheran Campus Ministry at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In making crew assignments WVU and IUP personnel were intentionally teamed together. All remarked at how well the two schools worked together. After action reports from IUP confirmed a strong desire to repeat the success.

The deployment included two nights. To handle meals, Tom Coffin was drafted. A graduate of culinary school, Coffin served as deployment commissary officer. In the evenings, team members recreated and enjoyed Welch.

## LDR—CC, A VISION FOR SERVICE

The Lutheran Disaster Response — Collegiate Corps was established to create a standing disaster response team staffed and led by collegians. College students train, equip, and stand ready to respond to the needs of Central Appalachia in times of disaster. A subsidiary of the Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU, the LDR—CC is a pilot project, developing and testing a model that can be replicated at colleges and universities across the region and nation.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans provided a \$24,500 grant to seed the project in December 2005 under the Youth Leadership Initia-

tive. The YLI's goal is the development of youth leadership through service learning.

LDR—CC participants learn valuable hands on skills related to demolition, building repair, and construction. They also learn disaster management skills including incident command, resource and personnel management, logistics, and disaster area health & safety. Included in their training are modules on the psycho-social, spiritual, and economic impacts of disasters as well as the history and theology of Lutheran disaster response. Thus equipped, corps members are empowered to serve their communities well beyond graduation.

## FAST FACTS ABOUT BILOXI III

- 21 people; 19 students, 2 adults
- 760 hours worked
- Over 2,200 miles driven
- Dumpsters filled, 3
- Floors tiled, 3
- Properties cleared of debris, 2
- Rooms prepped and painted, 5
- Ceilings repaired, 1
- Yards restored, 1
- Rooms demolished and rebuilt, 1





**Stephanie Zinn, 24**

Broadcast News  
Millersville, MD

*"I hope to find a way to use my skills in youth ministry."*

I am amazed at how much damage still remains along the coast of Biloxi. There is still a great need along the gulf. Even after a hard days work we are excited for tomorrow. Each night we close in a prayer service and it reminds us of the reason we are here. The fact that this is a Christian organization makes all the difference. Of course, I am making many new friends and memories I hope I never forget.



Barbara's ready to paint.

## SPAGHETTI, ANYONE?

The good people of Zion Lutheran Church, Wheeling, WV, held a spaghetti dinner for the LDR-CC, April 21, 2007. Raising over \$1200, not counting a matching grant from Thrivent, the dinner is the largest fund raiser to date for the corps.

Several team members, led by D.O.Zach Kochy, joined the Zion contingent. Dressed in their new LDR-CC T-shirts, they helped to prep food, wait tables, and clean-up. Ninety people attended the dinner, coming from Lutheran and non-Lutheran congregations in the Wheeling area.

The LDR-CC thanks Zion Lutheran Church and the Kochy family for their support.



Adam, Tom, Glenna and Stephanie prep salad.



**Cari Ball, 18**

Human Foods and Nutrition  
Winchester, VA

*"My goal is to educate the underprivileged countries and make the world a healthier place."*

I was more than amazed to see how much damage and destruction was still in Biloxi. At the beginning of the trip I had no idea what kind of work I would be doing or how much of a big difference I would really make. That all changed when it occurred to me that it was the Friday and we were done with our work week. From the 6 a.m. wake up calls that lead to the sleep deprived and exhausted work week to the showers that were much anticipated once the day was done, I realized what it really meant to make a difference. The smiles on the faces of the home owners and their family after seeing a part of their life becoming closer to normal was all it took.

## ASSISTING LYO WITH HABITAT

While Spaghetti was being served in the Northern Panhandle, F.C.Nick Hornbeck led a small contingent of "technical advisors" to assist the WV-WMD Synod Lutheran Youth Organization in the Eastern Panhandle. LYO, heeding the call of the church, spent the weekend working with Almost Heaven Habitat for Humanity as part of

the Thrivent Builds initiative. Each of the three LDR-CC members headed up a crew of synod high school students, teaching the necessary skills for the project and supervising the work.

A positive experience for all, the LDR-CC is looking forward to continued cooperation and a return to Almost Heaven.



**Justin Wood, 23**

Political Science  
Charleston, WV

*"One day I hope to win an oversized check and grow a beard as manly as Riegel's."*

Over the last few days I've spent 16 hours in a beat up van, turned a jungle into a yard, painstakingly scraped paint from a ceiling, filled the largest dumpster I've ever seen with the most disgusting trash I've ever handled, woke up before the sun came up for breakfast, and had the best time ever doing it all. Despite the lack of sleep, lack of food, and lack of being clean, I am constantly filled with laughter, happiness, and love. It really is beautiful seeing this group of strangers come together to turn our individual compassion into an amazing collective action.

Lutheran Disaster  
Response—Collegiate  
Corps  
At West Virginia

We're on the Web!  
LutheranMountaineer.org

### Special Thanks to our Donors

- The Family of Dr. Edward Vogelsong
- The members of Zion Lutheran, Wheeling
- The members of St. Paul Lutheran, Morgantown
- Marvin and Peg Riegel
- All those attending the spaghetti dinner at Zion Lutheran, Wheeling.



### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The Disaster Team welcomes the contribution of non-students as technical advisors, trainers, logistical support, and more.

Donations are also welcome to help offset the costs of deployments in either Appalachia or elsewhere as we help those in need. Checks should be made out to Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU with "LDRCC" on the memo line. You can also donate online through our website. Thanks!

*The Biloxi Deployment Spring Break '07 volunteers at the H.Katrina Memorial on 3/31/07.*



*The team traveled 1,000 plus miles over two days in order to volunteer a total of 760 man hours to help victims of Hurricane Katrina during WVU's 2007 Spring Break.*

## REAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP

*By Chaplain Matthew Riegel, Advisor*

For eighteen months, these students have amazed me. They continue to break boundaries in youth leadership that few realize even exist. They lead! Let me say that again, "They lead!" Rather than waiting for non-youth and professionals to set the agenda, make the plans, and then execute them, these students exercise leadership in all aspects. They set the objectives. They chose to make a planned deployment in the fall because there wasn't an emergency in the service area that fall that demanded their response. They selected Welch, WV, having researched and compared various options. They made all the phone calls. They arranged the transportation. They packed the tools and equipment. They arranged and prepared they arranged meals—actually, one of the women on the team drafted her boyfriend, a graduate of culinary school—now that's leadership! They even took the initiative to sell hot chocolate on campus in order to garner funds for an additional gift to the McDowell Mission, increase public knowledge, and advance recruitment.

Should I not be proud of these students? In my work I see the best and worst that college student's can do. Let me assure you, LDR—CC has allowed me to see the best at their best.

Last summer, I believed that the LDR—CC had met the prime objective of the Thrivent Youth Leadership Initiative. Now I am convinced, and much of the proof is to be found in

the energy and thought that current team members are already giving to the next year.

Where do we go from here? The students are talking about recruitment as might be expected. They are also talking about expansion beyond WVU, hoping to build upon the positive experience with IUP students during the Welch Deployment. They are talking about more planned responses and creating cooperative partnerships with other organizations. They are even talking about leadership transition and what will be necessary to ensure that LDR—CC can continue its work well beyond the current cast of characters. Future leaders? No. Leaders now!



*Chaplain Riegel*