

September Newsletter

What's Inside

GFSC and Katrina:

Many efforts reaching out to assist facilitators and other professional in affected areas...

GFSC at the European IAF conference:

October 9-11, 2005. Gil and Tim will be leading a workshop and discussing GFSC.

GFSC and Disaster Intervention Facilitation

The GSFC is all about people, people at the core of the social fabric in communities, helping people reach toward a better and brighter future.

Many organizations work hard to serve the needs of communities in the world. Red Cross and United Way are but two of many prominent examples. Money, medicine, food, construction, and much more are poured into locations to assist them.

The GFSC fills another critical role of service, applying professional support and training to the social fabric of communities in need. We believe that a heightened level of formal cooperation between individuals and institutions is the critical step towards: bringing relief to poor, vulnerable, or underprivileged people; increasing capacity of government and public service organizations; transforming community and neighborhood tension and decline; protecting human rights; and breaking out of stifling disputes and stalemates across geographic, class, race, ideological, or other boundaries.

Often the settings that need cooperation the most rarely have the resources or leadership. GFSC provides resources and facilitators to such settings. We serve as a neutral party and share our professional expertise in facilitating public discourse and civic engagement. Facilitators demonstrate the value, high standards, and practice of their profession by volunteering their assistance and expertise in public service projects.

We address the human healing that may be necessary, while facilitating the setting of direction and taking actions toward a brighter future.

For the complete text and photographs of this article, please visit the GFSC web site <http://globalfacilitators.org> and click on Fact Sheet.

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President's Message

The question I have been asked hundreds of times in the last few days from people around the world is "How can I help". Here are some immediate actions to consider:

- First and foremost, take care of yourself and your family. Please make sure that you have given an adequate context and explanation to your children that are watching these horrendous scenes on television. My daughter-in-law is an occupational therapist with children in the Houston area and told me yesterday that many, many children are being affected psychologically by the press coverage.
- Many NPOs need volunteers for a host of different tasks. Anyone who is reading this has many skills that are urgently needed. Check out Volunteers of America <http://www.voa.org/> or the CNN Help Center <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2005/katrina/help.center/>.
- Offer temporary housing to a person or family. Take a look at: <http://www.hurricanehousing.org/>
- Donate canned food, materials and especially blood (urgently needed in New Orleans) to your local Red Cross Chapter.
- Give a donation to a reputable aid organization. The Salvation Army, AmeriCares and World Vision have excellent records for use of funds.

The situation on the Gulf Coast is, in most part, still in the critical and survival stage. In the next days and weeks, however, the emergent psychosocial needs of the survivors will begin to appear and the challenge to help them is enormous. Although FEMA and many other organizations will have Grief Management and Critical Incident Debriefing teams working in the area, they will not come close to meeting all the needs.

Traditionally, facilitation has not been considered as a tool in disaster intervention. Nonetheless, several facilitation processes for use in grief management workshops and for social reorganization after a disaster have been developed and successfully used in many countries. Publications supporting these processes have been translated into several other languages.

GFSC is coordinating several efforts to use its Field Volunteers to train, prepare and mentor other professionals and caregivers in Disaster Intervention Facilitation (DIF).

- Local area GFSC volunteers in different parts of the USA are spearheading the efforts with local groups and organizations to offer this training.
- GFSC has many (new) materials on the GFSC website <http://globalfacilitators.org> on Grief Management, Critical Incident Management and Caring for the Caregiver.
- GFSC has a dozen GFSC Virtual Mentors that are available 24/7 to support local professionals using its new Hot Conference audio-video virtual conferencing platform that is accessible to anyone with an internet connection, even dialup.
- GFSC is in contact with other facilitator organizations such as the IAF and ICA to offer support to their groups as needed.
- If you are a professional facilitator, you can enter the GFSC Mentored Pathways Field Volunteer program to prepare yourself for future volunteer opportunities. For more information, go to: <http://globalfacilitators.org/VolunFormEnEs.htm>.

- If a local group of facilitators or other professionals working with victims need some F2F training in workshops on Grief Management, Critical Incident Debriefing or Caring for the Caregivers, we have volunteers that are willing to offer those workshops.

For more information or for any requests for services, please contact me at: GFSC-Chair@amauta.org. We will continue to keep you posted and thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Gil

We really need money to help pay some of the expenses of our volunteers. We would appreciate your help. You can safely donate online at: <http://globalfacilitators.org/donation.html>.

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

We are extremely grateful to our most recent contributors: Deb Starzynski, Jorie Wu, Sybil Stershic, Vida Ogorolec and Nancy Van Pelt. Many, many thanks for your support.

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Volunteer Highlights

Here are some recent updates:

- The little town of **Grapevine, TX** already has 600+ people who have been evacuated from New Orleans. All the churches are working together to support the people who have fled to here. A Christian Outreach group in Grapevine called **GRACE** is working on the housing and physical needs issues for the community.
- A **Hilton** hotel in Grapevine is housing the 600 people until more permanent housing can be located.
- This is going on all over Texas. **Houston**, in particular, is a focal point due to its close location to Louisiana. People are being transported to Houston, and then move to communities across Texas.

- Many other faith-based organizations are mobilizing their resources and organizing to support the evacuees in wonderful ways.

- Focus is still on getting people out of New Orleans. The same is true from the gulf areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, etc. Much of the evacuation is toward Texas, including Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, and other places.

- Recovery of the dead and missing will require extensive effort and time, given the massive amounts of water, decay, debris and toxic waste.

- It will be months before anyone will be able to return to New Orleans and many of the other affected locations. They are still struggling to find the engineering solutions to get the water out.

- Many of the people say they will choose not to return.

With this background, much of the disaster and crisis intervention work will probably need to take place in communities in Texas in addition to the Gulf areas of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. It is still very early, but here is a quick look at the preliminary efforts that are already beginning:

- **GFSC** is working with the Executive Directors of both the **IAF** (International Association of Facilitators) and the **ICA** (Institute of Cultural Affairs) in order to coordinate efforts.

- **Bego and Larry Meeker** and other local facilitators are coordinating efforts in Texas. They are prepared to meet in the local cities and communities to gauge need and possibilities. They were in Austin this Tuesday to evaluate these and explore other related issues with Christian leaders and local facilitators there. The local networks will be key links in the communication chain.

- **GFSC** is exploring the possibility of working with **GRACE** as a sponsor and partner to prepare facilitators. Also, they may be able to network us with other NGO's in this part of north Texas

- Facilitators in local networks, such as **SFN**, are already inquiring about what they can do. GFSC field volunteers will be connecting with all of them

through these local professional networks as we gain clarity on specific steps and plans.

- **Pete Sorenson** is a trained DCI (Disaster and Crisis Intervention) facilitator and is interested in helping prepare more facilitators. He and his wife just returned from Thailand where they were assisting in a rebuilding mission following the tsunami disaster.

- **Lynda Baker** found a home for our colleague facilitators from New Orleans, Erness Wright Irvin and her family. Lynda is connecting with local resources in Austin, TX as it has also become a outpost for hurricane refugees.

- **Dr. Karyn Trader-Leigh** and other volunteers just completed a relief drive this weekend, sending 250 boxes to a church in Gulfport. She has a request for assistance from a young man in Baton Rouge and emailed him the disaster materials listed at the GFSC site. Karyn is also promoting GFSC programs with black ministers, deacons and lay leaders in the poor communities of the disaster zone.

- **Dr. Julianna D. Padgett** of Southern University at New Orleans School of Social Work, and temporarily based in Lafayette, LA, sent GFSC's message on to a small listserve of facilitators in the Orleans/ Baton Rouge area as well as the faculty. She has received some responses already.

- **Jim Campbell** of IAF Europe is retransmitting all the GFSC messages to the European networks.

- Through a number of blogs and websites, **Nancy White** and **Sybil Stershic** are spreading the message about GFSC materials and support.

- Many thanks to **Jori Wu** and **Theresa Ratnam** for their letters of support

- **Michael Kane**, a bilingual (Spanish-English) facilitator and a professor at Tulane University and, now, a refugee, (he, his wife and their cat got out OK), is talking to several Tulane University folks regarding GFSC's help when the immediate survival crisis is over. He is also interested in helping Larry, Bego and their group with the work they will be doing with N.O. refugees in Texas.

A note from Mike:

“...it seems like the first responders are really, really overstressed. That is one of those hidden needs that cannot be overlooked. They are just exhausted but probably the most resistant to talking it out...

If anyone across the country wants to keep up with the local angle stuff, there is a clear channel 50,000 watt radio station WWL which broadcasts across the country every night. Usually folks can pick it up at 870 AM. It consists a lot of a local spin on the TV stuff and people call up from all parts of the metro area, Mississippi, Alabama, etc. so you can get a fix on what is happening now and how folks are reacting.

What also strikes me is the absolute diaspora conditions existing now. New Orleanians are all over the country. People need to move out of those centers quickly. So the local chapters of IAF in San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, Detroit, Memphis, can really be of great assistance with small-scale local efforts in conjunction with what will soon become an overstressed local professional community.

...It is vital for people to tell their stories, to act them out, to do a play, to laugh and cry together. To do that, they need listeners. That process is already happening with television interviews.”

Virtual Mentoring

For those of you with functioning internet connections, our Virtual Mentoring services on our Hot Conference platform may well be helpful as a virtual gathering place to regroup, share concerns and explore options. Visit the [GFSC website](#) for more information

A bit of other news...

GFSC at IAF Regional Conference, Germany 9-11 October 2005

In October, GFSC will be attending the 2005 IAF European Conference in Germany. Gil and Tim will facilitate a workshop for conference attendees as well as be available for sharing more information about GFSC.

And Thank You to...

Steve Davis of **Facilitator U** and **Master Facilitator Journal** fame Steve is donating a membership in Facilitator U to all the Mentored Pathways™ participants. There you will have access to a complete virtual library of facilitation information to complement your knowledge of tools and techniques and is a welcome resource supporting the MP Mentoring Process.

Editor's Note: Thank all of you for your interest, your energy and your efforts. Let us continue to work so that by this time next month, we can report on more progress in healing, finding homes and successful interventions.