

Press Release

**For Immediate Release
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**Contact: Wendy McArdle
Phone: 658-4143 x25**

ReCycle North YouthBuild to Aide Victims of Hurricane Katrina

On February 3, a crew of 12 ReCycle North YouthBuild students and leaders will hit the road for Gulfport, Mississippi to take part in a week-long Hurricane Katrina Service-Learning Project. The ReCycle North crew will join about a dozen other YouthBuild crews from throughout the U.S. on a mission to rebuild and repair homes damaged by Katrina. "This is bound to be a life-changing experience for the residents of Gulfport and for the YouthBuild students," says Andrew Jope, program manager for ReCycle North YouthBuild. "The students are psyched to use their new construction skills to help people in need in Mississippi," explains Jope. This is a pilot program that may eventually lead to an on-going effort by YouthBuild crews in the Gulfport area.

ReCycle North's crew will join YouthBuild crews from Oregon, Illinois, Massachusetts, Washington D.C., Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana to participate in the week-long project (Feb 5-11) in Gulfport. Each crew will be assigned one house, with projects ranging from first-step cleanouts for homes that have not been touched since Katrina to dry wall and floor installation in homes that are nearing completion. Male crew members will stay in the gymnasium at the local school and females will stay at a local church. All of the groups will gather at the church for meals, evening programs and special construction challenges to help the groups demonstrate their skills and get to know each other.

ReCycle North YouthBuild is a 9-month education and job-training program that helps transform the lives of at-risk youth (16-24 year olds). Most of the participants have not completed high school and are struggling to find a sense of purpose and direction in their lives. Applicants must first complete a 4-week mental toughening component to demonstrate their willingness to change and readiness to commit to the program. If accepted, the typical YouthBuild week involves 2 days in the classroom working toward their GED or high school diploma, 2 days on the jobsite building affordable housing, and 1 day in the community working on service projects. Students earn a performance-based stipend during the program. Following graduation, ReCycle North staff assists graduates in finding jobs and ensuring a smooth

transition into the workforce. To learn more about the program, see the new ReCycle North YouthBuild brochure at www.recyclenorth.org/YB_brochure.pdf.

The Hurricane Katrina Service Learning Project is being organized by Far West YouthBuild & Serve Management Group (SMG) out of Murphy, North Carolina. Serve Management Group specializes in repairing substandard housing throughout the southeast. “This project was a perfect fit,” explains Paul Crisp, Executive Director of SMG. “We do this type of project with thousands of high school students throughout the summer.” SMG is also sending a group of 150 college students to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi during spring break in March.

The total cost of the ReCycle North YouthBuild Katrina relief trip is about \$10,000. A number of individuals, businesses, and organizations have already made generous donations to help defray expenses (see below). To make a donation, please use the donation form at www.recyclenorth.org/YB_donation.pdf.

ReCycle North would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous donations:
Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (donating use of a van to transport crewmembers)
Petersen Consulting, Inc., Northfield Savings Bank, Seventh Generation, and Paul Frank & Collins.

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