



crossbeams

A publication of the Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance, Inc.

Issue #62 October 2005

www.gladalliance.org

GLAD Council Responds to Hurricane Disaster

[EDITOR'S NOTE: At press time, Hurricane Rita was slamming the Gulf Coast, only weeks after Katrina. Here's the latest on the response to Katrina, with more news to come on Rita in future editions.]

NEW ORLEANS - As Hurricane Katrina survivors huddled for days without food and water in New Orleans, the GLAD Council made an emergency grant to Week of Compassion of \$1,000 and worked to raise awareness of the special needs emerging in the lgbtq community displaced by the storm.

GLAD Council members contacted leaders of Week of Compassion and the Disciples Refugee and Immigration Office after reports emerged of discrimination against lgbtq evacuees. The calls served not only to remind these leaders of the additional burden faced by this group, but also to offer sanctuary for those displaced by the disaster.

Disciples O & A congregations are being encouraged to offer shelter to displaced individuals and families, via the Refugee and Immigration Office. To find out how to offer shelter visit www.discipleshomemissions.org/RIM/.

"We're not a relief agency," said Rev. Patricia Case, GLAD Moderator, "but we do have a responsibility to make sure Disciples relief efforts account for additional challenges faced by the lgbtq community in a case like this. Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, where most of the refugees sought shelter, are not exactly known for their openness to sexual diversity."

Meanwhile, in Houston, Rev. Todd Williams and New Covenant Christian Church, an O&A new church start in the metropolitan area, reached out immediately, sheltering a gay couple that was turned away from a Red Cross family shelter because they weren't considered "family."

Case was scheduled to arrive in Houston in late September where she has been called by Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston as an unpaid volunteer to help with disaster relief. Case will spend three months in the area, under the auspices of the Church Federation of Indianapolis. She is responsible for her own food, lodging, transportation

Rita Nakashima Brock Scheduled to Speak at '06 Joint Event

Rita Nakashima Brock has graced the podium at the Disciples General Assembly, has brought her words to the GLAD Alliance at the GLAD General Assembly Banquet, and is now scheduled to speak at the joint event of GLAD, the UCC Coalition, and the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists.

The theme of the event, to be held June 26-29, 2006, will be "Tapestry: To Live, To Laugh, To Love, To Lead." Each participating group will bring a speaker to address one portion of the theme.

The planning committee has not yet finalized the budget but costs for the four day event are expected to be \$99 for the event, \$75 for housing, and \$60 for meals.

Save the dates and plan on joining us in Indianapolis.

Ways You Can Support LGBTQ Hurricane Relief

New Covenant Christian Church, Houston TX
www.forministry.com/ustxccdocnccn

The Metropolitan Community Church Katrina Relief Center
www.mccchurch.org/katrina/index.html

Rainbow World Fund
www.rainbowfund.org

The Houston GLBT Community Center
www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org

Under One Roof supporting HIV organizations impacted by Hurricane Katrina
www.underoneroof.org/

Rainbow Relief assisting LGBTQ families affected by the hurricane
www.rainbowrelief.org

Open & Affirming Congregations Challenged to Unite, Empower, and Create

Exciting, Bold, and Hopeful: that's how O&A team leaders Christy Newton and Rachel Frey describe the plans for Breathing Life, the Open & Affirming training event scheduled for Las Vegas February 9-11, 2006. The theme of this event is Empowering Faith Communities to Breathe Life into Dry Bones: Uniting, Empowering, Creating.

The O&A team leaders explain that the event is designed to support those congregations in the Christian Church that have intentionally chosen to stand up against injustice and to join with the voices of Disciples congregations nationwide who have named their church's mission as Open & Affirming of all God's children.

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creating and empowering inclusive ministry are also welcome.

Registration for the 3 day event is \$50, including food. Discount housing has been reserved at Texas Station Gambling Hall & Hotel.

For more information see www.gladalliance.org or e-mail breathinglife@gladalliance.org.

On-line registration is available until January 1, 2006 at www.gladalliance.org.

However, the team leaders point out that congregations are often pulled by competing priorities and surrounded by distractions, and thus living into that mission can be hard. At times, congregations feel isolated, alone, and unequipped to offer this inclusive welcome in an exclusive world.

To meet the unique needs of Disciples Open & Affirming congregations who are trying to live into their mission, this event will unite, empower, and create transformative relationships among Disciples Open & Affirming congregations.

The Open & Affirming Team is challenging each Open & Affirming Congregation to send at least two members to this event. Members of other congregations who want to learn more about

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