



Relief for Human Need Worldwide

'Grain Train on the Move

<i>New Hammar Trailer</i>	2
<i>Indiana Division's Busiest Year Ever</i>	3
<i>Missouri-Illinois Division Reaches Out / Gulf Coast Hurricane Response</i>	4
<i>Thrivent GivingPlus Form</i>	5-6
<i>Cedar Rapids Flood Relief "Give Away Day"</i>	7

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN, INC. • FALL 2008, VOLUME 16, ISSUE 2

Almost Home

By Rev. Dave Buss, Executive Director – RAI Ministries, Inc., New Orleans, Louisiana

Howard and Helen Irving are almost home. Almost home to the New Orleans Ninth Ward that they love; to the home they purchased in 1965--when the neighborhood was brand-new and teeming with families and children. Almost home to where they raised their nine kids; to 43 years of memories; to the home that was filled with Katrina flood water for six weeks in 2005; to the home that hundreds of volunteers from all over the country have worked with the Irving's to rebuild.

Howard and Helen's present hope stands in stark contrast to the five months of uncertainty they spent in Howard's childhood home of Greensburg, Louisiana, where they evacuated after Katrina and lived with 14 other family members for five months. During the evacuation people slept in their cars and on the porch of the small family house, sharing that house's sole bathroom. Next came 18 months spent in a FEMA trailer that was recalled because of formaldehyde gas and the tiny one-bedroom apartment where they now live. Helen

says that in the middle of all that, she asked God, "Where will my help come from?"

And He answered, "Kansas, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Minnesota, Alabama, Arkansas..."

Convinced God sends the volunteers, Helen has faithfully recorded every name, address, and phone number in a spiral notebook. She and Howard plan to invite them all back to New Orleans for their "Home Blessing" ceremony that Camp Restore will perform when the work on their home is complete. "But first," Harold says, "I will drop to my knees and say thanks to God for all that He has done!"

It's now more than three years since Hurricane Katrina, and God continues to restore faith, home, and community to Katrina's victims through His volunteer ministry at Camp Biloxi and Camp Restore in New Orleans. Orphan Grain Train is a critical partner in this ministry, bringing the resources of our nation and the hope of Christ to the people of the Gulf Coast.



Howard and Helen Irving

(To volunteer contact Camp Biloxi at (228) 594-0008 www.campbiloxi.com or Camp Restore at (504) 242-2636 www.camprestore.org.)

C.A.N. Division and L.W.M.L. Team Up for “Undie Sunday”

The California-Arizona-Nevada Division of Orphan Grain Train held a unique Pacific Southwest District-wide “Undie Sunday” earlier this year.

The Sunday after Valentine’s Day was chosen as the primary date. The district Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) was invited to assist in gathering the contributions. They readily endorsed the project.

All the churches in the district received a mailing containing posters, copy-ready bulletin inserts and contribution envelopes for those who wished to help with the transportation costs.

It was a tremendous success. The ingathering was held at the March LWML District Board Meeting in Ontario, Calif. Our Orphan Grain Train committee members spent the entire day sorting and boxing. There were over 150 boxes of underwear and socks for men, women, boys and girls.

LWML societies in Arizona brought their ingatherings to the

LWML Workshop in Phoenix. Don and Shirley Anderson brought a van full of donations back to California. Crown of Life LWML, Sun City, Ariz., held a special event to raise funds. Their generous gift with matching funds from Thrivent was very helpful.

Norm Everhart, division vice chairman, delivered the first 150 boxes to Norfolk when he attended the Orphan Grain Train’s April 2008 board meeting. The remaining 80 boxes were delivered to Lutheran Border Concerns Ministry and Lutheran Hour Ministries for outreach in Tijuana, Mexico. Churches also responded with nice contributions to help with transportation.

The dollar value of the “Undie Sunday” ingathering (230 boxes full) had to be quite significant. The LWML ladies have been very supportive of Orphan Grain Train and are wonderful to work with. We are so thankful and praise our Lord for His blessings.

New Hammar Trailer



Orphan Grain Train’s new Hammar trailer takes container-loads of supplies and equipment to disaster response areas. The Hammar’s cranes can place a container exactly where needed. Orphan Grain Train purchased the Hammar trailer with special gifts including a grant from Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod World Relief and Human Care. Note the container’s bright paint scheme, which will be used on all future Orphan Grain Train disaster relief units. These containers will be retrofitted into restroom units, shower units, laundry units, and refrigerated and non-refrigerated storage units and sent to disaster response volunteer camps.

Orphan Grain Train Receives Charity Navigator “4-Star” Rating

Orphan Grain Train has received a “Four-Star” rating from Charity Navigator, America’s largest independent evaluator of charities:

“Charity Navigator (www.CharityNavigator.org) salutes your charitable efforts. Receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that your organization excels, as compared to other charities in America, in successfully managing the finances of your organization in an efficient and

effective manner. This rise in your rating is an exceptional feat, especially given the economic challenges many charities have had to face in the last year.”

Charity Navigator evaluates some 5,300 of the one million-plus charities organized in the United States. Of these, 1,643 are on the “Four-Star” list. Learn more about Charity Navigator at “www.CharityNavigator.org.”

Indiana Division's Busiest Year Yet

"If any one of you has material possessions and sees a brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of god be in you? Dear children, let us not love with words but with actions and in truth." I John 3, verses 17-18.

We begin each day with this Scripture quote, asking God to lead, guide, and direct our lives and fulfill our mission statement. We have received and distributed more donations than ever before in the Indiana Division's history. We have shipped containers abroad, throughout our tri-state area, and given to those at our own back door.

We helped six families restore their lives after fires and gave household goods to a local agency for needy families. We provided clothing, toys, books and health kits to children in foster homes and group houses. We also supply churches and agencies that serve people in legitimate need.

More than 12 inches of rain fell throughout central Indiana in less than four hours last June 6. By June 7 the small streams were huge rivers, and as it went south a wall of water as high as three feet took everything in its path. Forty percent of Columbus, Indiana, was immobilized with four to five-foot-deep water in areas that had never before been flooded. Three hundred hospital patients were moved to surrounding hospitals as water filled the hospital's sub-basement and rose two feet deep on the ground floor. The entire hospital will not completely re-open until after Christmas.

Hundreds of homes, churches, small businesses, one high school and one elementary school were damaged extensively. Water came within four inches of our Indiana Division

buildings. Two lives were lost. People had to deal with a tragedy that they had never faced before.

The Red Cross asked for all the scrub buckets we had, plus 2,000 more. On Monday, June 9, a clothing center was set up in one of the Methodist churches. We supplied sorted clothing, blankets, and items of necessity. Four hundred boxes of sorted clothing were distributed--work clothing, summer clothing for children, shoes--just the basics. Each day the clothing center ordered just what was needed. Our presorted, boxed clothing worked well.

On July 20 Orphan Grain Train Indiana Division partnered with a United Way agency in Columbus, Indiana, to set up a 40,000 sq. ft. furniture and appliance distribution center in donated space. Those who qualify are given an appointment to pick up anything they need at no cost. Donations have come in from all over the state of Indiana, plus two semi-loads from Lutheran Church Charities in Addison, Illinois. Thus far 280 families have been helped with more than 9,000 items.

Besides all the flood activity we have sent a container to Bangalore, India, two semi-loads to Lutheran Social Services of Southeast Ohio, and a semi-load of canned food distributed to nine local food banks. Two of our 18-foot trailer loads went to Red Bird Mission in Beverly, Kentucky, and a 53-foot trailer load went to Cornerstone Children's Ranch in Quemado, Texas. We are also working with the Indiana District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod to prepare a shipment of relief supplies and personal care items to Cambodia.

\$100,000 Challenge Fund Announced

Orphan Grain Train's "Building on Living Stones" campaign has received a \$100,000 challenge to help raise \$100,000. The challenge fund will match all donations dollar-for-dollar up to a total of \$100,000.

"Building on Living Stones" was begun in early 2001 to raise gifts and grants to build an office and volunteer center at Norfolk.

All gifts for the new building have been given as "plus gifts"--above and beyond the donations needed to fuel the mission of Orphan Grain Train.

The \$100,000 challenge fund is given to encourage gifts to finish the campaign. Gifts of all sizes are encouraged.

In Memoriam

Don Anderson, Orphan Grain Train board member and first chairman of the California-Arizona-Nevada Division of Orphan Grain Train died after a brief illness Wednesday, September 17, 2008. In addition to Orphan Grain Train activities, Don served on many boards and committees connected to the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod and the International Lutheran Laymen's League, including Lutheran Hour Float Committee, and treasurer and regional governor of the International Lutheran Laymen's League and the board of San Diego Lutheran High School.

Missouri-Illinois Division Reaches Out At Home and World-wide

Thanks to the generous hospitality of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Orphan Grain Train's Missouri-Illinois Division uses a one-hundred-year-old building from the original Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis, Mo., as its work center. This center was dedicated to use by Orphan Grain Train on September 10, 2001. Since then, Missouri-Illinois has raised and used \$150,000 in cash donations and grants to ship 15 semi-loads of humanitarian relief supplies in ocean freight shipping containers. Receiving countries include Argentina, Bolivia, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mongolia, Russia, Sudan, Trinidad, and Uganda.

But international relief is not Missouri-Illinois' only outreach. It has also partnered with several Saint Louis charities, including Lutheran food pantries, LCMS International Student Ministry, LCMS Humanitri transitional housing program, Nurses for Newborns, the homeless ministry

of Faith Lutheran Church, the caring ministry of Christ Memorial Lutheran Church, the Concordia Seminary food and thrift shop, the Lutheran Resale Shop, Baskets of Hope, Jefferson County Rescue Mission, LCMS Christian Friends of New Americans, Saint Louis Alliance for mentally ill and supplies for local VBS programs. And this doesn't include relief shipments outside of Saint Louis.

Volunteers come from a wide age-range. In recent months, 115 young people from youth groups and Lutheran high and elementary school groups have volunteered at the work center, along with 50 adult supervisors. The regular volunteers

make up another corps of workers. "Handwork for Missions" continues to donate knitted and crocheted items to Missouri-Illinois. Churches from around Strasburg, Illinois, bring trailer-loads of sorted clothes and quilts on a regular basis. Group projects include packing clothes, sorting food, yard work, and "spring cleaning."

Missouri-Illinois keeps a regular schedule of speaking engagements to any and all groups that want to hear the Orphan Grain Train story. Part of that story includes asking everyone for cash support to accomplish the mission.

Gulf Coast Hurricane Response

Orphan Grain Train shipped several semi-loads to the Gulf Coast in response to hurricanes Gustav and Ike. These shipments were sent to either provide provisions for disaster response in Louisiana or provide equipment for volunteer camps in Texas.



A joyful response to Missouri-Illinois' first shipment to Uganda.

- | | | |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| • 6,000-gallon water tanker | New Orleans, La. | Sept. 12, '08 |
| • Semi-load of food and water | Chauvin, La. | Sept. 16, '08 |
| • Semi-load of food and portable generators | Beaumont, Texas | Sept. 23, '08 |
| • 45-ft. office unit for vol. camp administration | Houston, Texas | Sept. 29, '08 |
| • Two refrigerated 48-foot storage units to Camp Beaumont at St. John Lutheran | Beaumont, Texas | Sept. 29, '08 |
| • 48-ft. storage container to Camp Gloria Dei | Houston, Texas | Sept. 29, '08 |
| • Two 20-ft. refrigerated storage containers with generators to Camp Gloria Dei | Houston, Texas | Oct. 3, '08 |
| • 48-ft. storage unit with a skid loader and seven pallets of bottled drinking water | Houston, Texas | Oct. 1, '08 |
| • Shower unit | Pasadena, Texas | Oct. 26, '08 |

GivingPlus® Gift Form



4321 N. Ballard Road, Appleton, WI 54919-0001
 www.thrivent.com • e-mail: mail@thrivent.com
 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836)

Send this completed form, along with your gift, to the eligible Lutheran organization of your choice. The check must be made payable to the enrolled organization. **Note: A congregation is not an eligible recipient for this program. List only one donor and one organization per form. Your unique secure identifier is required for the gift to be processed.**

Donor Information

First five characters of last name

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First and last name

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Address

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City

State

Zip

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Home phone number

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Note:
 Your unique secure ID consists of the first 5 letters of your last name and the last 4 digits of your social security number.

Use black ink.
 Use block letters
 (e.g. A, B, C).

Last four digits of your social security number

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Gift Information

Date of Gift (Month)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Jan. | <input type="radio"/> May | <input type="radio"/> Sep. |
| <input type="radio"/> Feb. | <input type="radio"/> Jun. | <input type="radio"/> Oct. |
| <input type="radio"/> Mar. | <input type="radio"/> Jul. | <input type="radio"/> Nov. |
| <input type="radio"/> Apr. | <input type="radio"/> Aug. | <input type="radio"/> Dec. |

Volunteer hour information

- Mark this oval if you have contributed 25 or more hours of volunteer service to this organization during the current calendar year.

Date of Gift (Year)

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Amount of individual gift

\$

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6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9

Name of institution or organization receiving gift

Orphan Grain Train, Inc.

City

Norfolk

State

Nebraska

I certify that I am an individual 16 years of age or older who is either a benefit member of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, or who owns a Thrivent Mutual Funds account and/or Thrivent Life Insurance Company product. I am making this gift under the guidelines of the GivingPlus program. I understand this program is not a guaranteed contractual benefit. I understand the budget for this program is established annually and therefore all eligible gifts may not be supplemented. Finally, I understand that contributions by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Thrivent Asset Management and Thrivent Life Insurance Company are subject to the guidelines of the GivingPlus® Program.

Signature of member

--

For Use by Recipient Organization

I certify that the stated gift has been received and satisfies the requirements of the Thrivent Financial GivingPlus® Program.

Signature of program coordinator

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Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Organization ID

5	0	2	7	3	9	6	8	2
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The GivingPlus® Program

Donations to Lutheran organizations can accomplish more through the GivingPlus program—a one-of-a-kind program offered individually by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and two of its subsidiaries.

Participation and eligible gifts

The GivingPlus program is an example of the immediate, positive difference we can make together by contributing to the vitality of Lutheran ministries. Through this program, your financial gifts of cash, check or money order to enrolled organizations may be supplemented by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Thrivent Asset Management, LLC¹ or Thrivent Life Insurance Company².

The following types of Lutheran organizations providing services in the United States are eligible:

- ◆ Early childhood centers.
- ◆ Elementary schools.
- ◆ High schools.
- ◆ Post-secondary schools (colleges, universities and seminaries).
- ◆ Outdoor ministry centers (camps).
- ◆ Campus ministries.
- ◆ Social ministry organizations.
- ◆ Lutheran independent organizations and institutions.

Individuals age 16 or older who are benefit members* of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, or own Thrivent Mutual Funds accounts and/or Thrivent Life Insurance Company products, are eligible to participate in the GivingPlus program. Thrivent Financial, Thrivent Asset Management, or Thrivent Life Insurance Company will add **\$1** for every **\$2** contributed to an eligible, enrolled organization, up to a maximum supplement of **\$300** per organization, per year.

- ◆ Individuals can donate to two different eligible and enrolled organizations of their choice each year, and have their donations supplemented by Thrivent Financial or one of the two subsidiaries.
- ◆ Individual donations can be for any amount, up to \$600 for each organization each year.
- ◆ Individuals can donate whenever they like (e.g., monthly, quarterly, etc.). Each time, the supplemental dollars will be provided once the paperwork is received and processed.

*"Benefit members" generally are those who have been admitted into membership and own Thrivent Financial for Lutherans insurance or annuity products.

¹Thrivent Asset Management, LLC is a registered investment adviser that provides investment management services to the Thrivent Mutual Funds.

²Thrivent Life Insurance Company is a life insurance company domiciled in Minnesota that issued variable life insurance and variable annuities to members prior to the time that state law authorized fraternal benefit societies to offer these products.

Special bonus for volunteers

Supporting volunteerism is an important part of Thrivent Financial's mission. That's why we've included an extra benefit to the GivingPlus program to recognize volunteer service.

When you contribute 25 or more hours of volunteer service to the organization you have supported with an eligible GivingPlus gift, Thrivent Financial or one of the two subsidiaries will contribute an additional \$25 per year. (Be sure to fill in the volunteer-hour bubble on the member gift form.)

Volunteer service includes unpaid time working on projects/activities or serving on a governing/task group for the recipient organization. Hours spent on Thrivent Financial chapter or congregational service team projects are not eligible for consideration.

Ineligible gifts

- ⊗ Worship offerings and donations to a congregation. Gifts that are intended for the congregation but are given or made payable to a Lutheran organization are not eligible as a GivingPlus donation.
- ⊗ Donations made on behalf of others.
- ⊗ Fund-raising activities, such as benefit dinners or auctions, golf outings, car washes, pizza or candy sales, etc. Any activity where donors receive goods, services or discounts for their gifts is not eligible.
- ⊗ Gifts that are not given directly to a specific organization.
- ⊗ In-kind contributions (e.g., the value of equipment or materials, commodities, donated time/service, etc.).
- ⊗ Tuition payments, registration fees, student or camper fees or any other charge where a named individual would receive goods, services or discounts in return for the donation.
- ⊗ Gifts to educational associations or professional affinity groups. Donors must specify the particular recipient organization to which their gift is being made.
- ⊗ Gifts contributed through the Care in Congregations, Care in Regions or Care Abounds in Communities programs.

Send your gift today!

Simply fill out the GivingPlus gift form on the reverse of this flyer. Send it, along with your donation, to the Lutheran organization of your choice.

Questions about the program? 800-847-4836 and select option 3. Or, send an e-mail to GivingPlus@Thrivent.com.

For complete guidelines and limits of the GivingPlus program, go to www.thrivent.com, Fraternal Programs, Church and Community Programs, GivingPlus program.

IRA Transfers Available Again

The October 2008 financial rescue bill passed by the U.S. Congress and signed by President Bush permits IRA holders of age 70 ½ or greater to once again make direct transfers to charity from their IRA's until December 31, 2009. Such gifts may be used to satisfy part or all of the required annual IRA distribution for individuals age 70 ½ or older.

- Donors must be at least age 70 ½ at the time the gift is made.
- Charitable Rollover Gifts must be made directly from an IRA Account to a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization.
- Gifts totaling a maximum of \$100,000 may be made in 2008. Additional gifts of up to \$100,000 may be made in 2009.
- Donors can support many charities and ministries at varying amounts as long as the total gifts do not exceed \$100,000.
- IRA rollover gifts may NOT be used to fund charitable gift annuities, charitable trusts, or donor advised funds.

For more information or if you would like to request an IRA transfer from your individual retirement account to Orphan Grain Train, please contact your IRA administrator. If you would like a sample letter for requesting a charitable distribution from your IRA, please call or write Richard Jostes, Director of Development, Orphan Grain Train, P.O. Box 1466, Norfolk, NE 68702-1466 (1-877—371-7393).

Cedar Rapids Flood Relief “Give Away Day”

Last summer's Cedar Rapids flood was about 20 feet over flood stage. Waters receded in about a week. Cedar Rapids' worst flood in modern memory, it resulted in at least 73 homes scheduled for demolition and two major businesses choosing not to re-open.

In response to unmet needs Trinity Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids held a “Give Away Day” on Saturday, September 27, which featured donated furniture and new plumbing fixtures shipped to the church parking lot by Orphan Grain Train. Participants carried passes from FEMA to indicate their homes would be rehabbed.

A generous donor made an in-kind donation of plumbing fixtures to LCMS World Relief—which filled a semi-truck. Orphan Grain Train stored the fixtures at Norfolk for LCMS World Relief and hauled them to Cedar Rapids when they could be used in the “Give Away Day.” The plumbing fixtures were a great blessing and tears of joy and gratitude flowed freely.

Kitchen sinks, cabinets, and

flooring are still in great need. If you would like to donate such material, or volunteer for rebuilding, please contact Kris Ruprecht or Crysten Sanchez at (319) 373-0584, Monday through Friday.

Volunteers can be housed with church members in Cedar Rapids, or at nearby Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca. A \$25 suggested donation per night includes two meals at the camp. Scholarships are available for those who could not otherwise volunteer. Most needed are people with skills in finish carpentry, interior painting, electrical, plumbing, or heating/air conditioning.



Norfolk warehouse volunteer John Fehrs moves donated plumbing supplies into container for Cedar Rapids.



Railroad bridge at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was destroyed by water 20-feet over flood stage.



First stack in the container-load of tools, wheelbarrows, and plumbing supplies for Cedar Rapids, Iowa, arranged by disaster response coordinators Aaron Walters and Vern Steinman (in photo).

Orphan Grain Train

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Telephone: 402-371-7393
www.ogt.org

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Rev. Dave Buss of RAI Ministries, New Orleans, answers questions at the Orphan Grain Train convention.



Orphan Grain Train warehouse volunteer John Davis with pallet of relief supplies for Sudan. Volunteers from Minnesota and Nebraska spent several weeks this past summer collecting and purchasing supplies for humanitarian shipment to Sudan. Plan now to hear about this and other projects at the next Orphan Grain Train Convention, September 18 and 19, 2009.



Disaster response training materials distributed at Orphan Grain Train convention