

### **New Orleans Mission Trip – Henry’s House**

What an awesome opportunity God provided for this congregation in New Orleans. It was like our own version of Extreme Makeover – Home Edition. There were long hours of work over 12 days, with lots of people (18 team members throughout the two weeks), and great homeowners. There were good times of food and fellowship and fun, but most of all, a great sense of satisfaction and accomplishment at a job well done.

When the first team arrived in New Orleans, the task seemed impossible to accomplish in two short weeks without professional contractors, but God began working a miracle as we got to work. Homeowners, Henry and his sister Joyce, stopped by each day to check on the progress of the work and buoyed our spirits with expressions of awe and a few tears as the floors went down, the insulation went in, the sheetrock went up, the mud went on, the kitchen cabinets were bought and installed, the doors were installed, the paint went on, the baseboards and window casings appeared, the light fixtures were installed and the bathrooms scrubbed and cleaned. It is truly amazing what a small group of church folks from a small town in Virginia were able to accomplish in the big city.

Henry, his wife Dianne, and sister Joyce, became like family to us throughout the weeks. Henry cooked for us numerous times. He was also ready to help out by running errands or making trips to the airport or doctor. They were so grateful for the work we did on their house. Henry told us over dinner one evening that after the flood, they had a few choices in how to repair the house – from taking out a loan he would never be able to repay to only fixing up a room or two for Joyce to live out the rest of her life and leaving the rest of the house gutted. They said that they felt like Lazarus, in that they had been resurrected from Katrina and the flood.

We hope that you were able to keep up with our progress on the house through our daily e-mails. There will also be lots of pictures floating around to give everyone a glimpse of the work that was accomplished. We all had a part in rebuilding this house, from team members who traveled to New Orleans, to those who contributed to finance this project, to church members who helped with the yard sale and other fundraising ventures, to all the prayer support for this endeavor from beginning to end.

In traveling around the city, team members saw how very much there is to do to rebuild the city of New Orleans. We were only able to repair one small house, but it will be a sign of renewal in the community. One of the final repairs to the house was repainting the front door and removing the large “X” on it that was put there when the search teams went door to door after the flood. As one of the team members wrote, “we have taken the mark of the storm away from this house and replaced it with restoration.” Please continue to keep Henry and his family, and all of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, in your prayers as they work toward restoration of their lives.

Praise God for giving us the vision, the strength, the skills, the resources, the time and the love to carry out this mission in His name!