

November, 2006

Dear Residents of Lafitte:

In our last letter to Lafitte Residents, sent in September 2006, we were just getting started on a long term initiative to build 1500 homes and apartments in the communities of Treme/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier. Just to confirm what you may already know, the Homebuilding Plan will:

- provide all former residents of Lafitte with the opportunity to come back, either to new apartments and homes on the Lafitte site or to apartments or homes in the surrounding communities of Treme and Tulane/Gravier; and it will
- include 900 subsidized, affordable homes and apartments, the same number as in Lafitte before the storm – there will be no reduction in subsidized housing units.

A lot of work has been done both by residents and the Homebuilding team over the last two months, and the enclosed newsletter shares some of that work with you. In particular we've heard from many Lafitte residents that the Homebuilding Plan cannot focus only on fixing homes – it also needs to focus on helping people. As a result, our team is working hard to begin a Community Supportive Services program to assist people with the challenges they face. We have also started developing a concept of what the Treme/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier communities could look like in the future. There is a lot of work still to be done on the Homebuilding Plan, and we're looking forward to continuing our work with residents to make sure we're creating the best plan possible. **Our next community meeting will be held on Saturday, December 2nd in Houston, with former residents of Lafitte (see details in the newsletter).**

Many people have told us that the first newsletter (sent in September 2006) was very helpful, and that it's important to continue providing Lafitte residents with updates about what's happening with Lafitte and the surrounding communities of Treme and Tulane/Gravier. We will continue to provide you with regular newsletter updates. Our goal is to help you return to New Orleans, and to family and friends.

Sincerely,

James R. Kelly
Providence Community Housing

Chickie Grayson
Enterprise

Providence Community Housing (Providence) is a Catholic housing initiative formed in response to the devastation caused by Katrina. Our members include Catholic Charities and Christopher Homes, and our neighborhood sponsors include St. Peter Claver/Ujamaa, St. Joseph's/Tulane-Canal CDC and Reconcile New Orleans.

Enterprise brings over 20 years of experience in creating decent affordable homes and rebuilding communities. Our mission is to see that all low-income people in the United States have the opportunity for fit and affordable housing, and to move up and out of poverty into the mainstream of American life.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will there be a home for me?

All 865 families that were living in Lafitte at the time of Katrina will have an opportunity to return.

My lease is about to run out, what do I do?

In a recent letter, HANO advised residents to continue to stay in the city that they are currently living in. Their letter also said: residents should NOT move out of their current unit without consulting the local housing authority that issued their voucher; and leaving a unit without following proper checkout procedures is considered abandonment and could result in termination of your assistance from HUD.

What do I do when my Voucher runs out?

You should first check to see when your Voucher expires. The DVP Voucher is good through September 30, 2007. HUD and HANO have informed us that former Lafitte residents will be provided with an option to either receive a Housing Choice Voucher or be offered a replacement public housing unit before their current Voucher expires. You should contact HANO at either (888)361-3093 (toll free) or in New Orleans at (504)361-1726 for more information on this matter.

When will Lafitte be rebuilt? Will any housing be available in the short term?

Providence/Enterprise hope to begin rebuilding Lafitte by the end of 2007. In the meantime, we hope to soon start building new homes in the Tremé area that will be available to returning residents. By next summer we hope to begin offering to seniors apartments in St. Ann's and St. Martin Manor.

What will be done to accommodate residents while they're waiting for the new homes?

Community supportive services will be available to every former resident of Lafitte. These services will be provided both in the short term and the long term, and will be designed to respond to residents' needs. We will offer case management, an apartment-locating service, employment services, child care, elderly care and more.

Will the Lafitte residents have first priority for the new homes?

Absolutely.

What You Can Do

1. Read this newsletter (and newsletter, issue 1, from September 2006).
2. Pass newsletters on to other Lafitte residents.
3. Contact us to confirm your most recent phone and address information.
4. Visit websites for copy of detailed meeting record from community workshops on October 3, 2006, and October 7, 2006 (if you don't have access to the internet, call us and we'll mail you a copy).

Will there be a mix of home ownership and rental in one building?

No, but there will be a mix of home ownership and rental on the rebuilt Lafitte site.

Are the houses going to be different for people who rent versus people who own?

A variety of housing will be built and the quality of the apartments and for-sale houses will be the same.

If somebody purchases a house, would they then be able to rent that house?

No. Our homes will be occupied by the home owners. Our plan is to create a healthy, diverse and vibrant community.

Will Lafitte residents keep the same rent? How will the rent be calculated?

The rent will be calculated on the same basis as before Katrina, which is approximately 30% of the household income. This is exactly the same way rent is calculated for all public housing residents.

What can Lafitte residents do to help with the home building process?

We need you to keep sharing your thoughts and ideas for the Homebuilding Plan. Also, let us know how you want to be involved.

How will we know what's going on?

We will send out regular newsletters to keep you informed, and to make sure you know how to stay in touch with us.

Was Providence/Enterprise part of HANO's decision to demolish Lafitte? Why aren't you opposing demolition?

Providence/Enterprise was not involved in any way in the decision to demolish Lafitte. After the decision was made by HANO, the Providence/Enterprise team was faced with a choice — either spend time fighting the decision (which in our experience could significantly delay opportunities for residents to come home), or accept the decision and focus on the rebuilding of Lafitte. We decided it was more important to take the next step and start rebuilding the community for the residents. We are also committed to ensuring that the residents of Lafitte, and the communities of Tremé and Tulane/Gravier, have a voice in the rebuilding of their neighborhoods. There are Lafitte residents who have told us that they are excited by the Homebuilding Plan, and that while they'll never forget Lafitte, they are also looking forward to something new and better.



Homebuilding Plan for Tremé/Lafitte & Tulane/Gravier

Volume 1, Issue 2 :: November 2006



Hearing From Residents

The first Homebuilding Plan newsletter went out in September 2006, and over the last two months we have been in touch with and/or heard from hundreds of people who are interested in the future of the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier communities.

People have lots of questions about the Homebuilding Plan, and strong messages for our team. **Many are telling us that rebuilding homes is important, but that rebuilding people is just as important.** As a result, this newsletter focuses on the support services that Providence and Enterprise will provide to all households that were living in Lafitte prior to Hurricane Katrina, and on the work that has been done so far on the Homebuilding Plan.

We are encouraged by the fact that so many people have helped us start the rebuilding process by answering feedback forms and participating in meetings to discuss future opportunities. This newsletter includes summaries of what we've heard to date.

This feedback has helped us create a conceptual Homebuilding Plan for the future of the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier communities. This was an important first step, since it was required as part of a funding application that was due in October 2006. These funds will help pay for the new homes and apartments.



A public workshop held in October.

The conceptual Homebuilding Plan is only the beginning. We need your help to ensure that all elements of the Homebuilding Plan, and the support services provided to Lafitte residents, best meet your needs and vision for the future.

Upcoming Workshop in Houston

When Saturday, December 2, 2006
10:00 am – 1:00 pm (light lunch to be provided)
Registration and light breakfast to start at 9:00 am

Location Full Gospel Cathedral Church of God in Christ
1369 Spears Road, North Side
Houston, Texas

Purpose of the workshop: To introduce the conceptual Homebuilding Plan to Lafitte residents living in Houston, and to get their feedback and advice on the support services program and on their vision for the future of Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier.

Re-Cap From First Newsletter (Issue 1)

Providence Community Housing (Providence) and Enterprise have been selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) to help plan a new community on and around the site of the Lafitte public housing development. The goal of the Homebuilding Plan is to build at least 1500 units of housing in the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier area.

Who are Providence and Enterprise?

Providence is an initiative of Catholic CDCs and charities, formed in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Enterprise creates decent affordable homes and rebuilds communities. Its mission is to see that all low-income people in the United States have the opportunity for fit and affordable housing, and to move up and out of poverty into the mainstream of American life.

Commitment to the Community

Providence and Enterprise are committed to providing:

- An absolute opportunity for the 865 families and individuals who lived in the Lafitte development before Katrina to return to better quality homes and a healthier neighborhood.
- Nine hundred subsidized homes, the same number as in the Lafitte development before the storm, integrated into mixed-income communities on and around the site.
- Opportunity for resident participation in planning and developing a more vibrant community.

Contact Providence/Enterprise

Homebuilding Plan
Providence Community Housing
1050 S. Jeff Davis Pkwy, Suite 301
New Orleans, LA 70125



Fax: (504)821-7213
Email: info@providencech.org
Toll-free number: 1(888)429-2499
Local number: (504)821-7222



Support Services to Lafitte Residents

Providence/Enterprise has committed \$2.5 million in private funds to provide case management, counseling and direct assistance to Lafitte residents, living locally, as well as those living in cities such as Houston, Baton Rouge, Atlanta and Memphis. Our focus now is on understanding what support services would be most helpful to people, and determining how best to use the available resources to best meet the needs of Lafitte residents.

What We've Heard So Far

Through feedback forms, meetings, telephone conversations and community workshops, we have heard that there are a number of key areas where Lafitte families could use support, including:

1. **Housing.** The most frequently asked questions we get from Lafitte families are "When will the new homes be ready?" and "When can I come home"? Providence/Enterprise hopes to offer homes and apartments as early as the summer of 2007, and to begin rebuilding Lafitte by the end of 2007. We expect it will take 3 – 5 years to meet our goal of building 1500 new homes and apartments. In the meantime, we know that Lafitte families need a plan. People have told us that they need help with their questions about vouchers, renewing leases, and getting and storing their belongings. They also have questions about the affordability of the new housing and about ownership opportunities.
2. **Child care and education.** We've been told that child care is essential so that parents can go to work, and look for work. There are concerns that schools aren't all open, and that some children living out of state are being treated poorly in their new schools.
3. **Elderly care.** Many Lafitte families have told us that support is needed for seniors. This includes everything from health care awareness, transportation and neighborhood clinics to Meals on Wheels and home care.
4. **Skills development and job training.** People are looking for different types of training programs. So far, Lafitte families have expressed a wide range of training interests including medical, construction, architecture, shipyard jobs, nursing, teaching and other training. People have said that programs should be offered at different times to give options to working people.
5. **Health services.** Many people have said they have a need for medical support, including mobile clinics and other facilities where people can access medical, dental, optical and mental health services, among other needs.

In addition to these five key areas, a number of other service needs were identified by Lafitte families, including grief counseling, financial literacy, exercise equipment, computer access/hook up, high school graduation preparedness and college preparation. We are using all of this feedback to develop a support services program, and we will be in touch with you with an update on when we will begin providing services.

Update on Outreach Efforts

- Distributed 3000 copies of September newsletter (Volume 1, Issue 1, September 2006). Newsletters were mailed directly to all Lafitte residents using the address information provided by FEMA.
- Made over 2500 telephone calls to Lafitte residents. The outreach team from All Congregations Together (ACT) is making calls daily to try and reach Lafitte residents.
- Received over 100 calls on the Toll Free phone line.
- Received over 500 completed feedback forms.
- Consulted with representatives of the Lafitte Residents Council.
- Held community meetings in New Orleans, October 3 – 7, 2006; over 250 people attended.

The Homebuilding Plan

Providence/Enterprise has committed to building 1500 new homes and apartments in the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier communities as part of this Homebuilding plan. In order to help pay for the homes and apartments, we are applying for funds from a number of different public and private sources. Our first funding application deadline was October 20, 2006. As part of the application, we needed a general idea of how many of the 1500 homes and apartments would be on the Lafitte site and how many would be in the broader community. We also needed to have an idea about the number of bedrooms in the homes and apartments.

To help answer these questions, and to start building a broader vision for the future of the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier neighborhoods, we spent five days in early October talking to people about the past and the future of the area. We asked people what they liked and didn't like about the communities 20 years ago and pre-Katrina. We also asked them to help us understand what kind of community they wanted in the future.



A child's drawing of the future community.

Highlights of the feedback we've heard so far are listed on the following page. The drawing and photos show you some of the ideas for the future that we've started developing based on the feedback received.

Our team will be traveling to meet with Lafitte residents in other cities, including Houston on December 2, 2006, and hope to continue to add and refine the future vision that is beginning to emerge.

What We've Heard So Far

What people liked best 20 years ago:

Community was together, people were friendly, families and neighbors were close, kids in the neighborhood were protected by the elders and each other, talent shows in Lafitte, second lines, culture, heritage, churches, people worked, everyone knew each other, people cared about keeping the place clean.

What people liked least 20 years ago:

Drugs, crime, violence, prostitution, police brutality, economic decline, building of I-10 disrupted black, family-owned businesses, not enough job opportunities, inequality around economic opportunities, no job training, racial tension, segregation, motels, bars, too many liquor stores, problems with blighted housing, called management too often, not enough opportunities for children, young people, and the elderly.

What people liked best pre-Katrina:

Family and friends were near, housing was affordable, good access to the city and transportation, close knit community, good churches in the area, black people were here (and now most of us are not), Dooky Chase, Carver Theatre, Willie Mae's.

What people liked least pre-Katrina:

Crime, drugs, killings, not a lot of places to enjoy ourselves, motels, corner stores, idle young people, buildings in disrepair, not safe walking the streets, corruption, neglect, inadequate schools, people don't live well stacked on top of each other, not enough retail shops in the neighborhood owned by us, racial profiling, lack of representation.

What people want to see in their community in the future:

More playgrounds, recreation center, more things to do, more lights in the community, quality family-oriented restaurants, preservation of our culture and music, equity and justice across the board, neighborhoods collaborating together, more police (a sub station), more trees and greening, streets repaired, family oriented, seniors, children, and youth programs

What kind of housing people would prefer:

People prefer singles and doubles to multifamily homes, and like porches, yards, fences, and the high ceilings. They are interested in both rental and home ownership. Most would like the housing to fit in with the current style in the neighborhood, with variations in the same architectural theme.

Homebuilding Plan—Ideas For Discussion



Top: Existing Lafitte housing; Above: Proposed housing.



Top: Existing Lafitte street; Above: Proposed Lafitte street.

How this feedback is beginning to shape the Homebuilding Plan

- We are working to build homes so that they build a neighborhood.
- There will be lots of trees, and the streets and houses are designed to feel like small "villages."
- There are opportunities to celebrate culture, children and history.
- There are services and stores in the neighborhood, and housing choices.

All the feedback we receive is being summarized and will be posted on the Providence website. It is also being forwarded to HUD and HANO so that they are up to date on the perspectives of Lafitte residents. Note that only summary information is being shared.