JUHAN Gulf Coast Disaster Relief Project
May 23-30, 2009
New Iberia, Louisiana
“The Jesuit Universities Humanitarian Action Network (JUHAN) was created on the premise of exchanging ideas, resources, and increasing the effectiveness of individual efforts among all Jesuit Universities' responses to world humanitarian crises.”
Mission/Goals of Project

- Utilization
- Collaboration
- Education
- Organization
- Cultivation
Utilization of the Jesuit University Humanitarian Action Network

- Connected Fordham and Georgetown Universities
- Shared work & responsibilities
- Shared curriculum
- Group Reflections
- Group interviews of community members/organizers
- Shared administrative responsibilities
Collaboration

- Renovation of 2 homes and a community café
- Served at a soup kitchen
- Contributed over 40 hours of free labor to Rebuild Iberia, Inc. and SMHA
- Saved organizations a combined $10,000 in labor costs
Education

- “Experiential Education”
  - Group & individual
- Shared curriculum
  - Understanding of humanitarian approach
    (emergency relief and development)
- Group reflections
- Group interviews of community members/organizations
- Final reflection paper
What we learned...

- Human Rights Framework
- Environmental solutions and man made aggravators of severity of natural disasters
- Prevention society vs. treatment society
- Unique challenges of rural poverty
- Disproportionate effect of storms on home owners vs. renters
- Access to healthcare
- Availability of affordable housing
- Lack of public transportation infrastructure
- Lack of jobs: Economic challenges
Organization

- Make connections with local community organizations
- Observe structure of NGOs, non profits we work with
- Learn best practices and greatest challenges from professionals in the humanitarian/development field
- Model aspects of JUHAN after most impressive organizations
Cultivation

- Knowledge
- Action
- Functioning groups
- Agency
- Leadership
- Connections (Network)
What sets JUHAN projects apart

- Academic rigor
- Humanitarian and human rights perspective
- Opportunity to work with students from other Universities
  - Replicates in the field experience
Student Testimonials

“The trip was extraordinary...I not only learn[ed] about the importance of service and relief work, but...also about compassion for one another from interacting with people in the community.”
Student Testimonials

• “I left Louisiana with a deeper interest in humanitarian affairs. I’ve always [been] committed to service, but this trip provided insight into a specific branch of aid and issues of human rights.”
Some challenges to tackle

• Funding
  – Formation of national fund? (similar to Teagle grant- apply for more grant money?)

• Incorporation of schools
  • Move out of Fordham-Georgetown-Fairfield triumvirate; include more schools in the future.
  • Encourage other Universities to collaborate independently of Fordham-Georgetown-Fairfield.
Looking forward...

- Create common JUHAN literature/history
  - Planning materials for similar projects
- Gulf Coast Disaster Relief Project to be used as model
- Year-round education/certification
  - Red cross-like certification
  - Common curriculum
- Bi-annual conference
  - Opportunity for training, certification?
- JUHAN website