



**COLLEGE STUDENTS
FOR
NEW ORLEANS**

through devastation, life persists

A Student Organization
at
San Diego State University

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College Students for New Orleans Origins

The story of College Students for New Orleans and its Nawleanteers began with the advice of Adam Kronenberg's sister to volunteer in New Orleans after she had done so in November 2006. Taking up her advice, Mark Kellner, Aimee De Saxe, Keri Rosen, Julie Garrison, Ryan Breakstone and Adam Kronenberg accomplished a one-week volunteer road trip to New Orleans in March 2007. The six students assisted the city and its residents by gutting houses, tutoring, and helping at animal shelter and an elderly home. Following this volunteer effort in New Orleans the group decided that they wanted to do something in San Diego to aid the citizens of New Orleans.

The group returned to San Diego and Ryan Breakstone and others established a San Diego State University organization, College Students for New Orleans. Through a large effort in a short period of time, CSNO had a second trip planned to volunteer in August 2007 with 12 students. The group gutted homes, worked on the historic North Rampart Community Center (formerly St. Marx Community Center) and worked with the rescued animals at Animal Rescue New Orleans. Upon returning there was an incredible amount of energy within the group after a memorable effort in New Orleans between the 12 Nawleanteers.

Following the second venture, a plan was devised so that student volunteer trips to New Orleans would be continuous each break. This includes: Spring Break, Winter Break and two Summer Break trips with up to 60 SDSU students/volunteers for each trip! Thus far in our trips, students have gutted and rebuilt homes, tutored youths, distributed food to homeless people and took care of rescued animals.

Experts estimate that it will take 10-15 years for New Orleans to be completely rebuilt and CSNO is confident that our students will prolong this effort until we see that day.

What is a Nawleanteer?

- a Nawleanteer is a New Orleans volunteer. The term became popular when a stroke of genius occurred for Adam Kronenberg in the creation of the word. CSNO members have used it as a self-description of who they are: They are New Orleans volunteers, Nawleanteers.

Fact Sheet

- Hurricane Katrina took more than 1800 lives, 1500 of those were in New Orleans.
- 705 Louisianans remain missing after the hurricane.
- The hurricane caused more than 53 different levee breaches, causing 80 percent of New Orleans to submerged under water.
- Mental illnesses amongst New Orleanians rose 14 percent and suicides rose 50 percent, post-Katrina.
- More than 70,000 homes were destroyed - only 10 percent have been rebuilt, thus far.
- In the New Orleans' community Lower Ninth Ward, the area most affected by Katrina, only 7 percent of the residents have returned.
- Katrina is considered a "396-year storm," meaning a storm of its magnitude will not hit again, for an estimated 400 years.
- By August 2007, only 20 percent of the \$8.4 billion allocated to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for levee repair had been used.
- There are an estimated 118,000 fewer jobs available in New Orleans than pre-Katrina.
- More than 80,000 hurricane survivors in New Orleans are still living in trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- The survivors living in FEMA trailers are 15 times more likely to commit suicide and 7 percent more prone to depression compared to the rest of the U.S.
- Only 40 percent of public schools have been re-opened in New Orleans, leaving countless of children untaught; In the Metropolitan area – all libraries remain close.
- In January and February 2007, about 300 children were turned away from public-schooling because of the lack of space and teachers.
- Of the seven general hospitals in New Orleans before Katrina, only one is operating at pre-storm levels.
- The average cost of renting a two-bedroom apartment in the New Orleans' metropolitan area is \$978, compared to \$676 pre-Katrina.
- College Students for New Orleans donated about \$300 to St. Marx Community Center and Animal Rescue New Orleans from left over funds from the Summer 2007 trip.
- 12 Nawleanteers gutted 2 houses (one two-story house) in three days.
- 12 Nawleanteers cleaned the cages of more than 1,000 rescued animals.
- 12 Nawleanteers rebuilt 10 percent of the historic St. Marx. Community Center in one day.
- 21 Nawleanteers rebuilt two houses in three days.

Sources: "Hurricane Katrina Exacts Another Toll: Enduring Depression." [The Washington Post](#), 23 September 2007.; "Katrina: Where Things Stand." [ABC News](#), 29 August 2007.; "In New Orleans, Rebuilding With Faith." [The New York Times](#), 26 October 2007. "Two Years After Katrina." [USA Today](#), 29 August 2007.; "Hurricane Katrina, two years on." [World Socialist](#), 29 August 2007. [International Medical Corps](#).

Testimonials

The morning that I left to New Orleans I was upset that my flat iron broke and that I had ran out of coffee. After visiting the Southern city, I feel ashamed for complaining, when at just one time of my 23 years of living, those luxuries were not accessible. My time in New Orleans with College Students for New Orleans was a life-changing experience, to say the least.

I had always been a volunteer for some sort of non-profit organization, but I had never experience such heartache until I joined CSNO. Ignorant to what was happening there I thought the city was nearly close to recovery. And, to explain the feeling of disappointment, sadness and anguish that came over me when I saw what Katrina had done is unfeasible. To explain how I felt to drive through neighborhoods and see endless rows of damaged homes is not viable. And, to explain what the citizens of New Orleans told me about what they went through – it was completely distressing.

But I also experienced other feelings. I worked with children who were so energetic and lively. I saw them get excited over things that I would take for granted, like ice in our drinks on a day exceeding 110 degrees. I also experienced Southern hospitality - Our neighbor told us to help ourselves to anything in his house, he left his door wide-open and I was happily greeted by everyone I encountered walking down the street. And, after all the New Orleanians went through, it was amazing to see so much hope, that life would get better soon. Their hope gave me assurance that, although not much has been done in two years, the city can still be restored to its magnificence.

And, that assurance made me work harder throughout the week we were there. Whether we were gutting a house, working with children or cleaning out the cages of the rescued animals, I knew that what my group and I were doing was something spectacular – that we were part of their reason to hope. I can't say that my week there actually made a difference; after all, I can't read the minds of the Katrina victims. But, I can say with certainty that I plan on returning to the city every chance possible until I do.

- Hoa Quach
2007-2008 Nawleanteer

* Hoa recently wrote a personal story about her trip to New Orleans, which was published in a local newspaper. For a copy of the story, please email studentsvolunteer@gmail.com

The Summer 2007 Nawleanteer trip was my second time to New Orleans in 4 months. The first time I volunteered for a week, and for this trip I went early before the large group to make it a 4-week trip for me. I had previously been exposed to the devastation, distress, disorganization and despair in my first trip to New Orleans. However, on my second trip I really saw what makes New Orleans so magnificent, magnetic and magical. I saw why even though Katrina was an immense hurricane and the likelihood of another

one to hit is a constant, the people refuse to leave. The people of New Orleans are deeply passionate about their city, their food and their music, amongst other things. I felt this love and passion for New Orleans when I was living there for 4 weeks preparing for our group to join us in New Orleans. At the same time that I was absorbing the New Orleans culture, I was also exposed to the bureaucratic chaos. My experience is a metaphor for the lack of good leadership in New Orleans.

In mid-July I originally intended to volunteer for the three weeks prior to the Nawleanteer 2007 Summer Trip in early August. Yet, upon my arrival there was complete disorganization and the picture that had been painted to me of a bustling fully functioning non-profit organization (fortunately, this organization no longer exists) was just an illusion. So, I was in a position where I needed to organize a one-week trip for 12 Nawleanteers. We persevered and had an incredible week volunteering.

The cliché phrase of “out of sight, out of mind” continues to reappear when I think about New Orleans. I hope that as more time elapses from when Katrina hit New Orleans that more people don’t forget about the tremendous need for help. The need for help is immense and it takes a unified effort on all levels. Words can not express the lessons of my time in New Orleans. Inadvertently, New Orleans has changed my life and inspired me to be a part of the rebuilding process in my fullest capacity. I am convinced that New Orleans is one of the most important cities in the world and it is important to restore it.

- Adam Kronenberg
2007-2008 Nawleanteer

I was seriously unprepared for the emotional distress I was about to embark upon when I went to New Orleans. I had been planning on going on this trip for a few months prior to departure, and I had been reading up on the state of rebuilding and other efforts that were underway to get the city back on its feet. I had learned about the 9th ward, the superdome, and the amount of damage that the city had received. Although this all affected me, upset me, and got me talking to others, nothing affected me as much as actually SEEING the devastation first hand. Driving around Lakefront and the Lower Ninth Ward, even driving through Uptown...I was able to feel, empathize, visualize what it might have been like for these people who were dealt such a severe hardship. After putting myself in their shoes, I felt that there was nothing I could do besides give my all when I was working. House gutting was amazing. Just knowing that I was helping a family save thousands of dollars of rebuilding was awesome. Another project we had was walking dogs at the animal shelter. Now, I was used to shelters that would euthenize their animals after a certain amount of time, however, this particular shelter did not. I was astounded by the amount of work that the owners of the shop put in each and every day to keep these animals alive and safe. I was so fortunate to partake in all the projects in New Orleans. I really felt like I made a difference in someone’s life, although I didn’t meet that person. Not only that, but by helping a few, we were really helping whole communities. Nobody wants to go back to a ghost town, there needs to be a group effort. I love New Orleans as a city, and I love

the people that live there. Never have I felt such strength resonating throughout a city...it was very emotional, very reassuring, and very uplifting. I can't wait until our next trip!

- Sharyn Greenberg
2007 Nawleanteer

The first thing that hit me was the heat, but that was expected. That's where my expectations stopped. When I signed up to do the volunteer trip to New Orleans I really didn't know what I was getting myself into. I'd never been to New Orleans before and everything I read and was told, told me that I needed to go see it. A week of volunteering sounded like a great option.

The first few days we spent getting acquainted with the city, the area we were staying in, and each other. While the group had held a couple of socials before the trip everybody was still kind of feeling each other out, plus there were some new people that none of us had really met before. I had my reservations going into the trip about if everybody would actually work, if everybody would get along, and I hoped that my week in New Orleans didn't turn into an episode of the 'Real World'. It didn't take long to realize that the group of people on this trip was better than I could have asked for. They worked hard, they didn't complain, and they stayed positive and upbeat even after eight hours of tough work. They were flat out a great group of people and I'm better off for knowing and working with all of them.

New Orleans as a city really is someplace that everybody should see. It's an amazing place. From the mansions of the Garden District to the French Quarter, to the nearly deserted and eerie Lower Ninth Ward, the people and the food, the sites, sounds, smells, the entire city is an absolute experience. From the Maple Leaf Bar to Café Du Monde, to the dilapidated abandoned houses still in need of so much work, the city is amazing. On top of all this we got to help people. From house gutting and mucking, hard work but worth every second, to landscaping, rebuilding, painting, and working in an animal shelter, there was no shortage of work that needed to be done.

It's rare that you get to have an experience like this. The combination of seeing an amazing city, helping people, and helping a city rebuild was an awesome experience. The people of the city know why you're there and they're extremely thankful for it. These trips make a difference, plain and simple. About a month before I left a family came into my work from New Orleans. When I mentioned I was going there to volunteer and asked for some advice as for what to see and do they were more than happy to give me all kind of great ideas. As they left my work their young son came up to the counter, looked up at me with a big smile and said, "Thank you for helping New Orleans!" I didn't realize it at the time but that set the tone for the whole trip, a trip that I'll certainly never forget and urge anybody that has the opportunity to do also.

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- Jon-Michael La Pierre
2007 Nawleanteer

Summer 2008 Plans

Presently, College Students for New Orleans is planning a one-week trip in June for 20 Nawleanteers to be a part of the next chapter in its history. During the week-long trip, the Nawleanteers will work with various organizations in New Orleans, including Habitat for Humanity, St. Bernard Project, North Rampart Community Center (formerly St. Marx Community Center), Animal Rescue New Orleans and Harvest Food Bank. The Nawleanteers will gut and rebuild houses and other buildings, work with rescued animals and tutor underprivileged students, amongst other things. The Nawleanteers will take a charter bus to and from New Orleans and will stay at Camp Hope, operated by Habitat for Humanity. A following is a budget of the cost of the trip:

Rental Vans: \$1,500

Gas: \$800

Housing, Food and Water: \$6,000

Protective Gear: \$2,000

Sponsorship Information

Any donations will go directly to College Students for New Orleans and are tax-deductible. Donations will allow students who don't necessarily have the funds but wish to volunteer, to do so. If the club receives more funds than are needed for the Summer trip, it will be divided amongst other non-profit organizations in New Orleans and/or will be held for the Winter 2008 trip.

All sponsors and their company logos (if applicable) will be listed on our website with a link to the sponsor's website. Sponsors may also have the opportunity to have their banners or materials displayed at our upcoming fundraising events, depending on the venue.

We also encourage all sponsors and their families and friends to visit New Orleans and volunteer, as well.

For more information or to become a sponsor, email studentsvolunteer@gmail.com or visit <http://studentsvolunteer.googlepages.com>