



Disaster hit New Orleans, changed lives

Ed. Note: The Donsereaux family came to Houston as hurricane evacuees and now are permanent residents.)

By Ackie Donsereaux

On Aug. 29, 2005, disaster hit home literally because it hit New Orleans where I was born and lived my whole life. Prior to this day, disasters were things that happened to someone else somewhere else.

Due to my daughter's coaxing, I evacuated to Houston at 4 a.m. Sunday and I arrived 16 hours later. We packed two pairs of jeans and two shirts because her dream to shop at the Galleria was coming true. Unfortunately, that dream was short lived because after the storm we had to return most of what we bought because we needed the money for survival.

Tuesday morning I went to NAM because someone in the lobby of our hotel on Highway 249 said NAM was helping people affected by the storm. I met Carole Little. She asked about me and my family. I told her I was a registered nurse for 34 years, lived in a two-story home and had never been unemployed. She gave me a \$25 Fiesta grocery voucher, a Sears gift card and a slip to go to the thrift shop on 1960 for clothes. I thought this was really nice. I didn't bother NAM anymore.

A month later, I was still living in the hotel and jobless. I was living in one room with my mother-in-law (age 77) and my daughter (age 17). We came here on "like and love," but we were living on

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The Moore family shared their story at a recent Trustees meeting. They were homeless and NAM helped them regain their self sufficiency.

‘One day we were like you....’

(Ed. Note: The Moores completed the Interfaith Hospitality Network program for homeless families and moved to their own apartment.)

By Joann Moore

We spent many months planning our move to Texas. We knew this was the direction God wanted us to go. We had covered all the bases. We had prayed about the move and were at peace with it. We had my college degrees in psychology and youth ministry. We had my husband's trade in finished carpentry, his master barber's license and his skill as a drummer. We had saved our money and had a place to stay until we got on our feet. But through circumstances we could not control our place to stay was taken from us with no warning. We were suddenly homeless in spite of all we had done.

One day we were like you, and the next we were like so many people with no place to stay. Finding ourselves homeless was devastating. Having four children and a baby on the way made the situation overwhelming. But because God put us in the paths of the right people at the right time, we were led to Northwest Assistance Ministries, and eventually a spot within the Interfaith Hospitality Network. In the three months we were there, IHN provided shelter in the storm of life.

Now, after two months in the Supportive Housing Program, we are getting our feet firmly on the ground. We have a healthy new son. My husband has three jobs, and we have our own place to live. We are going to be all right, and we have a passion to help all people in all forms of homelessness.

Thank you, NAM, for being a light in what for us was a dark place.

Donors should find ‘transparency’ in operations’

Charitable organizations and donors have a special relationship. We are especially grateful to our donors because they’ve chosen to share their resources to help others through NAM.

NAM, like other charities, needs financial support to survive, and while there’s never been a shortage of need, last year’s natural

disasters created unprecedented new needs throughout the world. Donors can choose to support an increasing number of social service agencies. However, the giving pool isn’t bottomless and with the new demands, some donors may feel pressured to give. Last year, as each crisis occurred, some donors simply had no more to give. With such demand for limited resources and



from so many agencies, donors want to know their contributions will be well used. They’d also like to know their gifts will have a positive impact. So what is the best way for a donor to know an agency will be a good steward of the donation and the gift will positively impact the lives of people in need?

Many experts agree donors should do a little research and evaluate a charity. Look at your donation as you would a traditional investment, but in this case, you are investing in your community.

Consider the agency’s track record and ask some questions. Does the staff have a strategic plan for addressing problems, can they show measurable results, can they show where they get their funding, and can they account for how those funds were spent? Some experts use the term “transparency of operations” for the answers to those questions. As a donor, the harder you have to work for that information, the less transparent an organization is.

Don’t expect specific information about specific clients. Agencies have a legal duty to respect and protect the privacy of its clients. However, the number of service hours a program devotes to clients and the cost of those programs should be readily available.

As donors consider charitable organizations to support, they may narrow the possibilities based on an issue or cause that touches them or they may choose purely on operational efficiencies, giving to the group that produces the most bang for the buck. Some donors support NAM because staff members have been recognized for their sound financial stewardship of resources. Other donors support NAM because it is a one-stop shop for social services. Donors don’t have to identify multiple agencies that address a variety of social needs because NAM has programs to address those needs under one roof.

NAM has been in the community long enough that the adult children of our

Please turn to Page 3

Rev. Watson: Join us as we impact the community together

Dear Friends,

Wildewood Baptist Church was one of ten founding congregations when Northwest Assistance Ministries began in 1983. The pastor of Wildewood at the time, Mike Massar, and several other local ministers provided start-up funds from their own pockets not knowing if the

money would be paid back. From meager beginnings in the early 80’s NAM has blossomed into a wonderful ministry of caring for the poorest in our community.

When I came to Wildewood in 1999, it was quite evident that our church’s participation was a significant part of who we are as a church. After a tour of the

facility and ministries by Carol Little, I was convinced that the most effective way our church could feed the hungry and help provide for the basic needs of the poor was to continue our cooperation with NAM. As Wildewood partners with other churches and resources through NAM, we are able to serve and care for thousands more people than our congregation ever could on our own.

Not only is our support of NAM good stewardship of our resources, there is the added benefit of the friends I have come to know and appreciate. The staff has the right blend of professionalism and friendliness that is infectious and a joy to be around.

If you are not currently a participating congregation, I encourage you to join us as we impact our community together. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call me.

Blessings,
George Watson

Majestic Truffles Math



- 1) Pick the number of times a week you’d like a Majestic Truffle. (more than 1, but less than 10)
- 2) Multiply this number by 2 -- just to be bold.
- 3) Add 5 for Sunday. 4) Multiply by 50.
- 5) If you already had a birthday this year add 1,755, if you haven’t add 1,754.
- 6) Now subtract the four digit year of your birth.



You should have a three-digit number. The first digit is your original Truffle number. The next two numbers are your age...so in this equation, the number of Truffles you have doesn’t matter... regardless of your age.

If you find yourself short of Truffles, call 281-885-4544 to place an order.



NAM's Volunteers are Priceless

NAM staff members encourage all volunteers to attend the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon set for April 27. This year's theme is "NAM's Volunteers are Priceless" because NAM could not operate its programs

without support from volunteers. Invitations will go out shortly or volunteers can sign up in the depart where they volunteer. For information call Peggie Ney at 281-885-4609.

Contributions are an investment in the community

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original supporters are now NAM donors and provide financial gifts and volunteer time. We are especially appreciative of our long-term supporters. They know that staff members are available to answer questions; that an independent firm audits NAM's financial statements each year, and that audit report is available on site. Financial summaries are regularly included in newsletters and the organization's 990

Internal Revenue Service statement showing assets and liabilities is available on our website, www.namonline.org, or at the charity tracking site, Guide Star, www.guidestar.org.

Volunteering is a great way to become familiar with an organization before making a financial commitment and we insist that our volunteers have an overview of the organization. We provide that overview in orientation sessions available twice a month (excluding December and July) that include a tour of the building and an opportunity to meet staff members in each department.

We encourage donors to tour our facilities because we want them to see the impact their donation has. Truly, seeing is believing that your donation to NAM will be put to good use in your community and impact the lives of people in need. If you haven't given to NAM in a long time

or you're considering your first gift, please schedule a tour. We want you to see the programs we offer, the results we achieve, and the hope we have for the future. If you give regularly to NAM and haven't visited for awhile, please schedule a tour. We want to reaffirm that your investment in your community was well placed and is changing people's lives.

Sincerely,

P.S.

Tours start at 9 a.m. the first and third Thursday of each month except December and July. Call Peggie Ney at 281-885-4609 to reserve a spot. Tours can be arranged at other times with advance notice.



**Northwest Assistance
Ministries
15555 Kuykendahl
Houston, TX 77090**

NAM Notes is the newsletter of Northwest Assistance Ministries. NAM Notes is published periodically throughout the year.

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www.namonline.org
281-885-4555

NAM Statement of Activities for the 3 months ended 12/31/2006 (unaudited)

Total Support and Revenues	\$2,902,350
Expenses	
Program services	\$2,273,826
Management and General	\$165,886
Fundraising and Development	\$60,419
Total Expenses	\$2,500,131
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$402,219

‘NAM staff members were my first Houston friends’

Continued from Page 1
love now.

Carole Little from NAM called me to check on my family. I told her I still hadn’t reached the Red Cross by phone. She told me to come back to NAM and that there was a program to help hurricane victims. I went the next morning and met apartment

locator Tracey Logan. This lady promised to get me into a two bedroom apartment that day. I hadn’t been able to find an apartment in weeks. I don’t know how that lady did it, but I had an apartment that day.

I needed a Texas license before I could work as a nurse. NAM paid the \$200 fee

so I could get my Texas nursing license. The job counselor Jonita Payton personally corrected my resume and sent me to interview for the job I now have at Innova Hospital.

My counselor also provided me with cards to buy gasoline so I could go job hunting and she helped my travel home to New Orleans when necessary. I also got a weekly grocery voucher for the food pantry.

While the things NAM did for me were the greatest, even more important was the way they treated you. NAM staff members were my first Houston friends. I laughed and I cried with them.

One day my daughter came home and said NAM helped everybody. I agreed, but asked how did she know? She said because her friend took a picture of his house and his furniture looked just like ours.

Yes, NAM even totally furnished our apartment providing us with a dining set, living room set and two bedroom sets. They even provided us with comforter sets, towels, pots and pans.

I do know that it is my desire to stay in Houston and I’ll always be available to help NAM. NAM didn’t just start helping people, but the magnitude of the problem was handled so well by NAM. I will always love and appreciate them.

Please know that you and all involved with NAM have done more than a good job. NAM made a real difference.

My daughter is a senior at Cy-Creek High School. Graduation is in May and she just received her letter of admission to Howard University in Washington, D.C.

I have been attending Cy Fair Christian Church since the storm and the members there have been a solid force in my life.

I have a Texas driver’s license, a Texas nursing license and a Texas voter registration card. I am an official Houstonian. My daughter says Texas is the best place to be displaced in.

Thanks so much to all who gave. No gift was too little. It meant so much to us.

NAM’s Hurricane Relief Project assists over 8,700 people and enters third phase

NAM’s Hurricane Relief Program has moved through three phases since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the Gulf Coast last fall, and the program has funding to continue helping evacuees through next September.

Immediately after the hurricanes hit and evacuees began arriving in NAM’s lobby, NAM staff members and volunteers marshaled resources to provide emergency food, clothing, gift cards and information. During that crisis phase, NAM’s Hurricane Relief Project assisted

8,253 people with services valued at \$417,409.

Area residents, the Covenant Congregations, NAM’s Service Partner organizations and business Community Partners made this assistance possible with donations of in-kind items, cash and volunteer time. Throughout the relief effort, NAM’s regular programs have continued operating and no funds from those programs have been used for hurricane relief.

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NAM Hurricane Katrina/Rita Activity Summary (Through Jan. 31)

People Served

Phase 1 - Emergency Services	8,253
Phase 2 - Resettling Families	339
Phase 3 - Workforce Dev. and Counseling	130

Assistance

Clothing Vouchers	\$160,267
Other in-kind items	\$304,424
Housing	\$69,702
Food	\$10,647
Holiday Gifts	\$14,025
Vehicle Fuel and Fares	\$69,826
Other Assistance	\$523

Total Assistance \$629,414

Operating Costs \$11,796

Salaries & Benefits..... \$29,958

Total Expenses \$671,168

Balance in Program \$511,357

(Balance will fund Workforce/Counseling through Sept. ‘06)

Contributions for Hurricane Relief

Cash

In-kind

Total Income..... \$1,182,525

Relief effort adds counseling, and workforce development to assist hurricane evacuees

Continued from Page 4

After the initial crisis passed in October, NAM launched the second phase to resettle families. The program has helped 329 participants with basic social services as well as furniture, dishes, glasses, flatware sets, bed linens, pots and pans.

The relief effort has moved to the third phase which includes workforce development and counseling. NAM's Workforce Development Center now has job developers to help hurricane evacuees with job leads, resume writing, mock interview coaching and job coaching. The job developers also are scheduling weekly visits from various business representatives who can interview clients on the spot for employment.

NAM's Family Violence and Counseling Center assists individuals and families who are dealing with domestic violence and/or trauma-related issues. Individual therapy is now available and a support group for evacuees is in the developmental stage.

The goal throughout NAM's Hurricane Relief Project has been to assist the evacuees in regaining their self-sufficiency. The program now has funding to continue workforce development and counseling efforts through September 2006.

Sidelines with Sarah ... A Counselors' Promise

By Sarah Fisk

NAM Volunteer Assistance Counselor

I met Bill Wolff nearly twenty years ago when I started at NAM as an assistance counselor.

He looked old then. He had a shock of white hair and a collection of deep wrinkles. He volunteered and taught new volunteers from the time NAM opened its doors in 1983 until two weeks before his death on December 12, 2005.

He epitomized what NAM stands for, the promise to do its best to help others. Bill drove to NAM from The Woodlands every week...and he drove cautiously. One of my favorite stories about Bill concerns his driving. One Tuesday morning, as he was turning into NAM's parking lot the driver behind him blared his horn, trying to get Bill to drive faster. Bill noticed who honked.

Bill's first client that day was the person who had acted so hostilely only fifteen minutes earlier. Bill recognized him and his client recognized Bill. As the client sat down across from Bill's desk, I heard Bill say, "You should be careful who you honk at." I'm sure the client sunk a little deeper into his chair. But then Bill proceeded to help the client any way he could.

When I heard of Bill's death I thought back to that day and I thought forward to what I will always remember. Bill taught fairness toward others, disregarding his own thoughts and



Holiday Project success

NAM volunteer and Trustee Dale Adcock helps assemble toy bags from Cypress Creek Christian Church, one of NAM's 10 founding congregations. Thanks to a very generous response from NAM's Covenant Congregations and the community at large, NAM was able to provide toys to 3,495 children and holiday meals in November and December to more than 5,800 people.

feelings and yes, prejudices. We counselors knew Bill's opinions, his clients never did. He taught respect toward those who came to NAM. He interviewed each client thoroughly and listened patiently to their requests. He taught empathy toward his clients, sometimes acting beyond an assistance counselor's duties, such as the time he made a phone call and reconnected a son with his father.

Bill loved a good joke, he loved McDonald's milk shakes and he hated computers. Throughout his years at NAM Bill taught us fairness, respect and empathy for others, not by what he said but by what he did. Thanks Bill. We will remember. We promise.



**Give a little.
Gain a lot.**

It's amazing how far a little food can go.

Collected items can be dropped off at the NAM Food Pantry, 15555 Kuykendahl.

Call 281-885-4589 for information or visit www.namonline.org.



FVCC schedules free family violence education class series

Northwest Assistance Ministries' Family Violence and Counseling Center is offering a free Family Violence Education class beginning Jan. 19 at NAM's main building, 15555 Kuyken-dahl.

The class will meet from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays for six weeks and participants will receive a certificate of completion.

"This program is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues and dynamics surrounding family violence," said Donna Amtsberg, FVCC director.

Class topics include: History and Definitions of Family Violence, Myths and Warning Signs, Power & Control, Effects on Children, Substance Abuse and Family Violence, and Leaving an Abusive Relationship. Clients must commit to the full six-week program in order to receive the certificate.

Clients will be referred through the FVCC staff/volunteers and through Child

NAM can no longer accept old computers

NAM appreciates the support the community has provided through donations of computers and computer-related equipment, but circumstances regarding those donations has changed, said Pampi Bartels, NAM Information Technology Director.

"Due to rising costs of environmentally friendly disposal and licensing, we are forced to request that you take old equipment elsewhere for recycling," Bartels said.

"We can no longer accept computer equipment donations. The exception is computers with a speed greater than 1Ghz because we can put those machines to work in our offices rather than recycle them."

For computer donation information, contact Bartels at 281-885-4598.

Protective Services (CPS), however, the class is open to anyone interested in learning more about family violence and how it affects adults and children. No childcare services are available at this time.

Classes will be offered throughout the year according to the following schedule which is subject to change:

Jan. 19 - March 2,
March 23 - April 27,
May 18 - June 22,
July 13 - Aug. 17,
Sept. 7 - Oct. 12, and
Nov. 2 - Dec. 14.

To register for the class call the Family Violence and Counseling Center hotline at 281-885-4673.

NAM honors supporters for special efforts

NAM recently honored individuals and businesses that helped with NAM's Hurricane Relief effort and others who created new projects to raise money for NAM.

These folks went above and beyond expectations with their assistance. They provided a variety of services ranging from spreading the word about special needs to directly assisting evacuees with services.

Honorees were Vickie Kolodzik, CVS Pharmacy #6514; Jim Carter, Windfern Business Park; Tammie Jeffers, Anchor Staffing; Larry Lipton, Allstate Insurance;

Northwest Assistance Ministries Calendar

April

14 Good Friday - NAM closed
27 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

May

6 Literacy Carnival
29 Memorial Day - NAM closed

Volunteer Orientation is at 9 a.m. the first and third Thursday of each month except July and December.

Trustees Meeting

6:30 p.m. April. 24
Second floor, Fivity Plus area

Tracy Logan, Target Realty; Fritz Fryer, Time Warner Cable; Bill Mehrens, SC Management Company; Bill Moffett, Moffett Productions; and Joe Palumbo, Trim Electric.

NAM also presented two project originators with Bright Idea Awards to recognize their efforts in implementing creative ideas to raise money for NAM programs. The honorees were Dean and Carole Lindsey, St. Timothy Lutheran Church, for their Million Dollar Hole in One Contest, and Andrew Chow, Kinsmen Lutheran Church, for his marathon runner training program.

NAM Programs and Services

Assistance Office	281-583-5600	Second Chance Resale	281-880-9000
Children's Clinic	281-885-4630	Corner Resale Shop	281-885-4544
Development	281-885-4608	Senior Services	281-885-4600
Donations Hotline	281-885-4545	Shelter & Energy Assistance	281-885-4526
Family Violence and Counseling Center.	281-885-4673	Other agencies at NAM	
Interfaith Hospitality Net.	281-885-4567	Harris County Social Services..	281-885-4591
Meals on Wheels.....	281-885-4622	Harris County Hospital District.	281-587-8596
Rotary Learning Center...	281-885-4616	American Red Cross.....	281-885-4563
NAM Resale Shop.....	281-897-8952	Even Start.....	281-586-1888

NAM's wish list

Development Department

Television capable of playing DVDs
Laptop computer, 600MHz or higher with 128 mb of memory and a CD ROM drive

Food Pantry

Commercial scale
Nonperishable food items to replenish pantry for the summer
Cash Donations always gratefully accepted

Assistance Program

Overhead Projector
Digital Camera and software for computer
Paint, supplies and labor to paint the offices
Portable fans
Two-drawer file cabinets

Interfaith Hospitality Network

Fold up baby play pen
Maternity clothes
Toiletries
Griddle
Pillows

Fifty Plus Senior Center

Van drivers
Ride-along volunteers to help the drivers on Wednesday and Friday mornings
Back up bingo caller

Shelter & Energy Assistance

Commercial paper shredder
Labor & parts for refrigerator water connection valve
Electric three-hole punch

Information Technology

New UPS' for workstations -- minimum of 1400VA/980W
IT volunteers
Recent HP printer cartridges

Resale shops

Security System
Copy Machine

Bicycle rack
Rolling racks
Shopping carts
Volunteers

Building Maintenance

Indoor/outdoor carpet
Commercial floor mats Fifty Plus area
Tile or carpet for FVC hallways
Tile or carpet for 2nd and 4th floor hallways
Ceramic
Poly strapping machine

Children's Clinic

Spanish Children's books
Spanish speaking volunteers
Stuffed animals
Infant and toddler car seats
Books - new and used
New toys for birthday gifts
Table scale
Braun Thermo Scan - need 3
Electronic thermometer - need 3
Rectal probe thermometer - need 3
Probe covers for listed thermometers - 10 cases a year
Child blood pressure cuff with bulb and valve - need 10
Adult blood pressure cuff with bulb and valve - need 9
Large adult BP cuff with bulb and valve - need 2
Welch Allyn Oscope/Ophthalmoscope Kit with teaching head

Meals on Wheels

Copy machine
Volunteer drivers
Digital Camera
Portable Scanner
Cell Phone with Minutes

NAM supporters can donate online. Visit NAM's web site, www.namonline.org, and click the "Give Online" button.

Recent grant awards

City of Houston Katrina/Rita Fund
Curtis and Doris K. Hankamer Foundation
Harris County Emergency Shelter Grant
Harris County Community Development Block Grant
Houston-Katrina Fund
Newfield Foundation

Jewish Federation of Houston
Junior League of Houston
Robert & Pearl Willis Knox Foundation
Spindletop Charities, Inc.
United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast
Veritas DGC, Inc.
Violence Against Women Act Grant



Christ the Good Shepherd Catholic Community helped fund and set up a new Education Room in the Children's Clinic. Checking out the finished room which will serve as a client resource center are Larry Cronin of the congregation's Department of Social Ministry, left, clinic director Rebecca Jones, seated, clinic nurse practitioner Sharon Record and Jan Papciak, congregation direct services, Dept. of Social Ministry.



The Newfield Foundation award NAM \$30,000 for its Meals on Wheels Program and Hurricane Relief Project. On hand for the check presentation were MOW Director Cheryl Green, from left, Newfield representative Mellissa Gentry, NAM Executive Director Carole Little, and Newfield representative To'saundrea Taylor.



Houston region Discount Tire Co. representatives recently presented Northwest Assistance Ministries with a \$10,000 check to help support NAM's Assistance Program, Family Violence and Counseling Center, Children's Clinic, and Food Pantry. On hand for the presentation were from left, Rhonda George, Crystal Hale, NAM Executive Director Carole Little, Chandra Garcia, Kathy Allen, Pam Walters and Linda Archer. The donation was made on behalf of Discount Tire Co. owners Bruce T. and Diana Halle.

NAM, Junior League schedule Literacy Carnival for May 6

The sixth annual "Plant the Reading Seed" Literacy Carnival will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 6, at the Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) playground, 15555 Kuykendahl.

The Junior League of North Harris and South Montgomery Counties, Inc. in partnership with NAM is sponsoring the free event which is designed to be a day of fun, food, games and books for children and their families.

Festivities include games and prizes, crafts, and refreshments. Most games and booths promote literacy and each child who attends will receive several free books. Past carnivals have also included children's book authors and storytellers. This year's activities are still being planned.

The Junior League of North Harris and South Montgomery Counties, Inc. is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective

action and leadership of trained volunteers.

NAM's Rotary Learning Center offers courses in General Educational Development (GED) test preparation,

Learning Center adds Workforce Development

NAM's Rotary Learning Center has added a Workforce Development Center and job developers who are helping NAM clients including hurricane evacuees with job leads, resume writing, mock interview coaching and job coaching.

The job developers schedule weekly employer visits to NAM from various business representatives who interview clients on the spot, said Jonita Fair-Payton, Director, Rotary Learning and Workforce Centers.

The center is also piloting a program with a \$5,000 grant from the Willowbrook Rotary Club for vocational training and education. The participants will have mentors for added guidance.

English as a Second Language, reading skills development and American Civics for U.S. citizenship testing.

For information call NAM's Rotary Learning Center at 281-885-4616.

The center still conducts general education development (GED), adult basic education (ABE) classes and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in partnership with North Harris College.

Last year, the Learning Center purchased the Rosetta Stone English software to help teach Spanish speakers English. Now, the center has added Rosetta Stone Spanish software to teach English speakers Spanish.

Classes for students who want to learn Spanish will begin this summer. The class fee schedule is still being developed. For information, call the Learning Center at 281-885-4616.

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