

April 1 – Message from HOPE Workers at Back Bay Mission:

Well as you know, we were all too tired last night to even think about writing. HOPE has been assigned several jobs. Barbara Zigterman is working in the Back Bay office. They were short of staff because of vacations and sick leave. She has dealt with clients helping them get supplies and some funding based on the clients needs. Barbara said that she has really been moved by the stories that the clients have told her. Barbara said it is stressful in that the issues facing the clients are extremely severe. She wants to help the clients, but some of the rules of Back Bay are fairly restrictive regarding giving clients personal money. The rest of us along with a group from Redlands, California have been assigned a house near the Back Bay Mission site. It needs all of the baseboards installed, framing around doors, fascia, soffits, window and door framing, etc.

Nick and Jane Dempsey and Mary Kroening are installing the soffits and fascia. They are doing a super job and the final product looks like professional installers completed the job. Bob and Martha are doing the framing for the windows and doors. The work is interesting as we are learning many new skills along with the fact that nothing is square in the house. In addition to working all day, HOPE is preparing the meal for tomorrow night for a group of 25 people, all of the camp volunteers here this week. Since we are working with groups from California, Ohio and Wisconsin, we will be treating them to brats (especially for the Wisconsin people so they will feel right at home). After dinner we will be going with Back Bay staff to a church service in a nearby church.

Tonight we met with Back Bay staff and had an opportunity to understand the issues facing the Back Bay Mission in servicing the needs of the victims of hurricane Katrina. The estimate is that it will take at least another 10 years to get Biloxi back to pre Katrina status. Back Bay deals with 650 clients a month with an extremely small staff. Their building program consists of rehabbing homes along with building new homes. Also Back Bay Mission has a new building program that will add two new buildings a dorm for all of the volunteers and a community center. You can find out more about the Back Bay Mission by going to the UCC website or to the Back Bay website. In fact you can see the trailers we are staying in on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6UI69HR-QA>. The person showing the trailers is Pam Small the volunteer coordinator.

I will give you an update on Thursday. We will complete are assignments on Friday night followed by a shrimp boil.