

# December Newsletter

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## Looking into the Future GFSC in 2006

by Marieann Shovlin



As the newest GFSC Board member, I was asked to write about what we want to accomplish in 2006. The Board has started its strategic planning process and determined two major areas of focus:

### 1) Strategic Thinking And Planning

We want to clarify our vision and voice so they accurately communicate who we are and what we are about. Once that clarification is in place, GFSC can move more confidently into partnerships and fund-raising activities. We are in the process of developing our Strategic Plan, scheduled for our face-to-face Board meeting in February.

### 2) Direct Community Service Activities

We are setting up our workshop calendar starting off with a 2-day Disaster & Crisis Intervention (DCI) Facilitation training in Phoenix AZ on January 10-11. We are grateful to the Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA) for donating space and time after their ToP Trainers meeting. Our key goal with these workshops is to develop a core group of DCI workshop trainers who will go back to their communities and train others to be ready

when disaster strikes. Facilitators can register for this event at <http://www.globalfacilitators.org>.

Complimentary to the workshops, is the expansion of the Mentored Pathways™ program, providing virtual training, support, materials and coaching to facilitators volunteering in the field. This activity supports the field volunteers and encourages networking to expand this base, allowing GFSC to be "anywhere in the world at any time."

Concentrating on these two areas will give GFSC stronger capability to fulfill our mission: "Through the development and support of local volunteer facilitators worldwide, Global Facilitator Service Corps helps build the capacity of communities to work through their challenges and create sustainable solutions."

It is exciting, challenging and humbling to be a part of the GFSC leadership; exciting because we provide such a valuable service – globally; challenging because providing this service is not easy, particularly when the crisis is in your own community; humbling, because we are all potential victims of disaster and never know what, how or when that crisis will happen – only that it will.

We will continue to post our progress, opportunities for volunteers, and educational materials on our website and in our newsletter. We hope you will keep reading and participating.

## DCI Workshops 2006

We like to be prepared and we would like you to be prepared, too! We are in the process of scheduling Disaster and Crisis Intervention Facilitation workshops for 2006. These workshops are designed for experienced facilitators and/or those who use facilitation skills regularly in their work. If your agency or organization would like to sponsor, organize or participate in a GFSC DCI workshop, please contact Marieann Shovlin, [sec@globalfacilitators.org](mailto:sec@globalfacilitators.org).

**President's Message**

**Gilbert Brenson-Lazan**

## **Who's There When Everyone Goes Home?**



This year has been the worst in recent history for natural disasters around the world. We have all been moved by the stories and the visual records that bombard us daily and many are also moved to action. The immediate response of concerned citizens and organizations has been

amazing in both speed and effectiveness. And yet, who is there after everyone goes home?

As the aid and emergency workers go home, what and who are left? At this moment, as you are reading these words, we know that:

- The suicide hotline usage in New Orleans has tripled in the last weeks.
- In Cozumel and Cancún, Hurricanes Emily and Wilma wiped out 65% of the tourism business, their only business, as the snowbirds are looking elsewhere for their winter retreat.
- The snows have begun in Pakistan while a million people are still without roofs over their heads after the earthquake.
- In Guatemala, Hurricane Stan killed 700 and left thousands without their homes or their crops.
- Many US communities affected by the latest rash of hurricanes are struggling to regain their community identity and to participate in the process of reconstruction, with little facilitation help available.
- In Houston, TX, only forty counselors have been added to the City-State payroll to serve the 150,000 evacuees that are housed there.
- The upcoming holiday season is now triggering severe attacks of reactive depression in thousands of victims of these tragedies.

So, who is there when everyone goes home? The answer lies in building and supporting local capacity to continue with the psychosocial and community recuperation process, the essence of the GFSC philosophy.

## **GFSC has been busy this year**

In February, we had our first Virtual Mentor workshop and have logged in several hundred hours of virtual mentoring with local professionals around the world. Thousands of copies of our manuals, workbooks and support materials have been distributed or downloaded from our website and at our Disaster & Crisis Intervention facilitator training programs in Venezuela, Colombia and in the Dominican Republic.

We are grateful to Kiosk and Hot Conference for hosting our website and donating Virtual Conference Rooms with audio, video and document presentation capabilities for our volunteers, Local Network Coordinators and Mentored Pathways participants. We now conduct most of our monthly Board meetings using this technology.

GFSC volunteers, Bego and Larry Meeker of Dallas, TX together with the Grace Church Project of Dallas have been training trainers throughout Texas.

In October, GFSC conducted facilitator training at the IAF European Regional Conference in Germany.

New local volunteer networks have been established in Manizales, Pereira and Bogotá, Colombia. Plans are underway for similar networks in several other countries.

Mentored Pathways™ now has 40 facilitators and there are more than 200 GFSC volunteers on both our English and Spanish-speaking databases

In addition to supporting our volunteers we are working with the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) on their community outreach project in the Baltimore area, the site of the 2006 annual IAF conference.

Our work is expanding for 2006. We are continuing our conversations with Heifer International and America Speaks, exploring specific ways GFSC can work with each to build community capacity and develop local resources for participatory decision-making,

All of these efforts are directed toward building the capacity of communities to work through their challenges and create sustainable solutions. By sharing our knowledge, experience, and caring, we enable communities and the institutions that serve them, to identify and achieve their goals.

Who is there after everyone goes home? The residents, organizations, agencies and professionals of the local community remain. They hold the keys to the efforts to rebuild and sustain their communities. With your help, GFSC can continue to support them in their quest to build and strengthen their self-reliance.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all of you for your support this year. As I leave the Presidency of GFSC in the capable hands of Lenny Diamond, I will continue to actively support and work with the Mentored Pathways program for GFSC Field Volunteers.

May you all enjoy a blessed and happy holiday season.

*Gil*

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### **GFSC Officers and Board for 2006**

Lenny Diamond, President

Tim Karpoff, Vice President

Secretary, Marieann Shovlin

Treasurer, BJ Diamond

Gil Brenson Lazan, Mentored Pathways Program Coordinator

Karen Brill, Member at Large

*When the power of love  
overcomes the love of power  
the world will know peace.*

*Jimi Hendrix*

### **Two GFSC Supporters**

Steve Davis of **FacilitatorU** and **MasterFacilitatorJournal** is donating a membership in Facilitator U to all Mentored Pathways participants. There you will have access to a complete virtual library of facilitation information to complement your knowledge of tools and techniques. Facilitator U is a welcome resource supporting the MP Mentoring Process. If you would like to become a GFSC volunteer and participate in the Mentored Pathways program, visit the GFSC website.

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In addition to hosting our website, **Kiosk - HotConference**, is graciously donating 25% of all their sales that result from GFSC website visitors and contacts, to GFSC. For more information, please go to:

[hotconference.com/GFSC/partners1.php](http://hotconference.com/GFSC/partners1.php) If you would like to arrange to use this conference "space" for volunteer facilitator work, planning, support, sharing concerns and exploring options for specific projects, please contact [mp@globalfacilitators.org](mailto:mp@globalfacilitators.org) to reserve this space.

### **Add GFSC to your holiday giving this year**

In 2006 we are expanding the delivery of Disaster & Crisis Intervention Facilitation workshops for communities that have already experienced disaster as well as those that want to be prepared for future disasters. We are reaching out to individual facilitators, agencies and NGO's whose staff and volunteers work with affected people to rebuild communities and their social, supportive infrastructure.

**Your donations help** offset volunteers' expenses and workshop costs as well as the distribution of materials.

We appreciate all contributions. You can safely donate online at:

<http://globalfacilitators.org/donation.html>.

Or you can mail a check to **GFSC**, c/o BJ Diamond, Treasurer, 11 Sequin Road, West Hartford, CT 06117 USA.