

HOPEFORCE

INTERNATIONAL

...A Compassionate Response to Crisis and Disaster



A Milestone Year: Marking Five Years as a Ministry



In 2008, did it seem that if the news wasn't about the elections, it was about yet another disaster? Rest assured, you're not imagining things.

As we write, FEMA has issued 74 federal disaster declarations for the year – just one fewer than the previous record high set in 1996.

Record floodwaters swamped Iowa, engulfing Cedar Rapids' downtown business district and shutting down interstates. Hurricanes Ike and Gustav pounded five states along the Gulf Coast. A possible record number of tornadoes in the U.S. killed at least 123 people, including four Boy Scouts at a camp in Iowa. Wildfires raged across California, destroying homes and businesses.

Around the world, China's disasters dominated the news even as it prepared to host the Olympics. The country suffered its worst winter in 50 years, followed by a 7.9 magnitude earthquake that killed more than 69,000 and left 5 million homeless. Then, a month later, 2 million more Chinese had to evacuate due to flooding.

As the stories fade from nightly newscasts, people continue to suffer untold hardship. Disasters change lives forever. Rebuilding homes and some sense of normalcy takes time. Confusion, despair, and frustration often result.

Into this brokenness comes Hope Force International, responding with compassionate action to ease emotional suffering, meet physical needs, and offer the ministry of presence: being there to listen, comfort, and walk alongside those in crisis.

For five years now, HFI has answered the call of God *to equip willing responders and mobilize them onto a pathway of service.* What a blessing to look back and see His faithfulness. This ministry is growing and making a difference in countless lives, because of your commitment and dedication to service.

Turning the calendar to a new year is full of excitement for Hope Force! No one can predict what will dominate the news in 2009 and where we will be desperately needed. But together, linking arms with you, we will bring faith, hope and love into the world's darkest places.

Hopeful and expectant,

Jack and Cherie

Jack and Cherie Minton
Founders, Hope Force International

HFI Snapshot for 2008

- **Volunteer hours contributed:** 47,441
Does not include staff hours
- **Reservist trainings conducted:** 7
*First international training in Mexico
First medical training in California*
- **New reservists trained:** 160
From 43 churches and 14 states
- **Reservists ready to deploy:** nearly 600
- **Disaster deployments**
*Tornadoes in Tennessee
Fires in Colorado and California
Floods in New Jersey and Iowa
Hurricanes in Louisiana
Hurricane Katrina Project Rebuild in Biloxi*

Thankful for a roof over their heads



Hope Force partnered with three other organizations to give several residents of Chauvin, Louisiana, an extra-special Thanksgiving in 2008. The "Roof Blitz" volunteers included the long-term Hope Force Biloxi team and others who came from Haines City, Fla.; Franklin, Tenn.; and West Henrietta, New York. They shared, served and reached out together to help families hit by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.



A bed-ridden Mrs. Henry Williams was shuffled around to nursing homes during evacuations for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Only the Williams' roof suffered damage. They bought shingles at a deep discount, but couldn't afford to hire a work crew. The Roof Blitz team removed the old roof, repaired plywood, placed new felt and hammered new shingles. The work team then surrounded Mrs. Williams' bed, praying for her and the family home. She shed tears of joy and thankfulness for the "polite workers" and "awesome job."



Sometimes, suffering seems to come in waves. Diana Boudreaux has breast cancer; her husband, Duris, has lung cancer. Hurricane Gustav destroyed their daughter's home, so she and her two young sons moved in with them. And their own roof was leaking from Gustav, until a Hope Force crew tarpied it before Ike hit. Volunteers returned at Thanksgiving to remove the old roofing and apply new felt and shingles.

"I've never had such kindness shown to me," says Mrs. Boudreaux. "They do have wonderful people in the world. The roof is so well done, and everything is very good."

Rose Charpentier planned to fix her own roof, until approached by HFI. She agreed that it might not be best for her to be climb up scaffolding anymore, considering her age – 81! She still works in a shrimp factory, although hours are scarce, and her husband, Murphy, has early stages of Alzheimer's. This fireball of laughter enthralled volunteers with her tales of past hurricane seasons and a life spent on the bayou.

"I'm thankful for all the people here, and that this roof is now prepared for any weather," Rose tells us.



HFI Medical Highlight for 2008: Smith & Nephew Partnership

An invaluable partnership grew even stronger this year: Hope Force is now *the designated U.S. charity for Smith & Nephew*, the world's largest supplier of orthopedic supplies.

This means Hope Force will be the agency that receives all of Smith & Nephew's donated orthopedic supplies, for distribution to those in need around the world! What a privilege and honor. We are humbled and grateful to be trusted with making sure these invaluable supplies are put in the right place at the right time and used to benefit those who are hurting.

HFI has already received 14 pallets of equipment, valued at several million dollars, that includes instruments and implants to complement a previous donation in 2007. Dr. Toney and Gina Russell of Memphis generously arranged for the donation and contributed storage space for these items.

Dr. Russell is a world-renowned orthopedic surgeon and his wife, Gina, is an orthopedic nurse. We are blessed to have both of them serving on the Medical Advisory Board of Hope Force International.

Our goal with these donations is to stage pallets for immediate shipment in the event of an international disaster where Hope Force medical reservists are deployed. HFI will also supply other international outreach teams with Smith & Nephew products for use in short-term missions. Thank you, Smith & Nephew, for your philanthropic spirit and willingness to serve those in need around the world!



This photo was taken in Sri Lanka in 2005. It shows a Hope Force surgical team that worked alongside local orthopedic surgeons in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami, one of our previous outreaches in partnership with Smith & Nephew.

HFI Goal for 2009: Creating an "Oasis of Hope"

After five years in the field, Hope Force knows that gaps in service exist after disaster. Our heart is to serve "the least of these" in small, overlooked communities, such as those we've seen in Pearlington, Miss.; Fayette, Tenn.; and Chauvin, La.

These rural locales often don't have a central gathering place after disaster strikes, but residents deserve the opportunity to reconnect with their community and regain their bearings. We envision smaller

mobile feeding kitchens where chefs create delicious meals and thousands of gallons of clean water can be produced daily, where tents and tables offer a place to break bread together, where caseworkers and caregivers can offer comfort, where large screen TVs provide the latest news, and where several agencies can converge to provide an information clearinghouse.

The HFI Oasis will also serve as "command central" for our Reservists, giving them a place to utilize every imaginable disaster relief tool. A centralized location will also make it easier for churches to send their members to volunteer in the aftermath of disaster, because they'll know where to report. We believe this concept will be easily transposable to international relief work, as well.

In early 2008, the leadership of Hope Force began to believe it was time to "enlarge our tents." We're already seeing how that will happen, both literally and figuratively, in coming months! Your prayers and financial gifts are key to making this goal a reality. God bless you for being faithful!



HFI Volunteers Make a Difference and Leave a Lasting Impression Responding to California Wildfires



Hope Force reservists certainly distinguish themselves in the field, as they did in November when wildfires broke out in southern California on Nov. 15.

Reservist Vicki McGuinness oversees California deployments for HFI. She and others immediately answered the call to help staff the Local Assistance Center in Anaheim.



Reservist Roy Gerber and his therapy dog, Ziba, were the hit of the center. A friendly dog calms the heart and mind of people facing crisis. They can take a moment to pet and play with the animal, and Ziba loves to return their affection.

During this continuing deployment, emotional and spiritual care providers like Roy help individuals who are struggling with the myriad details necessary to put their lives together. Others on the team help meet physical needs; in the first three days of operation they helped serve 461 fire survivors, providing food boxes, hygiene kits, toys, and gift cards for items such as gas, groceries, phone minutes and restaurant meals.

"We kept hearing comments like 'Your Hope Force volunteers are the best,' " Vicki recounts, "and 'Your volunteers have such a distinction in their quality of character and preparation.' "

We don't take pride in these words; rather, we take pride in our dedicated team of volunteers and trained reservists, who drop everything when called upon to minister to those who are in great need. YOU are the "force" in Hope Force!

Building Homes for Katrina Survivors

Ruth Showers claims she isn't much of a talker.

"I can't express myself – like talking, cause I get all...." Just then Ruth starts to tear up. "See, it's about to come up now!"

But they are happy tears. "It's so good – all my life I have wanted me a home."

Ruth may not like to talk much, but she is full of laughter. In fact, when Hope Force Project Rebuild Coordinator Craig Snow came by the house to ask Ruth how she would like to be in a new home in three or four days – she laughed. And laughed. Then she asked Craig what a "blitz build" was.

She soon found out.

About 70 volunteers descended on the Biloxi property in the spring of 2008, constructing Ruth's home in a combined organization 'blitz build'. A team of Amish ensured the frame of the house went up in record time, working side-by-side with shirtless men full of tattoos. Amish women in plain clothes wore tool belts and sang as they painted. Volunteers even added



landscaping, all while Ruth sat in a chair in the shade, watching the circus of construction workers.

[Click here to watch the amazing time-lapse video!](#)

A new rocking chair now sits proudly on the porch, its bow still intact. Wind chimes tinkle in the gentle Gulf Coast breeze. It's almost hard to imagine that a little over three years ago, Hurricane Katrina hit Biloxi's coast, damaging Ruth's house beyond repair.

"In a way, it was so sad, but in a way it was a blessing cause He brought us through it," Ruth reflected. "And it's such a blessing that he brought you all here on the coast to help us. It's a blessin'. And I love ya'll!"

Special thanks to Brenda Steffen for this article and photos.

What's YOUR resolution for 2009?



To serve others, to extend compassion, to bring hope,
to be the hands and feet of Jesus?

**Then come join our ranks
and become a trained Hope Force Reservist!**

**You don't need special skills, only a willing heart.
We have a place for YOU on the frontlines of disaster response.**

Hope Force International Basic Training Intensive 2009 Schedule

Jan. 15-17: Nashville, TN

Mar. 12-14: Orange County, CA

Feb. 19-21: Kansas City, MO

May 14-15: Washington, DC

To sign up, schedule trainings in your area, or request more information,
e-mail info@hopeforce.org or call (615) 371-1271.

Or become a Hope Force Compassion Partner!

Your donations make the difference.

DONATE NOW

or send your donations to:
Hope Force International
7065 Moores Lane, Suite 200
Brentwood, TN 37027

Breaking News:

HFI is now an accredited member of ECFA, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

This means we adhere to seven stringent standards for responsible stewardship, focusing on financial transparency, integrity in fund-raising, proper use of resources, and board governance.



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*