



## 'Grain Train on the Move

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## Orphan Grain Train Annual Report 2006

Orphan Grain Train entered its 15th year of bringing "Relief for Human Need Worldwide" in 2006. By God's grace, a record 170 humanitarian aid semi-load shipments were made by Orphan Grain Train's 18 regional divisions and Norfolk, Neb. headquarters, 76 of which went to relief partners overseas and 94 in response to domestic efforts.

International recipient nations included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Georgia, Ghana, Haiti, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liberia, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tajikistan, Trinidad, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. Seven different regional divisions shipped a total of 14 semi loads to the former Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the most Orphan Grain Train sent to any one country in 2006.

To illustrate what can be accomplished by Orphan Grain Train international shipments, the three container-loads sent to Bangalore, India in 2006 helped more than 4,300 poor and needy people through the distribution of relief supplies by local Christian churches and the United Evangelical Mission.

Continued recovery on the Gulf Coast from hurricanes Katrina and Rita was once again the largest Orphan Grain Train domestic project in 2006. New equipment, food, bottled water and tools made up the 40 semi loads sent to volunteer work camps along the Gulf Coast. This effort will continue for at least the next three years as volunteers respond to the worst economic disaster in Southern history since the Civil War.

Camp Restore a joint effort of LCMS World Relief/Human Care, the Southern District of the LCMS, Laborers for Christ, Lutheran Social Services of the South and Orphan Grain Train, opened last September. This camp can house hundreds of volunteers who clean and rebuild New Orleans, one house at a time. Orphan Grain Train supplied a 45-foot-long mobile kitchen trailer to prepare daily meals for Camp Restore and Bethlehem Camp.

Besides the mobile kitchen, 50 other trailers and storage containers from Orphan Grain Train are now located across Louisiana and Mississippi where they serve as sleeping, bathroom, shower, laundry, or office trailers.

Domestic efforts not listed on the 2006 annual poster include 17 semi-loads of hay sent to ranchers struggling with the effects of hurricanes or wildfires and 54 small trailer-loads of relief to flooded areas of the Ohio River Valley and the Gulf Coast.

In November Orphan Grain Train

moved its Norfolk offices into a new building across from the warehouse. Special thanks are reserved for the volunteers of Laborers for Christ who donated a substantial amount of time as they completed the interior finish work.

Thousands of volunteers across the country do the daily hands-on ministry of Orphan Grain Train and more are "getting on board" every day to make "Relief for Human Need Worldwide" a reality. They and other contributors also donate the cash gifts that keep this ministry in motion.

Stories, updates and information about regional divisions, projects, shipments and recipients are posted each week at [www.ogt.org](http://www.ogt.org).

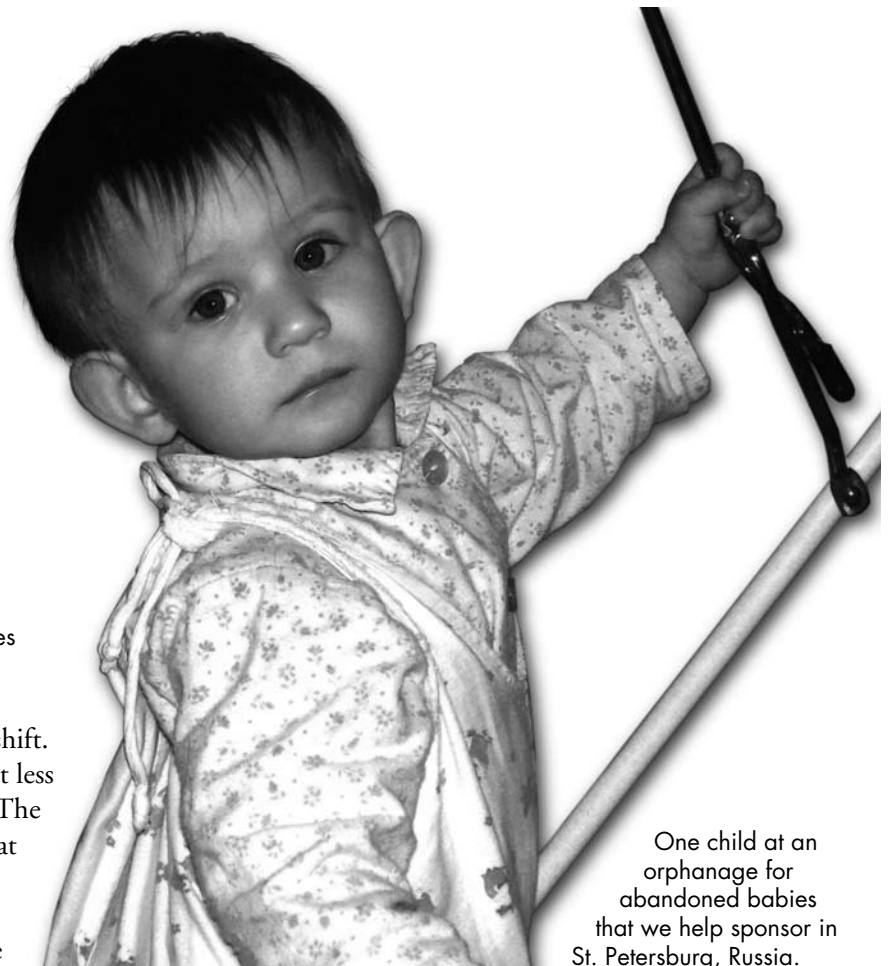
*Orphan Grain Train's name and character are explained by the words of Christ recorded in the Gospel of John chapter 14, verse 18: "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." †*



This 45-foot-long mobile kitchen was built by Orphan Grain Train and taken to New Orleans last September. It is used to prepare three meals a day for hundreds of volunteers at Camp Restore and Bethlehem Camp.

# Abandoned Babies

By Rev. John D. Reehl, Director of Orphanage and Prison Ministries



One child at an orphanage for abandoned babies that we help sponsor in St. Petersburg, Russia.

When a child is found abandoned here in the United States it is news. You can read about it in the newspaper or see it on the evening news on your local TV channel. However, it happens so often in Russia that it never becomes a story in the papers; it never makes the evening news.

St. Petersburg, Russia, is a city of nearly five million people and in the surrounding area there are another two and a half to three million. In this region there are four orphanages for abandoned babies. Each orphanage has nearly one hundred children aged newborn to three and a half years old. The Orphan Grain Train “Adopt an Orphanage” program has sponsors for two of those abandoned baby orphanages at Lomonosov and Bsovoloznsk. We hope to be able to sponsor the other two abandoned baby orphanages soon.

To visit one of these orphanages is an emotional experience. The first time I was asked to describe it, I said that it was “wall to wall babies—a dangerous place to take an American woman because they want to pick up an arm load of babies and take them home.”

The workers at these orphanages work ten-hour shifts and they take care of ten to

twelve babies per shift. Their salary is a bit less than \$5 per shift. The directors tell us that their staff workers are loyal and dedicated and care deeply about the babies. The care is adequate but hardly the close, warm, affectionate care that a newborn or infant needs for good emotional growth.

Russian women and girls give up their children for so very many reasons.

Unemployment, too many children to care for, perhaps the child needs medical care or is an invalid or handicapped.

Almost all Russian children with physical, mental or emotional problems live in orphanages. Perhaps the mother is a teenager or younger living on the streets; perhaps she is on alcohol or drugs, or perhaps the husband or boyfriend forces her to give the child away. The causes are numerous.

Where are these children found? In America people break into cars to take things out, in Russia they break into cars to put something in—a baby. Leave your car

unlocked and you may be in for a surprise. They are found in bus stations, train stations and in the underground metro stations. A favorite place to find them is in a garbage can or huge garbage container. It is a favorite place to leave or abandon a baby because in a matter of minutes someone will be digging into that garbage container and the baby will be found.

They are abandoned to everyone except our blessed Savior. He loves the little children and wanted them brought to Him. It is because of His love and caring that we seek to help these little ones in Russia. As we feel loved and cared for by our Savior, Jesus Christ, we reach out with that love especially to the “abandoned babies” of Russia. †

Learn more about the “Adopt an Orphanage” program at [www.ogt.org](http://www.ogt.org), under Special Projects.

Editors note: Orphan Grain Train has shipped more than 145 semi loads to the relief centers and volunteer camps on America's Gulf Coast since Hurricane Katrina. The effort continues as requests are received for supplies, water, tools, and facilities. This report was prepared in April 2007 by Mr. Seth Kaiser who served as a volunteer coordinator at Camp Atonement in Metairie, La., October 2005 through May 2006. Seth is now enrolled as a full-time student at Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis, Mo.

## *Katrina Relief Progress Is Slow*

By Seth Kaiser

During my spring break I returned to New Orleans to visit Atonement Lutheran Church, which was the place I stayed and worked at the relief camp for the majority of the seven months I spent down south. It was a great experience to see friends and acquaintances and become somewhat reacquainted with everyone and the current situation and the state of progress in the New Orleans area.

I have to be honest—it seemed like virtually nothing had changed. For me, it was like being gone for a week and returning more than being gone for almost a year. To be fair, there are certainly signs of progress. New housing developments are going up, new people are moving in for the wealth of jobs available, and in places hit hard, such as Lakeview, most of the homes seem to be gutted and it seems like every 15th house or so has been completely rebuilt and/or

restored with someone living there.

That fact, in and of itself, is certainly a bizarre sight. Imagine, if you can, driving down a street of flooded out, abandoned homes, still gray and dingy from the floodwater. All of a sudden, you stumble upon the brand-new home that looks like it's been airlifted in from some suburban area in another part of the country, complete with plush green grass and landscaped yard!! Then, before you blink, back to the water-damaged houses again until the landscape improves for one brief minute as you pass another new house 20 houses later. Who knew progress would look like this?

Last year I shared with our [volunteer] groups that it was projected to take 10-20 years until the city would look normal again. While those were the words that came out of my mouth over and over, I never knew what that would look like until now. †



Seth Kaiser and the Rev. Kurtis Schultz, President of the Southern District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Hear their stories on the Hurricane Katrina Response video at [www.ogt.org/video\\_archive.cfm](http://www.ogt.org/video_archive.cfm).

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## **IRA Transfers Help Orphan Grain Train Donors Make Gifts.**

IRA holders know that “IRA minimum distribution” rules require them to receive a distribution from their IRA each year once they reach age 70 1/2. This income is taxable. However, a law passed in August 2006 makes the IRA distribution available as a tax-free charitable gift until December 31, 2007.

IRA holders who don't need the annual IRA distribution added to their taxable income can use some or all of the funds for charitable giving. It is a “new source” for charitable giving available the rest of 2007.

Not all financial institutions are promoting this short-term benefit for IRA holders since it is scheduled to expire December 31, 2007. IRA holders will need to ask their financial representative to process a form to redirect the distribution to the charity of their choice. Donors should note that such transfers are not counted as income, so the gift will not be tax deductible and a gift is thus possible from a source other than taxable income.

Donors have used such transfers to make contributions to Orphan Grain Train's “Building on Living Stones Campaign.” If you think this gift opportunity will work for you please contact your financial services representative before the date of your IRA's annual distribution. Please also let Orphan Grain Train know of your plans so your gift is recorded correctly.

If you, your financial advisor, or your financial custodian have questions please contact Richard Jostes at (877) 371-7393 or Neal Koch at the LCMS Nebraska District Office (888) 643-2961. †

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## **Thrivent Giving Plus Supplemental Funds Program Has New Form!**

Thrivent members who are using the Giving Plus program to secure a 50% match to their gift should take note that the forms changed last winter. Please contact your Thrivent office for copies of the new form, or print it from: [www.ogt.org/Thrivent\\_GivingPlus.cfm](http://www.ogt.org/Thrivent_GivingPlus.cfm) on the Orphan Grain Train website. †

## Orphan Grain Train

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### 2006 Shipments Poster edition

Orphan Grain Train newsletter

Please mark your  
calendar now and plan  
to attend the  
Orphan Grain Train  
Convention 2007,  
September 21 and 22  
at Norfolk, Nebraska.

Registration form will  
be available in June  
on the Orphan Grain Train  
website:  
[www.ogt.org/convention.cfm](http://www.ogt.org/convention.cfm).



Orphan Grain Train volunteers cook fish by a special method that keeps the best flavor in and leaves the aroma outdoors. Donations received at these fish feeds help defray the costs of shipping Orphan Grain Train's humanitarian relief where most needed around the world and in America. Find the list of these activities at: [www.ogt.org/events\\_list.cfm](http://www.ogt.org/events_list.cfm).  
Photo: Westfield, Wis., August 2006.