



# DISASTER RECOVERY CORNER

**St. Croix in Focus**

**Ralph Hassel, Chairman of the Board of Directors for SVDP  
Disaster Services, Shares His Story**

***Vincentians Active in Disaster Recovery***

**April 5, 2018**

# SPIRITUALITY, FRIENDSHIP, SERVICE



As Vincentians we are all aware of the meaning of the essential elements of the Society. However, for myself and Ann they took on a whole new meaning as part of a team ministering to those in need in St. Croix, VI.

As to Spirituality: Our relationship with Christ grew opportunity of really seeing Christ in those we were serving. Even as victims of Hurricane Maria, they exhibited their faith and trust in Christ by waiting patiently in line in the sun for hours to be seen, sharing their sorrow with strangers, and had the humor to say "Hey Mon" when we got something wrong.

**Shown Left: Vincentians gather the first evening in St. Croix for dinner and fellowship before serving the St. Croix community impacted from the hurricanes.**

# SPIRITUALITY, FRIENDSHIP, SERVICE

We found that our sense of Christ's presence in the Eucharist grew stronger each day at daily Mass as the week went on. We experienced a noticeable change in our prayer life. We found ourselves filling idle moments praying for those we had just visited with.

As to Friendship: We formed friendships with all the members of the team as we shared our experiences of the day with one another and did the labor of getting ready for the next day or cleaning up the kitchen and dining area after supper. We also formed bonds with those we served. After the first day, as we walked around the area we were greeted as friends not as strangers, with a smile, a wave and a hello. We were made to feel at home.

As to Service: Possibly the greatest service we rendered was listening quietly to their stories as they relived them. These ranged from death of a spouse, total loss of their home, to loss of all their belongings including food, water and medicine and their inability to get any help for long periods of time. In addition to helping them understand the long-term recovery process, start them on the path of long-term recovery, we were able to provide them with some non-perishable food, and a \$25.00 gift card. Frequently, they reacted as if this \$25.00 was a \$1,000. Hope as a way of doing that.



**Shown Above: Vincentians gather from state-side and the island of St. Thomas to assist those impacted from disaster on the Island of St. Croix. Alma Wells, Conference president of St. Thomas shown at the head of the table.**

# SPIRITUALITY, FRIENDSHIP, SERVICE



Last Day: On our last day Ann and I and another couple accompanied the Parochial Vicar of Holy Cross Catholic Church to set up a mini-PRAC, in an unincorporated area with the poorest of the poor that suffered a large amount of damage from the hurricane. As it turned out the Parochial Vicar had been ministering to this community for several years prior to the storm by visiting each week with food, love, listening, assistance, and prayer. What we experienced was the genuine love of the people for the priest and the love of the priest for them. The example the Parochial Vicar provided ignited a new Vincentian flame in our hearts for the poor and showed us the true meaning of the phrase "Love the Poor." Without a doubt, this week was one of the most humbling and meaningful experience in our lives.

*- Ralph and Ann Hassel of Fort Worth, Texas*

**Shown Left: Vincentian, Tijal, of St. Thomas making preparations for the P-RAC in St. Croix.**

# OPERATION ST. CROIX

I always thought of St. Croix as a vacation destination, that was not what we saw. Most of the people we interviewed were below the poverty level, some made less in a year from Social Security than many of us receive in benefits for a month. Many were in need of dental care. At first I didn't understand why so many were concerned about the gutters that were ripped off of their homes. The reason is that the gutters collected the rain water that would be deposited in their cisterns, no gutters meant no water. And, many of the people had damaged cisterns. Most had to buy water for drinking, cooking, brushing their teeth, etc.

We collected information for unmet needs that would be determined at a later date. We listened to their stories and assisted where we could. We made calls to FEMA for some who were unsure of their choices. One lady thought that because she wasn't on the island when the hurricane struck that she wouldn't be able to file a claim. We explained the importance of applying for a SBA (Small Business Association) loan after they were rejected by FEMA. The reason is, if they don't apply for the SBA loan they cannot appeal the FEMA rejection.

All in all, the deployment was an exhausting, wonderful experience. The people we saw were grateful for what little we gave them and welcomed a chance to tell their story. The Disaster Services volunteer team, came from all over the continental U.S., Puerto Rico and St. Thomas, was a wonderful blend of personalities that made this a special group creating lasting friendships. - ***Diane Clarke, Vincentian of Florida***



**Shown Above: Vincentians prepare and set up the P-RAC in St. Croix to receive community members impacted from the hurricanes. Collectively, both P-RACs processed over 1,000 in-take clients.**

# OPERATION ST. CROIX



# OPERATION ST. CROIX



# TRAINING DURING BLUE SKIES

*During quiet weather times, blue skies, it is a great opportunity to catch up on disaster recovery training. Please consider moving forward with training resources independently and joining us for other educational opportunities at the National Assembly or at your Regional SVDP Meeting where we may be able add on an additional training day to cover your role in disaster recovery as Vincentians. The more prepared you are in advance, the better you will be equipped to help your fellow community members.*

**You can find training resources available through FEMA online at: <https://training.fema.gov/is/>. There are over 250 online classes you can take, but here are a few we recommend to get started...**

-IS 100

-IS 200

-IS402

-IS700

-IS800

American Red Cross also provides online training and recommends additional training resources online found here: <https://www.disasterready.org>. You can access the Red Cross System and information for that is provided below. You do not need to be a volunteer to take classes. Volunteer Access to EMBARC: <https://embarc-learning.sabacloud.com>

EMBARC is the Education Management Base for the American Red Cross. It is the new Learning Management System (LMS) for Humanitarian Services and Corporate course management (e.g., Disaster Cycle Services, Service to the Armed Forces, International Services, and NHQ). EMBARC is a newer technology platform, Saba Cloud, and an upgrade from the previous Saba Enterprise LMS. While the goal of the American Red Cross is a single enterprise LMS solution for the entire organization (expected in late 2016), IT contracts for the current Saba Enterprise LMS end this year and are costly to extend. To provide significant cost savings and bridge the gap between now and when the enterprise LMS will be available, the Red Cross needs to temporarily shift the LMS for Humanitarian Services and Corporate and separate it from the LMS for Preparedness, Health and Safety Services (PHSS). EMBARC provides functionality for managing and executing training and learning programs for all of the American Red Cross. The LMS manages and tracks all training, students, instructors and certification data for Disaster Cycle Services, Service to the Armed Forces, International Services, NHQ, and volunteers. It serves as a central platform for both Web-based training and blended learning for internal and external learners. Please direct EMBARC questions to [embarc@redcross.org](mailto:embarc@redcross.org).

# PREPARING YOUR CONFERENCES

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We sent out a blog about contingency planning for businesses a few months prior. This is a great resource for Councils and Conferences to prepare for disaster during blue skies:

-<https://www.svdpcdisaster.org/blog/your-business-resilient-five-things-you-need-know-about-preparedness-and-planning> and take the quiz.

<http://www.feapc.com/business-resilience-readiness-survey/>

## **FEMA Resources and Guides for Businesses...**

-[https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1389019980859-b64364cba1442b96dc4f4ad675f552e4/Business\\_ContinuityPlan\\_2014.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1389019980859-b64364cba1442b96dc4f4ad675f552e4/Business_ContinuityPlan_2014.pdf)

-<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/357>

-<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/89506>

-<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/344>

## **Ready.Gov Resources and Guides for Businesses:**

-<https://www.ready.gov/business>

F O R M O R E



**Please consider supporting our mission by donating your time, providing financial support, and/or becoming active in your local community on disaster preparedness and recovery as a Vincentian.**

Please stop by our newly updated website: [www.svdpcdisaster.org](http://www.svdpcdisaster.org)

An online store and training resources will soon be available exclusively for Vincentians active in disaster recovery.

**Follow us on Twitter:** @svdpcusadisaster

**Follow us on Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/DisasterServicesCorp/](http://www.facebook.com/DisasterServicesCorp/)

**Follow us on LinkedIn:** Disaster Services Corporation, SVDP-USA

Brooke Newton, Deputy Director: [bnewton@svdpcdisaster.org](mailto:bnewton@svdpcdisaster.org)

For those of you interested in volunteering, please stop by our website at [www.svdpcdisaster.org](http://www.svdpcdisaster.org) and click on the volunteer button at the top right corner. It will take you to a webform to complete. This information will help us gain better insight on you and be able to better pair you with what we have open and available to volunteer with. We will set up a one on one phone call shortly after the form has been completed.

As a reminder, we cannot continue all these great works without your help. Please consider donating to the general disaster fund at [www.svdpcdisaster.org](http://www.svdpcdisaster.org) to keep our programs running so that we can in turn support those who have been impacted by disaster here in the United States.

