



**HOMELAND
MISSIONS**

A Ministry of Sovereign Grace Fellowship

Post-Katrina
**COMMUNITY RELIEF
VOLUNTEER INFORMATION
PACKET**

www.SGFM.org

*"For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."
James 2:26*

From Our Team

Thank you for your desire to co-labor with us. We give praise to our Lord for your commitment to help our community by seeking to lend a hand in our ongoing long-term recovery effort in the metro New Orleans area.

We ask that you join us in prayer for our region, so that the truth of God's grace through Christ may be spoken in our words and resound loudly by our deeds, as we work together with His saints in the call of ministry.

The immediate emergency phase of hurricane relief work has passed, and our focus has shifted now to specific rebuilding/renovating projects and general community relief work. We are organizing **Homeland Missions** as a non-profit group under the oversight of our church so that we can maximize the fiscal advantages of being a 501(c)3 and have the accountability of a Board of Directors.

Many organizations have left the area as few groups are continuing their work long term, yet there are still thousands of families in need of help. As merchants of hope compelled by the love of Christ, we have come alongside the needy, ministering not only to their physical needs, but also to their hurting souls as well.

Sovereign Grace Homeland Missions (SGHM) has been set up to accommodate this long-term effort as well as become our permanent urban missions project.

SGHM began by God's grace through our initial response to Katrina and is developing and maturing through people such as you — people who are willing to encourage us, labor with us, and offer their help and suggestions in every aspect of our work. It is a blessing for us to watch His Body rise to the occasion and through that response see the establishment of a permanent mercy ministry.

Read through this information packet and familiarize yourself with our protocol and practices. Afterward, feel free to email or call us with any questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you soon.





Our Contact Information

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Scheduling Your Trip

Pick Your Dates

Check out our work calendar at <http://sgfellowship.org/calendar/> to see what dates are available for your group. We can accommodate up to 35 workers at a time. Keep in mind that we can handle multiple groups at the same time, so if you see that someone has booked the dates you want, see how many people are in that group and add them to your number before choosing another slot.

Once you have your date picked, print this packet for all of your team to read. Dates reserved can be changed at a later time, so it is best to book the slots you want rather than wait and have them taken by someone else.

The Work Week

Most work crews arrive on Saturday and leave the following Friday or Saturday. However, we accept trips of any length. Just let us know and we will work with you. Sundays are non-work days. Our worship service is at 10:00 a.m. and the rest of the day is a good time for fellowship and sightseeing. Wednesday evenings we have Bible study and prayer starting at 7:00 p.m.

Local Tour

On Thursday evenings we can schedule regional tours for your group led by Pastor Eddie, who is a lifelong resident of the New Orleans area. The tour includes visiting destroyed and recovering neighborhoods as well as the local landmarks that overflow with the region's unique and colorful history. The evening includes a trip to Deanie's Seafood in Bucktown for dinner and winds down in the French Quarter for beignets and café au lait on the Mississippi Riverfront at the world famous Café Du Monde. [While there is no charge for the tour, each person attending is responsible for their own expenses at dinner (which runs around \$15 per person) and any other places we may visit. Each vehicle is responsible for downtown parking as well. \$10]

The Typical Daily Work Schedule

6:00 a.m.	Wake up
6:30 a.m.	Breakfast and lunch preparation
7:15 a.m.	Morning devotional
7:30 a.m.	Pack up vehicles for departure to work sites
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
4:30 p.m.	Pack up and leave job site
	Showers and cleanup
6:30 p.m.	Dinner

The Work Itself

Northshore Disaster Recovery Inc.

To facilitate good case management we have an ongoing database set up to monitor those who come to us for help. In addition, we are members of [Northshore Disaster Recovery Inc.](http://www.northshorerebuilds.org) (www.northshorerebuilds.org), a community non-profit group (composed of some 80+ civic, government liason, and faith-based groups) designed to combine and share resources and to solicit ongoing funding. This is essential to the continued rebuilding efforts as individuals run out of options. We also coordinate various jobs and work projects through other NDRI-affiliated churches in our area.

Constants and Variables

Given the nature of our relief work and our in-house needs, there are some constants and some variables. The constants are a need for ...

- prayer and evangelism
- financial support
- expertise in construction-related work
- supplies and building materials
and
- volunteer workers

The variables are the *types of work* needing to be done. After months of displacement, empty promises and political shuffling, many people have not even gotten to their properties yet while others are months ahead. Presently, Orleans Parish is the furthest behind in recovery.

As families move forward in their dealings with FEMA, insurance companies, local governments, lenders and grant agencies, they discover new challenges and needs. As a result of this flux, the specificity of our work changes monthly. Your exact work will be assigned just prior to your arrival. We do our best to match your skill level to the needs at hand.

In addition to our rebuilding work in the community, we are working on renovations and improvements to our own facilities so that we can have a firm base and headquarters for long-term work. Our modest church building was in need of repair prior to Katrina -- virtually untouched for 20 years. Post-disaster, after housing hundreds of workers and visitors, we have begun sorely needed upgrades and maintenance so that our work can continue.

Also, due to the benevolence of two main churches we are preparing to move our Homeland Missions offices and storehouse into a new 1,200 sq ft building adjacent to the church. Through SGHM's storehouse, we provide the community with food, clothes and other benevolence gifts. To facilitate this move, some of the work to be done will focus on our church grounds and Homeland Missions facilities so that our outreach and ministry can move ahead.

The Division of Labor

As the scope of work has shifted to more skilled labor, these are the main work areas:

Evangelism / Counseling

- Many counseling/evangelism opportunities
- Using our database of contacts volunteers can visit the hurting and lost
- Also, there are hundreds of people living in FEMA trailers that still welcome visitors

Organizational

- Internal organization involving everything from sorting through donations to maintaining our pantry and benevolence store
- Clerical and computer work
- Basic rebuilding work consisting of carpentry, electrical, plumbing, roofing, drywall, framing, painting, etc.

Construction

- Meal preparations, cooking, cleaning and grounds work
- Community properties – upkeep and clearing of yards, lots, etc.

Miscellaneous

As one can see from the above list, there is something for every volunteer from every background — skilled or unskilled. The main requirement is that they have a heart for Christ and a love for service. He will take care of the rest.

Frequently Asked Questions

What facility fees can we expect?

We charge a \$10 facility use fee per person per night. RVs and campers pay a flat rate of \$40 per week.

Where will we stay? What about bathrooms and showers?

Sleeping is done dormitory-style in our worship area. We can accommodate up to 35 workers. We have a few roll-away beds, cots and air mattresses. Check for availability. You will be responsible for bringing your own bed linens, towels, and pillows. Please do not bring king or queen air mattresses without approval as they take up much needed space.

We have four bathrooms available and currently use a local athletic club and the NDRI facility for showers off site as well as our own shower at the church.

What about food? Should we bring food with us? Will food be provided? Should we be ready to cook our own?

Depending on the size of your group, we require that at least one to two crew members be available to help with meal preparations. Breakfast, lunch, dinner as well as desserts, drinks and snacks will be provided for \$15 per person per day. We have a variety of menus to choose from. (See pg. 10)

If other groups are in at the time of your arrival, we will make sure that we work with them to coordinate your meals and preparation times.

If you are accustomed to bringing your own food with you or have any particular budget concerns regarding your meal expenses, just let us know and we will do our best to work with your particular crew needs.

What should I bring with me?

Pack lightly and keep it simple. We ask that you bring only one suitcase/duffle bag per person with you to save on space.

Bring appropriate clothing with you. Our winters are not harsh, but our summers can be. Sunscreen, bug spray and a hat are always a good choice. Remember that flip-flops and sandals are fine for non-working hours, but for the job sites you will need good working shoes. A pair of work gloves is a great item to bring as well.

Since our sleeping area is an open space, make sure to pack modest sleepwear.

Also, pack all of your necessary medications. For those with laptops and Internet devices, we do have wifi web access.

What kind of tools do we need to bring? Should we bring any?

We have a good supply of tools and equipment; however, that changes from time to time due to breakage, use and changing needs. Before you come, ask us what might

be needed at the time of your arrival.

Are there any age requirements for those who volunteer to work?

Can I bring my teen-age son or daughter with me?

Our cut-off age for workers is 14. The physical labor involved is generally too intense for younger children. If you have younger children that you wish to bring with you or feel that their maturity level and physical conditioning is adequate, let us know.

As long as the children remain with their parents, we can allow them to come along with the group. Families ministering together are a great thing, and sometimes we have small jobs that small hands can help with. We will take each situation on a case-by-case basis.

PLEASE NOTE: *When dealing with children, for the sake of safety and order we reserve the right to correct and/or remove any undisciplined child from any situation if they are deemed to be troublesome.*

Do you allow individuals with disabilities to come with a work crew?

Except for physical needs that cannot be met while here, there is often no reason why many disabled individuals cannot come with a crew. We would ask such a crew member to fill out a skills assessment sheet like everyone else (which asks about physical and spiritual skills) so we can plan work for him/her. In addition to construction, and the organizational work in the Relief Center, there is also follow-up phone calling, visitations, etc. Also, cleaning and such is always a need when a crew is in-house. We will do our best to accommodate their needs.

How will we know where we are working and what we are going to be doing? What kind of work will I be assigned?

Given the fluidity of needs, work schedules are put together as close to your arrival date as possible so as to be up-to-date. Some folks have been on our list for quite some time (as well as other lists) and may have had their work done already, so a site inspection is critical. After that assessment is made the work is scheduled.

Our work team coordinator will use the Skills Assessment forms to put together individual crews and match them with jobs. A short orientation will be scheduled covering basic work week information and details when you arrive.

Where and how far is the nearest major airport?

The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (<http://www.flymsy.com>) is the most major, but the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (<http://www.flygpt.com>) is smaller and easier to deal with. When buying your tickets, check both and go with the best fare since they are equidistant from our church (approximately 50 minutes away).

What about transportation? If we fly in can we get back and forth to the airport? What will we drive?

If you choose not to rent a vehicle and need to be picked up from the airport, you can make arrangements with us beforehand. We have a 12-passenger van that we can

use to transport crews, and, depending on the size of your group, personal vehicles can also be made available as well.

If we want to bring donated items (or buy them in Slidell), what is most needed by your ministry?

Given the nature and flux of our work, it is best to ask us what our food pantry, volunteer and community-use needs are at the time of your booking. We will be glad to go over the list of options with you.

What recreational activities are available for our crew members in the evenings after dinner?

We have yard space if anyone wants to throw a football or Frisbee (you'd need to bring them along). Since we are legal to burn much of our wood and paper trash, we have a fire pit in the backyard that you're welcome to use.

We have access to a wooded swampland area for those interesting in seeing Louisiana outdoors up close. Bring your gear if interested.

We also have a small collection of board games at the church that you may feel free to use (bring your own as well). We have a TV with a VCR and a DVD player that can also accommodate video games.

What kinds of touristy activities are available in the area, if we have free time on the weekends?

If your budget allows, we can recommend a swamp tour in the Honey Island Swamp. You need to book it ahead of time. www.honeyislandswamp.com.

In New Orleans, the National WWII Museum is wonderful (www.ddaymuseum.org). They have special group rates if you book at least 2 weeks ahead. In addition to that, there's the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans (www.auduboninstitute.org). For more local attractions you can visit this site: www.go2slidell.com/attractions.

About a half-hour away in Mississippi are some beaches. Gulf waters are usually warm and good for swimming from May through September. While visiting the beach, you'll notice that a lot of properties on the Coast were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, including many historic plantation-style homes.