



'Grain Train on the Move

<i>Southern Cookin' With Love</i>	2-3
<i>Warm Boots for Russia</i>	3
<i>Ohio Floods Update</i>	4
<i>Bringing warmth and comfort around the world</i>	4
<i>Thrivent GivingPlus Form</i>	5-6
<i>The children of Uganda</i>	7

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Nicaragua Mission-Vision Trip 2008

Story and photos
courtesy of Elfie Eberle

What a celebration!!!! After only ten years of missionary activity in Nicaragua, there are 26 trained deaconesses, 14 pastors and 23 worshipping communities.

Amazingly, we witnessed the miracle of the formation of an independent "Lutheran Church of Nicaragua". Truly the Lord has performed a miracle here.

What an honor to be there in mid-January. My husband Bill and I were there with fellow members of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Annapolis, Md., Alberto Carreras and Herm Schmidt.

Nine years ago Orphan Grain Train sent the first container of humanitarian aid to Nicaragua for the survivors of Hurricane Mitch. Because of the deluge, whole villages were inundated by mudslides, killing thousands. Pastor Sandor Arguello, missionary to Nicaragua, brought the strong message of the Gospel accompanied by the material help shipped by Orphan Grain Train.

Today the mission receives more invitations for dedicated pastors and deaconesses to bring the word of forgiveness and hope than they can possibly serve. However, there is a group of 10 young pastors in training right now.

It is such a joy to be around the smiling faces of our brothers and sisters in Christ in Nicaragua. Despite abject poverty (this is the second poorest country in Central America), malnutrition, lack of medical care, abysmal housing, contaminated water and lack of work opportunities, the hope of the Gospel shines in their eyes. It was amazing. It was such a joy to be with this team and an honor to serve the Lord with them.



The director of the National Police Hospital in Managua showed Elfie Eberle all the medical equipment they had received from Orphan Grain Train.



Georgina Arguello keeps the Orphan Grain Train warehouse well organized and ready to respond to natural disasters as well as regular ministry needs.

Southern Cooking With Love In an Orphan Grain Train Mobile Kitchen

By Kurtis Smith, Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance

The South is known for good cooking. People from the South say it's because their main ingredient is love! The Orphan Grain Train team wonders if it's because the food is cooked in the Orphan Grain Train mobile kitchen.

Whatever the reason for the great taste, have you eaten "Southern cookin" lately? If you haven't, it's time to schedule your next trip to the area where you'll not only find good cooking but be able to help spread God's love to victims of disaster.

Brenda Johnson and her sister, Lorraine, serve up love as cooks at Camp Restore in New Orleans—a ministry of Southern District LCMS Recovery Assistance. Their stories exemplify the exciting movement of God's love across the Gulf Coast and how Orphan Grain Train has provided relief for human needs.

From a family of origin with ten children that were all affected by the Hurricane Katrina in one form or another, these two sisters now serve others too. Each day they provide meals for the often over 100 weekly volunteers that come from around the country to help with relief efforts.

Brenda had over five feet of water in her house and wasn't able to stay on the property until she received a FEMA trailer eight months later. She and her husband, Charles, worked to gut and renovate their home as best they could. Eventually, Brenda found a job as a cook at Camp Restore.

Working at the camp brought Brenda hope. She says with a smile, "They've made my smile go from a zero to a hero."

Brenda's sister, Lorraine, now also serves food out of the Orphan Grain Train kitchen: she cooks breakfast

while both sisters work on lunch and Brenda cooks supper.

Lorraine agrees with her sister that the volunteers are making a tremendous difference. "God has watched over us. I'm strong in my faith today because the people that come here show that God still loves me and my community...the volunteers are the best thing that could have happened to New Orleans."

Beyond cooking for those who volunteer at Camp Restore, Brenda is also heavily involved in starting a new outreach to battered women developed through LINC New Orleans, another ministry arm of Southern District Recovery Assistance. Her own experience as a battered spouse (her first husband is now deceased) helps her bring hope to women in similar scenarios. "The spousal abuse rate has skyrocketed since the storm and many women need spiritual as well as physical help."

Camp Restore and Camp Biloxi, both ministries under Southern District Recovery Assistance, have over 2000 homes on their combined list that are still in need of repair since the storm.

"Please don't forget us and we won't forget you" said Brenda," When



Lorraine Johnson cooks lunch in the 45-foot-long Orphan Grain Train kitchen trailer at Camp Restore in New Orleans.

something happens in Minnesota, I'll sit on the floor of an Orphan Grain Train mobile kitchen trailer and ride up there to help because they cared when we were in need. I'm ready to go!"

For more information about the ministries of Southern District Recovery Assistance, including Camp Restore and Camp Biloxi, please go to their ministry website: www.lcmsrelief.org. Or call (228) 594-0008 for Camp Biloxi and (888) 248-2636 for Camp Restore.



Brenda Johnson (at left) takes a moment to visit with Camp Restore volunteers as they go through the cafeteria line.



Flags fly high each day over the Orphan Grain Train bedroom trailers at Camp Biloxi.



Lunch is ready to be served!



Kitchen, bedroom, utility, and shower trailers from Orphan Grain Train are just some of the dozens of equipment pieces which make up Camp Restore.

Warm Boots for Russia

The “Warm Boots for Russia” project continues year-round in the Russian orphanages. More than ten years ago, Rev. Terry Timm and his wife, Ruth, thought of “Warm Boots for Russia” to help the children in Russian orphan homes who didn’t have shoes for the wintertime. “We had watched the video ‘Red Boots for Christmas’ and we came up with the idea of ‘Warm Boots for Russia’” says Rev. Timm. “We realized we could do a lot more if you buy the shoes in Russia.”

The price is \$15 a pair, which includes the cost of an illustrated children’s Bible and boots for each child.

It was Yuri’s idea to take the children to the market and let them barter for their own winter shoes.



Orphanage director, Yuri, grew up at Nikolskaya Orphanage. After high school, military service and university he returned to administer his former home.

A happy owner of new winter shoes at the Nevskaja Dubrobka orphanage.

Ohio Floods Update

from Mary Woodward of
Lutheran Social Service of Ohio

On August 27, 2007, 8,717 families were flooded by more than 10 inches of rain in eight counties.

On February 8, four inches of rain fell in Ohio, causing already high rivers to flow from their banks, flooding the communities that had experienced flooding 6 months previously. Over 60% of the families flooded in August 2007 have once again lost everything due to the high water in their homes. Three additional communities have been flooded and over 600 families are experiencing flooding for the first time.

No clothing is being accepted at this time, but donations of specific items are needed, as families are able to move back into their homes. An e-mail list has been established to communicate these needs to congregations.

Lutheran Disaster Response Ohio relies upon partnerships to expand the capacity of these services--especially organizations such as Orphan Grain Train. Orphan Grain Train is positioned to deliver food, furniture, household items, and other items that families need in times of disaster. The Orphan Grain Train Ohio and Indiana divisions of Orphan Grain Train are scheduled to deliver items to the Findlay, Ottawa,

and Shelby communities. The support and assistance is deeply appreciated by the families in need. Thank you!

For more information, please contact Mary Woodward at 740-509-1132, or mwoodward_1@msn.com

(Editor's note: During 2007 the three Orphan Grain Train regional divisions of Indiana, Mid-Atlantic, and Ohio delivered one semi-load and 40 smaller truck and trailer loads of relief supplies to the disaster areas in northwestern and southeastern Ohio.)

Bringing warmth and comfort around the world

Photos by Lloyd Dennert

National Quilting Day will be observed March 15, 2008. Orphan Grain Train thanks the quiltmakers and quilting groups who generously donate quilts and comforters of all sizes so they might be shared where most needed here in America and around the world. Orphan Grain Train's eighteen regional divisions gratefully accept these donations year-round.

Some quiltmaking groups go "all out." One example is the St. Paul Lutheran Church quiltmakers in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Since

2001, their society has made 2,250 big quilts and 976 baby quilts for Orphan Grain Train. Most of these years Mrs. Elsie Hehn was its coordinator until she retired in October 2006. Alline Heidenreich has taken leadership of the group since then. She says their group has 16 to 20 regular volunteers, plus others who sew at home for the group effort.

Want to learn more or want to get started in quilting? Join a group,

or write to The National Quilting Association, Inc., P.O. Box 12190, Columbus, Ohio 43212-0190; call: (614) 488-8520, or go to: www.nqaquilts.org.

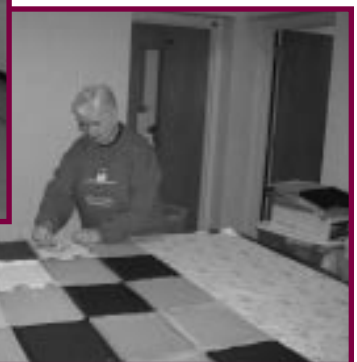
Also, the International Quilt Study Center & Museum opens March 30, 2008, in Lincoln, Neb. It features quilts from all over the world. Tours are available Tuesday through Sunday. Call ahead: 402-472-6549, or go to www.quiltstudy.org online.



St. Paul quiltmakers drawing and cutting quilt blocks.



The quiltmakers at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Aberdeen, S.D., meet every Thursday morning.



Alline Heidenreich prepares a quilt top for its backing.

GivingPlus® Gift Form

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

--	--	--

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

0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
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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.

Date of Gift (Year)

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Amount of individual gift

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4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
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6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
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8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

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.

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

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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.

The children of Uganda

By Joan Zanders

The children of Uganda suffer--most often alone. An entire generation of adults, the would-be parents of these children, has almost disappeared. HIV/AIDS, malaria, political violence, poverty, and hunger have taken parents, security and safety from these children, and they are left alone with all of this ugliness.

In May 2007, the first 40-foot-long cargo container from Orphan Grain Train arrived in Bugembe, Uganda, to assist the Aids Orphans Education Trust (AOET), a grassroots, nongovernmental, nonprofit organization founded by Sam and Nancy Tushabe. Orphan Grain Train learned of AOET through Joan and Dee Zanders of Norfolk, Neb., who traveled with friends to Uganda and experienced the multifaceted work of AOET in action.

AOET works with orphaned children, often taking them from the streets, to place them in caring homes. AOET does not believe in institutionalizing children in orphanages, preferring instead to place children in families where parenting can be modeled. School sponsorships are provided for orphans and other vulnerable children. Block by block, AOET built and opened a new elementary school in January 2007. The school still has no electricity, but teaching and learning are there, including daily religious education and prayer time. A new high school is now under construction thanks to a grant from ASSIST International.

When AOET learned they would be receiving a shipping container of hospital beds, an operating table and other medical equipment from Orphan Grain Train, they expanded the small existing clinic to fill the entire administrative building. When Nancy Tushabe learned of the shipment, she commented that this clinic would be better than the main hospital in Jinja, a city of 300,000. The clinic focus is HIV/AIDS and helping women prevent mother-to-child transmission.

Another facet of AOET-Uganda, the Njero Children's Village, now includes 13 completed and dedicated houses where ultimately 25 homes will be built for two-parent families who are willing to adopt four or more orphans. Families live rent-free for four years and are taught skills to better support themselves and manage their finances. After four years, the families will be able to construct their own homes, and new families will move into the Children's Village.

Africa's need is overwhelming. That is why AOET has already expanded into Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, and Botswana. Over 200 internally displaced persons' camps dot the landscape of northern Uganda. The challenges are unbelievable, but AOET is there, working to save the children.

Joan and Dee Zanders are eager to tell the story of Uganda and AOET. If your church, service organization, or company would like a presentation, please contact Orphan Grain Train at 402-371-7393 or Joan and Dee directly at 402-379-2708. If you wish to help the children of Uganda, make checks payable to Orphan Grain Train and designate the memo line for Uganda. More articles about the work of Orphan Grain Train and Aids Orphans Education Trust in Uganda will follow as we expand our impact in this area of the world.



Orphan Grain Train's first shipment of medical equipment to Uganda is unloaded.



Many of the children in Uganda have lost their parents to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Orphan Grain Train is helping to bring them the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

There's more about Orphan Grain Train on the www.ogt.org website!

- Keep up with current projects and activities
- View past editions of this newsletter
- Watch Orphan Grain Train videos
- Photos from regional divisions
- You can also use www.ogt.org to donate on-line with your credit card

Orphan Grain Train

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Orphan Grain Train Convention 2008 September 19-20 in Norfolk, Nebraska

Nicaragua school kit from Bill and Elfie



In mid-January volunteers from Orphan Grain Train's Maryland Division including Elfie Eberle and her husband, Bill, had the joy of distributing school kits to more than 300 children in two Nicaraguan communities. *(Please turn to story on Page One.)*