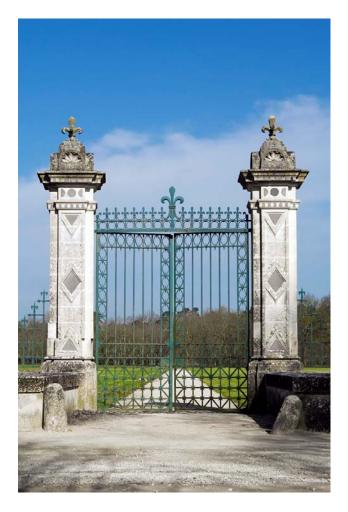
# Metro New Orleans' Unsung Heroes including Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes



Behind these gates is a path made of stories in which strong inspired people gave immeasurable selfless contributions to their neighborhoods and/or greater communities. They are the Metro New Orleans' "Unsung Heroes."



Metro CCP · 3308 Tulane Avenue · New Orleans · Louisiana · 70119



# **Metro CCP's Unsung Heroes**

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina came ashore washing away lives, families, homes, careers, and businesses. Katrina forever changed the place called home. Shortly thereafter, Hurricane Rita brought more water into the already devastated city. Some of the people survived the storm to later leave survivors behind; others are walking bands of tension popping under the duress of daily life. Then there are those that rose up to the occasion without regard to themselves just the desire to help others.

It has been a privilege to record the tales of those who had no desire to be a hero just wanted to serve, protect, rescue and assist their fellow man. These are truly "unsung heroes" and their stories are testimony to human spirit of survival and sacrifice. They extol community, love, and decency. We are unable to identify every unsung hero, yet the ones in this publication are a symbol to all.

The timeline of service varies from the day of Katrina's surge to the present. Some are no longer with us in body; only in spirit may their good work inspire others to answer the call to serve. Some have moved on to work elsewhere. They are current residents, former residents, new residents, volunteers, workers, and missionaries. This diverse cultural and ethnic mecca was home to almost one million people, as of November 2007, it is estimated that 61% of the population has returned. Many work to rebuild in the most devastated areas with the help of unsung heroes.

The Metro CCP service area includes Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes.

In Commemoration of Hurricane Katrina, February 2008

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# **Gerard Fernandez**

### Orleans

Gerard Fernandez is an unsung hero in Gentilly. During Hurricane Katrina, he stayed behind to assist his family as they wanted to stay in their home not expecting the devastation to come.

Gerard saved an elderly disabled lady from flood waters as it entered her home. By the time his rescue was complete, the water was waist deep. If Mr. Fernandez hadn't been there to react quickly to save her, she may have perished.



# **Dr. Clara Byes**

### Jefferson

Dr. Clara Byes is a 76-year-old, retired grandmother. She worked for many years in the Jefferson Parish Public school district. She is one of the supervisors at Gretna Community Center. Hurricane Katrina challenged her to use all her contacts to recruit donations for the people in the Gretna community. In the early days after Katrina, there were critical shortages. People needed food, water, and clothing on a regular basis. She worked tirelessly to find places where the survivors could get basic needs met.

Clara went out of her way to help those in need. There was one incident when a survivor came to her needing help to get to her father's funeral in Atlanta. Clara searched for donations and after not collecting enough money, she put the remainder of the funds herself. She works continually to help improve the living conditions and quality of life for everyone.



**Uriel Icaza** 

#### Jefferson

Uriel Icaza is a local businessman. He returned to Jefferson Parish only three weeks after Katrina because he felt the need to help. His home received no damage and he viewed this as an opportunity to help those with no shelter. Mr. Icaza allowed survivors to use his home as shelter. At one point, 45 people lived in his home. Even though overcrowded, he let everyone stay. He moved to a smaller house, and brought two of the families with him. The rest of the people stayed in his original home. These families stayed in his homes for nine months.

When Uriel heard the Mensaje, a Spanish-based program of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, had lost everything and could not even afford to pay for an office costing \$1000 a month causing it to be closed indefinitely, Icaza quickly conditioned a property office of his and donated this office to Mensaje free of charge. Mensaje is still currently operating from this office.

Uriel Icaza would wake up early and go to bed late because he was passionately and deeply committed to helping the community. He would spend his days transporting those in need to medical services, disaster recovery centers, supermarkets, and their lost homes. Uriel would then assist them in recovering anything of value.



Diamond Transitional Living Center

# **Akemley Cross**

### **Jefferson**

Mrs. Akemley Cross is a life-long resident of Harvey. She dedicated her life to assisting those less fortunate than herself. After her family home was destroyed by rising flood water of Katrina, she was forced to live in a FEMA trailer.

Over a month later, she quickly recognized the needs of two specific population groups within the FEMA trailer park. She established several activities that address the elderly population such as Bingo game night, birthday parties and counseling with Louisiana Spirit. Mrs. Cross also addressed the growing children population. Single-handed she established the after school program. This program provided the young people with an avenue to express their concerns about being displaced and allowed them to find the things that unite them more then divide them.

Along with Louisiana Spirit, she established a Help Education Program, to match kids of higher grades with kids that had failing grades to help them improve in the classroom.



# **Deidra Cleggett**

### Jefferson

Deidra Cleggett is a nurse in the Jefferson Parish area. When the storm came abroad, many of her patients at the Woldenberg Retirement Community were sent to Houston. They expressed to her that while Houston was a safe place, they wanted to return home.

Weeks later, Cleggett got a bus, and drove her patients back to the retirement home. She took several rides to Houston to pick up about 10 patients per ride to bring them back home.



### Michael Vicknair

#### Orleans

Michael Vicknair of Orleans Parish said, "On August 29, 2005, while trying to escape the flood water with my family by car, we saw a wall of water coming in our direction. I grabbed the first boat I could find and secured my family." As they proceeded to find higher ground, they noticed several individuals trapped on roofs. "My family and I decided that we could not leave them behind so we started to rescue everyone we could find." The small boat quickly filled up and became dangerous to maneuver in the high squall. He was able to locate a larger boat and transfer all the people aboard.

As they continued to make their way to higher ground, they picked up several other families that were trapped by flood water. They paddled all the way to Almonaster Road. There was a semi-truck which they used to drive everyone to Simsport to seek help.

While driving came across a female officer that had been beaten up and was in need of help. They helped her into the truck and took her to safety. Vicknair and his family assisted almost 50 people. He doesn't consider himself a hero. "I just did what any other person would have done when faced with such a situation."



# **Mandy Thompson**

### Orleans

Mandy moved to New Orleans with the burning desire to help New Orleanians post Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Armed with her experience in the home furnishing business, and a drive to do something to bring back a historical pearl, she found a niche helping first responders refurnish their homes.

Mandy founded a non-profit foundation that donates furnishings to the first responders that lost their homes. Today she has helped many rebuild their lives with the new furnishings.



### Ward "Mack" McClendon

Director, Lower 9th Ward Village Community Center

#### Orleans

Mr. Ward McClendon affectionately known by his family and friends as "Mack" is a very humble man. He has a heart of gold and a pure vision of what he wants to see his Lower 9th Ward Village Community Center to become. With his faith, and the help of volunteers from near and far, along with neighbors, friends and community groups coming to his aide, he has made a difference in the lives of others returning to the Lower 9th Ward.

He works to service the entire Lower 9th Ward, focusing on helping the senior residents return home and rebuild their homes with local licensed electricians, plumbers, and contractors. Mack's other passion is working with the youth and giving them an opportunity to help rebuild the Lower 9th Ward through an apprenticeship and mentoring program.

As Mack continues to rebuild his Lower 9th Ward home, he works twice as hard building the Lower 9th Ward Village Community Center to service his neighborhood. Mack said he's finally found his purpose in life ... to serve his Lower 9th Ward Community.



**Ernesto Schweikert** 

### Jefferson, Orleans

Ernesto Schweikert, owner of Spanish-speaking radio station KGLA-AM, realized that radio communication was the most effective way to communicate with the community after Katrina. Ernesto, deeply committed to New Orleans, and especially its Latino population, felt a greater responsibility to stay and serve his community.

As Hurricane Katrina came, KGLA-AM remained on air until power was lost. Schweikert, determined to keep citizens informed, took a boat from New Orleans to Jackson, Miss., to purchase a generator.

Incredibly, a couple of days later Schweikert was back on the air in New Orleans. Within the hour, callers flooded KGLA-AM's phones for help, information, therapy, etc. Schweikert told them "say whatever you want to get off your chest." From this moment on, the radio station has been serving the community in social service information. For six solid months KGLA-AM, was the sole Spanish-speaking media outlet, and opened its door to every agency, which could help the community, in order to empower its listeners.



# **Steve Dooley**

#### **Orleans**

Steve Dooley was among many who became homeless after Hurricane Katrina. Prior to the hurricane, he attended Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) in pursuit of a Master's Degree in Social Work. After the hurricane, Dooley was provided with a FEMA trailer on the university's campus. Dooley lived next to his classmates, professors, friends, and families with children in the trailer park. He wanted to make the trailer park feel more like home for the children. He wanted to build a playground.

A friend who heard him talk about his vision, gave Dooley information to get the playground funded. The first spreading of the sand for the playground was on September 4, 2007. The playground eventually got a swing set, sea-saw, rocking horses, and a basketball goal. The opening day for this celebration was held November 12, 2007 at SUNO's North Campus.

Dooley stated that "he couldn't be more appreciative, especially because the project was complete before the holidays and gave the children something to look forward to."



# Ligia Buitrago

### Jefferson

Ligia Buitrago is a 64 year old retiree. She has lost everything she owned twice prior to Hurricane Katrina. Again, she faced loss after Katrina. A month later, she was back in her hometown because in her words, "she felt as if she had to be in a place where she was needed." Upon her return, she called an old friend who provided her with a place to live. And from there she immediately began searching for ways in which she could help those in most need.

Ligia would cook and hand out food on street corners in Kenner at no charge. The American Red Cross found out what she doing, and began to provide her with the food to cook and give away so that she could continue this selfless and inspirational act. When she encountered anyone in need of medical attention she would take them to the Ernest M. Morial Convention Center, which at the time was the site of the only hospital in the greater New Orleans area.

She considers her most important asset is her ability to help those in need.



# **Margaret Rhodes**

#### Orleans

"Unsung Hero," Margaret Rhodes is now deceased. Margaret was quiet and unassuming. She was lovingly known as "Mama Marg." She was a mother to young and old alike. Prior to the hurricane, Mama Marg resided in the Carrollton area of New Orleans near her two sons and her grandchildren. Her home had an open door to many. She was special with a gentle and nurturing spirit. Once you met her you had a friend for life. Mama Marg didn't care which walk of life you came from, you were always welcome. Due to many health problems, she was unable to work outside of her home. She began babysitting and selling suppers in her home to make ends meet. Mama Marg had an amazing way with the children she cared for.

Such a fantastic cook, that people came from far and near to get a meal. Mama Marg's popularity spread and it was necessary for her family to intervene and set limits on how many children she could keep and the number of homeless she fed.

After the hurricane Katrina, Mama Marg and her family relocated to Baton Rouge for a short time. It wasn't long before she started babysitting, selling suppers, and feeding the needy. The open door policy continued. When her family was able to return to New Orleans in 2006, her health worsened. She was no longer able to baby-sit or cook like she use to. But due to the many people she helped over the years, many gave back through monetary gifts, preparing meals for poor and listening to her colorful jokes and pearls of advice. On October 13, 2007, Mama Marg passed away, leaving many to mourn her death. She will long be remembered for her good deeds and never forgotten.



## **Hidania Montero**

### Orleans

Hidania Montero is a retired, 71-year-old manicurist, who loves and cares about those in her community. After Katrina, she returned to her home, which suffered extensive damage. Once there, she met a woman who had no place to live and her daughter, who has Down's Syndrome. Montero kindly took them, along with another woman with an autistic child into her home. While transporting her guests to take care of their needs, she helped them to contact FEMA and apply for a trailer. Once her guests received their trailers, she provided her yard as a place to put the trailer.

These two families lived in Ms.Montero's yard for over a year. Montero has since invited two more families who also have children with mental health problems.



# Mr. Gill

### Orleans

Mr. Gill is a neighborhood friend. He stayed behind for the hurricane to make sure that no one broke into the neighbor's homes. He has always supported and helped everyone in his neighborhood.

He has assisted everyone in the rebuilding process. Mr. Gill would mow the neighbors' lawns free of charge. He's always helping the elderly with transportation, taking them to the grocery store and bringing them to their doctor visits.



Mr. Kevin Brown

### Orleans

Kevin Brown and his family evacuated from New Orleans to Memphis during Hurricane Katrina. As soon as New Orleans citizens were allowed to return home, Kevin and his family came home.

Kevin gutted the homes of more than 50 senior citizens, assisted them in getting home assessment documentation such as permits for rebuilding, applications and appeal letters for FEMA, SBA, home mitigation and the Road Home processes. Kevin often sat with them while they spoke with their contractors, plumbers, electricians and insurance adjusters.

Kevin also assisted citizens with locating their primary care doctors. When time permitted, he provided transportation to and from scheduled appointments and pharmacy pickups.



# **Percy Jackson**

#### **Orleans**

During Hurricane Katrina, Percy Jackson found a boat and was trying to make it to his mother's house to inspect the early damage, when he noticed a man holding on to a bus stop pole. He kept going underwater and resurfacing. By the time Jackson was able to reach him, the man had gone under water again. Jackson was able to pull him to safety. The man said to Jackson, he must be an angel because he had been there for two and a half hours. Jackson brought him to safety at I-10 and Poydras Street.

Jackson recalled that he was stopped by Wildlife and Fishery officers who requested that he get water from the Kentwood water company to deliver to people in need on I-10. Jackson brought water to about 300 people. After a delivery of water to an elderly thirsty lady about 85, she said to him, "You must be an angel because this water taste like steak, it is so good."

Jackson helped over 200 people left in the Plaza Hotel on Canal Street. He found boxes of frozen shrimp and fed them to the crowd.

On September 3, 2005, Mr. Jackson and his family were evacuated to Fort Smith, Arkansas. He encountered an evacuee that was grieving over all she had lost. She was going to throw herself in front of a bus. Mr. Jackson talked to her about God's role in this and how He would see her through it. God needed her to be here for her son.

After returning to New Orleans, he resumed working with the crisis unit and continues to save lives.



### **Beth Ann Simno**

#### Orleans

Beth Ann Simno truly gave unselfishly of her time, talent, and treasure to assist and to care for others who were affected by the hurricane. Her positive actions made a definite difference in the quality of life of the Lakeview community because her actions affected, enriched, and touched the lives of many others.

Mount Carmel Academy is located in Lakeview, one of the hardest hit areas of the city. After Katrina, the school was surrounded by a housing graveyard and the headache-inducing smell of toxins and dirt. This neighborhood school just below the 17th Street Canal levee looked like a river bed, with boulders, mud and branches mixing with the debris of destroyed homes.

When the school's principal and president were hospitalized, Beth Ann stepped up and assumed the responsibility to continued to organize and supervise the clean up and the rebuilding. It was a crucial time for the cleanup and rebuilding of the school. She authorize the digging of an 800-foot well on the school property in order to obtain fresh water for the cleanup. She had generators brought in and provided the only source of electricity and water in that part of the city. The school became a true beacon in the community and the only significant sign of hope. No one was living in the area.

In January 2006, the school reopened.



### **Pastor Turner**

# **Plaquemines**

In October 2005, while still living in a FEMA Trailer, Pastor Turner of the Mount olive Baptist Church in Plaquemines Parish established a rebuilding and recovery program. With the help of two other members of his church, he began working to rebuild homes.

So far, Turner has helped more than 15 families return to their homes, with 47 homes slated for rebuilding and over 10 homes in the process of repairing. Pastor Turner founded a food and clothing bank that provided hundreds of families with the necessities. He also negotiated with several organizations, government officials to secure funding, and volunteers to rebuild and repair homes. Turner was able to secure free building permits for those individuals that could not afford to pay.



# **Pastor Virgle Gaunichaux**

### Orleans

Pastor Virgle Gaunichaux has been conducting outreach services to the homeless population under the I-10 overpass for several years. Since Hurricane Katrina, she has seen a huge increase in the number of homeless people. Pastor Gaunichaux has devoted her ministry to providing food, clothing, and toiletries along with spiritual counseling.

She said that her church was destroyed by Katrina but in spite of her personal setbacks she has not stopped her mission to care for the homeless.



**David Rivet** 

### Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard

St. Anna's Medical Mission serves the medically needy, fragile and underserved citizens of the Metro area in an RV staffed by volunteer medical staff. The RV can be found at various points in rebuilding communities where often the only available medical service is in the RV. David Rivet, a native New Orleanian, is the driver of the RV. He gives guidance to the medical crew often working in areas with little adequate housing or emergency response services.

Driving the medical unit to provide these necessary medical services for those impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is only part of David's experience. As a nurse, he provides the triage before patients are seen by the doctors. He also helps prepare clients with paperwork and referrals to other physicians that further assist them with medical services.

David is a multi-tasker and self-starter but most of all, he loves to give to the community.



**Paul Greenberg** 

### Orleans, St. Bernard

Paul Greenberg, a reserve officer of the United States Marine Corps, noticed that the Hispanic citizens assisting in the rebuilding efforts were being taken advantage of due to their inability to communicate. The language barrier affected rental agreements, purchases, and payment for work done. Paul felt that something needed to be done to help those that came to help. He contacted the Hispanic Apostolate Community and asked what he could do.

After a few conversations with the director of the Apostolate Community, he volunteered to teach English as a second language class on a weekday evening. Paul also recruited another Marine to teach, because of the huge number of students that signed up for the class. Since January 2007, Paul has lead recruiting efforts to locate volunteers for several programs such as Toys for Tots, playground rebuilding, and other essential projects to rebuild the community.

Paul's efforts in teaching English as a second language has helped the Hispanic citizens break the communication barrier.



# **Tyrone Edwards**

### **Plaquemines**

Tyrone Edwards started the first and only Holistic Center devoted to the rebuilding and educational endeavors of the community of Phoenix, La. Edwards also established a rebuilding and repair program to assist the community members. He lobbied state, federal, local, private individuals to donate funding for the rebuilding of homes.

To date, Edwards has completed eleven homes and has been able to help twenty five families receive a start up voucher worth \$5,000 to buy materials needed to rebuild their homes. Edwards was able to recruit several volunteers from around the country as well as from local colleges, including Loyola University. His effort has led to the revival of the community to sixty percent of pre-Katrina population. These works have been a catalyst of pride. The slogan "Yes We Can" is the rallying cry for Braithwaite, LA.



# **Anna Clay**

### **Orleans**

Anna Clay is a 66-year-old ray of sunshine for her community. She came back to New Orleans in October 2005, after Katrina, and immediately began checking on relatives, friends and old co-workers' homes. As they came home she gave them information on the different agencies that were giving assistance to Hurricane Katrina survivors. She would give rides to the elderly and bring neighborhood kids to school when they did not have transportation. When some of the people she assisted were waiting on trailers--she allowed them to use her name as a contact person to receive the key.

Clay didn't do big things like gutting or helping build houses. She did all the little things like collecting clothes and canned goods for needy families and all errands necessary for daily life.



### **Anastasia Hammond**

### **Orleans**

Anastasia Hammond has been a volunteer at the Ozanam Inn for the past 18 years on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She decided that volunteering at the Ozanam Inn would be an extremely worthwhile pastime for her golden years. After Katrina, she returned from her brief evacuation to her volunteer duties when the Inn opened on November 20, 2005. Mrs. Anna could easily have given up her long-time position, but did not, returning as quickly as she could to assist with the day-to-day activities.

She has a commanding presence that is tempered with just the right gentle touch to be able to effectively handle the sometimes cranky homeless citizens who visit the Inn for its various services. Mrs. Anna contributes a considerable amount of money each month to the Ozanam Inn.



# **Darnell Wimby**

### **Orleans**

Mrs. Darnell Wimby is a 63-year-old homemaker with four adult children. Before Hurricane Katrina, Wimby became the sole care taker of her deceased daughter's three children. At the time of her daughter's death, the children were 5, 8, and 10.

Mrs. Wimby has also opened her home to her neighbors and his family since Katrina. One neighbor's home was deemed unlivable and they had nowhere to live. She has allowed them to reside on her property in a FEMA trailer at no charge. Mrs. Wimby also cares for young children while their parents are at work. She also takes care of her two neighbor's children after school until their parents return from work free of charge. She's active in her community, her church, and at the children's schools. She never asks for anything in return.



Mr. & Mrs. James Salandy

James and his wife are both severely hearing impaired and made the decision to stay home for Hurricane Katrina. They were rescued and brought to Chalmette High School. Due to the loss of their home, they were sent to a trailer park in Silver Creek. Unfortunately, the Creek flooded and displaced the couple again. James helped two trapped families that were deaf escape the five foot deep flood waters in the trailer park.

In another incident, James rescued another trailer resident from a burning trailer. The young man was severely burned. The couple is currently awaiting a Habitat For Humanity home to be built for them.



Adam "Yockey" Patcheco

Adam Patcheco stayed home during Hurricane Katrina. While the storm was causing significant damage, he noticed the water rising quickly then got a small boat from his yard and started to load his family. While rowing the boat, Patcheco heard cries for help. He followed the noises and it lead him to an elderly woman and her cat. He rescued her and took her where other elderly people were staying until the helicopter came to evacuate them.



# **Larry Malter**

#### Orleans

Larry Malter chose to stay behind with his mother and family members that decided not to evacuate in advance of Hurricane Katrina. When the storm came and the levees broke Larry knew he had to get at least some of the people out of harm's way. They were trapped in their homes and needed to get to safety. A nearby school provided a higher elevation and better chance of rescue. It was August and there was no electricity, food or water. It was fast becoming unbearable. Some of the men left on foot to find resources or help. They walked from one end of the town to the other through filthy water and debris. Finally an abandoned Kentwood truck was spotted. They got the truck started and went back for children and mothers that had evacuated to higher ground. Many more people were loaded onto the truck then brought to higher ground to be rescued.

It was two weeks before Larry was able to reach his wife, whom had been evacuated to Texas. When he returned to New Orleans, he found his and his mother's home had been under six feet of water. Larry has returned to home and restored his home.



# Thaddeus Brown

# Jefferson

As a native, Thaddeus Brown chose to stay home for Hurricane Katrina. Thaddeus helped rescue his family and neighbors and brought them all to be rescued to safety. He risked his life for others.



**Robert Thompson** 

#### Orleans

Robert and his wife Elizabeth evacuated New Orleans to Houston the day before Katrina. While in Houston, he started a New Orleans evacuee group through an electronic bulletin board. Once a week they met up with evacuees to exchange information and build morale for what lay ahead.

Upon the Thompson's return home they found their business (Fair Grinds Coffee House) flooded and vandalized. They weren't able to reopen the business for 2 years but during the time of repair they provided support to the neighbors by offering free coffee and a place for residents to come together on their patio. Robert also provided a place for recycling of much needed goods.

Robert continues the electronic bulletin board to help the residents of New Orleans stay connected to the ones who have not been able to come back. He and Elizabeth also help people in need by becoming advocates on their behalf. Now that the business has reopened, Robert offers free meeting space to community service programs.



### **Ashton Pruitt**

### **Orleans**

Ashton Pruitt was 14 years old and in the ninth grade at Holy Cross College Prep High School when Katrina came. The week before, Ashton went camping with his Boy Scout troop in Mississippi. There he earned his merit badge in swimming. Little did he know, that very lesson would save the lives of his family members on August 30, 2005.

After the flooding began and water was waist deep, Ashton made floatation devices from pants to help them stay above the flood water inside the family home. He knew that they would have to leave the home to get to higher ground. Ashton thought quickly then took the ladder from his closet to get the family onto the neighbor's roof. They stayed on that rooftop 19 hours before a fireman by responded to a 911 call across the street. The fireman rescued them and took everyone to the University of New Orleans Campus.

At the UNO campus, Ashton and his mother provided triage first aid to other survivors as they were brought in to safety. The family was moved on to the Reliant Center in Houston.

Today, Ashton is back in New Orleans with his family and attending Holy Cross. He enjoys his youth group and volunteers at St. Jude. This young hero is humble about role in saving his family and continues to serve others.



Tami Menard

Tami is boundless energy. She has a smile that is flashed to all before the word "hello" is uttered. A warm hug easily extended and a full plate of home cooking served.

In January 2006, Tami felt the call to serve others in need. She helped others by cooking, serving, and distributing food to survivors and volunteers that came to Arabi to aid in recovery. Tami cooked at the Chalmette Wal-Mart parking lot in a huge white tent. She prepared breakfast, lunch and dinner for 1,200 people a day.

Tami presently, manages the food distribution for the needy. She prepares meals currently, at the Adullum Church for the volunteer groups still aiding those impacted by the storm. Tami is also a survivor of the area. For those that come for the hot meals prepared by Tami and a kind word, she is ever ready with a big smile giving them that familiar feeling of family and home.



Eric Riley

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, Eric Riley, 24 was a resident of St. Bernard Parish. Like many, he was left homeless by the storm, Eric moved to Slidell. Eric decided to help Adullum Church to aid in the rebuilding of his parish.

Eric has vast skills in sheet rock installation and finishing, carpentry, and painting. He helped to build a church facility and complete the skateboard park at the Boy and Girl Scouts facility nearby. When he is not busy there, he helps with the food distribution center.

This inspiring young man helps others first taking him out of the despair of what was lost. He now has found new meaning to return to St. Bernard.



Paul Remick

Paul was a longtime resident of southeast California, who saw a need to help in the rebuilding of New Orleans. So, Paul moved to St. Bernard Parish.

In 2006, he started his venture with Adullum Church in Arabi. Paul witnessed the great need and contributed financially and physically to get the church back together for the survivors seeking it so desperately. He has general carpentry skills that were put to good use at the church and in the community helping residents repair their homes.

Paul is a resourceful man of many talents and a big heart. He is a welcomed new resident to St. Bernard bringing the right attitude to help resident survivors rebuild.



Dianne M. Hensley

### Jefferson

Pastor Dianne M. Hensley was a resident of Marrero prior to Hurricane Katrina. She evacuated to Lafayette before returning home on October 1, 2005. As soon as she returned home, Diane went back to work for her community.

While attending Bible College, a missionary church offered assistance to her. Dianne did not think of herself, she brought the donation to those that she knew were in dire need of household goods. The supplies given to her over a period of time were passed on to 200 families. They were so grateful to get the new clothes, linens, and house wares.



# Samuel Ridgely

### Jefferson

For about 10 years, Samuel Ridgley has been a neighborhood hero at The Harvey Center. "It's in my heart to help another person," expresses Mr. Ridgley. When Hurricane Katrina hit many people were left with nothing but faith.

Everyday at noon from August 2005 until September 2007, Ridgley and co-workers at the center served hot lunches, distributed new clothing, gave water, and ice. "We wanted to help, and we are still helping. That's what I do with the help of my fellow co-workers," says Ridgley.

Ridgley also made contact with about 30 states to ask for any donations to help. The center serviced over 1000 people. There were times when people would ask Ridgley for money and he never said no. He is still giving his heart at the center.



# **Veronica and Edward Young**

#### Orleans

Veronica and Edward Young were packing their car to evacuate on Sunday morning before Katrina hit with two dogs and three cats. A college student who rented a room in their house had no way to leave, so Veronica unpacked the dogs and cats and took the student with them in Ed's small car.

The house and yard secured, food and water was set up on all three floors of their house for the two big dogs and three cats they were forced to leave behind. Off they went with the full expectation to return in a couple of days. Meanwhile, Ed went to his friend's house to make sure she left with her sister. She hadn't; she didn't want to leave her three dogs. So, Ed moved her and the dogs into an empty apartment over his offices on Canal Street. She bunkered in for the storm.

When they returned home one week later, friends and neighbors were e-mailing them to go to check on houses and pets. They gladly helped their neighbors, making sure the pets were fine and bringing food to them also sending emailing updates.

Ed's friend's home had five feet of water in it. His move saved her life and the dogs as well. Veronica and Ed spent countless hours caring for the four-legged friends and family members left behind by their owners.



**Anthony Henderson** 

### Orleans

Anthony Henderson, a New Orleans native was helping a friend board up her house preparing for Hurricane Katrina and missed his ride to evacuate. Instead of panicking or staying inside, he knew there were ways he could help. Living in Uptown New Orleans, Anthony knew of many senior citizens living alone in their homes that would not evacuate. Most feared the looters and did not trust the police or the Military but Anthony was trusted.

Anthony knocked on doors, brought food, water and news about the flooding situation. He repeated the vital run daily. Later, he would help them to get out of town to safety.