

CAPITAL AREA NEWS

Katrina Project

This newsletter is a source of information to keep Hurricane Katrina Survivors who reside in Wake and Johnston Counties informed and involved in activities to assist them in becoming self-sufficient. It is also an opportunity to keep Capital Area Workforce Development Board, Workforce Investment Act partners, and all interested parties informed of Capital Area Katrina Project activities.



CAPITAL AREA

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

...serving Wake and Johnston Counties

November, 2005 Capital Area Received Award to Aid Hurricane Evacuees

Capital Area was awarded funding to offer employment and training services to Katrina Evacuees in Wake and Johnston Counties. These services include classroom training, on-the-job training, and employment opportunities.

Katrina Project staff consists of Georgia Steele, Project Coordinator, and Case Managers Ella Watson Goodson, Shirley Chamberlain, and Waldeen Mitchell. Shirley and Waldeen are New Orleans natives now residing in Cary and Raleigh.

Outreach Activities

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Natasha Ben

In an effort to locate Evacuees in Wake and Johnston Counties, a **"Greet and Meet"** was held at NC State University, Jane S. McKimmon Center in Raleigh on March 13th. Other agencies and organizations providing services to Evacuees participated on the program to talk about the NC Helping Neighbors fund, housing assistance and other support services available in Wake and Johnston counties. New Evacuees were identified and enrolled in the Katrina Project.



Bob Barham, Capital Area WD Chair welcomes Katrina Evacuees to NC and as participants in the WIA Katrina Project. **"Greet & Meet"** March 13, 2006.

A second **"Greet and Meet"** was held at Wake County Commons on May 17th. Representatives from Fiscal Progress, a non-profit Organization were available to present information on credit counseling, housing, and tax counseling. In addition to learning of new resources in the area,

Evacuees were excited to see and renew acquaintances they had not seen since being evacuated to the shelter when first arriving in Raleigh. Some took the time to renew friendships from New Orleans. There was also an opportunity for individuals to enroll in the Katrina Project.



"Greet and Meet" at Wake County Commons on May 17, 2006.

A **Networking Breakfast** was held at NC State University, Jane S. McKimmon Center, Raleigh NC on July 21st. Panelist shared information about employment opportunities & training needed in the high growth occupational fields of healthcare, transportation, and the hospitality industry. Evacuees were also given the opportunity to give feedback on the services they have received from Capital Area Katrina Project and to make suggestions on how to improve services. Recommendations and action steps will be shared in a future newsletter.

Seminars



Evacuees participate in the Financial Seminars taught by Ron Shaffer.

Finance Seminars: Sixteen Evacuees in the program participated in a four part Financial Seminar Series. The seminars were taught by Ron Shaffer and were held May 6, May 19, June 3 and June 17. The seminars received an overall outstanding evaluation. Some comments received on the evaluations were: "Wonderful! Very informative, thanks for educating us on money matters." "Ron was great as usual at taking a complicated subject and simplifying it, although I have to admit that renting isn't as unappealing as it was before." "WOW! Great knowledge." "The class has brought about change in terms of my

financial status. I have been working on the budget for about one month and I feel much better about my future and retirement."

Resume Class: Evacuees were given the opportunity to participate in a resume class taught by Dick Hart, "Make Your Resume Talk." They were also given the opportunity to participate in a one on one resume class taught by Katrina staff and volunteers. This gave each participant an opportunity to receive interview tips and prepare his/her resume in class. Participants were able to leave the class with a complete resume ready to be presented to prospective employers.

Training

On-the-job training (**OJT**) is one of several training options that Capital Area Workforce Development Board and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) contractors can utilize to help customers develop job-specific occupational skills for new careers. The program is designed to provide occupational skills for the customer at an actual worksite through a plan agreed upon by the employer and the WIA contractor. The employer is reimbursed for extraordinary training costs and the lower initial pro-

ductivity of the **OJT** participant at a predetermined rate, not to exceed 50 percent of the wages paid by the employer to the **OJT** trainee.

Katrina enrollee, Natasha Ben completed an **OJT** experience with INC Research on July 3rd. INC Research is a leading therapeutic contract research organization with a headquarters in Raleigh, NC. Natasha is employed full time with benefits. Natasha received outstanding reviews while participating in **OJT**.

Other Training



Komi Koledji graduates from the Carolina Trucking Academy.

Katrina participants have completed NCSU computer training, CISCO networking, medical coding, Excel basics, cosmetology and barber school.

Three enrollees have completed truck drivers training with Carolina Trucking Academy. Each graduate is now employed with full benefits. Participants interested in truck driver training are continuing to be enrolled in this training.

Public Sector Employment and Work Experience (**WEX**): Public Sector Employment is temporary employment in a public sector entity which includes governmental city offices, public schools, county government, state government, the United States government, and non-profit organizations. Work Experience (**WEX**) is a planned and structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time.

The following governmental agencies and non-profits organizations have provided public sector and work experience opportunities for Hurricane Katrina Evacuees: Capital Area Workforce Development Board, Division of Employment and Training, Wake County Finance, Wake County Risk Management, The Salvation Army (Person Street, Wake Forest Road, Tryon Road and Old Wake Forest Road), American Red Cross, White Oak Foundation, Employment Security/JobLink (Carl Sandburg, Cary, and Smithfield), Raleigh Business & Technology Center, and Urban Ministries. Two individuals completed their work experience and were hired by the agency.

Sadly Missed ...

Lisa Glee and Anya Meyers relocated to North Carolina after Hurricane Katrina. Both were participants in the Hurricane Katrina Program.

Lisa worked in a temporary position with the NC Division of Employment and Training. Anya was an employee with Cingular Wireless.

Lisa, Anya, and Lisa's daughter, Shayla were killed the early part of this summer in an automo-

bile accident. Lisa's other daughter, Shanna and Anya's daughter, Anyia were hospitalized, but they have been released. Both are reported to be doing well.

Lisa, Shalya, and Anya made many friends in North Carolina and they will be sadly missed. We will continue to keep Shanna and Anyia in our thoughts and prayers.

"Lisa, Shalya, and Anya made many friends in North Carolina and they will be sadly missed."

August, 2006 marks the one year Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. This month's Spotlight features the story of Hurricane Survivor, Natasha Ben. If you would like to share your story in a future newsletter, an e-mail may be sent to Georgia Steele at Georgia.steele@co.wake.nc.us.



Katrina Participant Spotlight

Natasha Ben

Katrina Experience

I arrived in North Carolina on September 7, 2005. The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill welcomed several evacuated students during the Fall semester to continue their education. In January, I returned to Tulane University (via on-line courses) and completed my Master of Public Health degree. My relocation process was made smooth with assistance from the Chapel Hill Red Cross, Durham Salvation Army, Abundant Hope Christian Church, Junior League of Raleigh/Orange, Interfaith Council, Katrina Neighbors Support Group of Durham, Workforce Development, Women in Science and Engineering (W.I.S.E.) of Duke University and countless volunteers from the triangle area. My journey has taken me from homeless to a first time homeowner. Katrina has turned out to be a blessing in disguise for me.

OJT

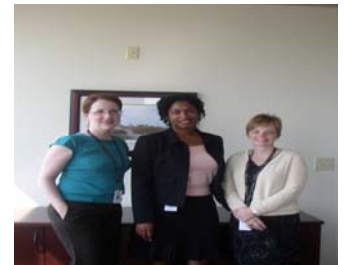
Towards the end of February, Bro. Ray Eurquhart emailed me a Workforce development flier. I called the 800 number and was pointed in the direction of Georgia Steele regarding employment opportunities. Georgia referred me to Shirley Chamberlain in the Cary office. I spoke with Shirley and had an instant connection. Shirley is also a Katrina Survivor and we shared many stories and triumphs. I scheduled an appointment with her for early March. Upon arrival to the office, I registered with the Joblink Career Center and received my identification card. Shirley and I spent time searching the Capital Area database

and within minutes located an employment match. We forwarded my cover letter, resume and references to the site, INC Research. A few days later a recruiter from INC Research contacted me for an interview. Two interviews later, I was hired and began employment on April 3rd. My on-the-job training was spread out over three months. The Workforce Development On the Job Training Program required status reports for the first three months of employment. I completed the required reports with INC Research management assistance which employs an open-door policy that welcomes and encourages questions. I have enjoyed my placement within INC Research and look forward to a prosperous career.

Financial Seminar

Shirley informed me of the Financial Seminar in April. The four part series was held in Raleigh one Friday and three alternating Saturdays ending in June. The seminar brought together Katrina Survivors from the Gulf area. It was a time to fellowship, collaborate and educate. The instructor, Ron Shaffer, provided the group with a wealth of knowledge including setting budgets, homeownership preparation and steps to gaining a prosperous retirement. Capital Area Workforce Development supplied breakfast and refreshments during the three hour class. Ron answered all questions and stayed behind for one-on-one counseling. He even went above and beyond the call of duty by sup-

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Pictured: On the job – Susan Akers-Smith, Project Manager, Natasha Ben, Research Associate and Wendy McLawhorn, Human Resources Manager



Partnerships for Workforce Excellence

Post Office Box 550
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602-0550
Phone: 919-856-6040
Fax: 919-856-6038
E-mail: capitalareawdb@co.wake.nc.us

Katrina Project Staff

Georgia Steele: 919-856-5608
Ella Watson Goodson: 919-212-3849, ext. 265
Waldeen Mitchell: 919-329-5590
Shirley Chamberlain: 919-469-1406, ext. 207

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Natasha Ben, cont.

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plying his personal e-mail address for outside assistance. During the third class, pamphlets were distributed regarding HUD's Katrina Homeowners Assistance Program. I immediately pursued the opportunity and expressed extreme interest in the program to Ron who served as a great resource during the whole process. Although I was not able to participate in HUD's Katrina Assistance Program due to deadline restrictions, I was able to find an affordable HUD property. On July 20th, I closed on my first home.

A Year Later

This month, I will "celebrate" the one year Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. The tragic event has left me struggling to rebuild my life. I appreciate all the assistance I have received from the aforementioned agencies within North Carolina especially Workforce Development. There has truly been a silver lining attached to my gray cloud.

"My journey has taken me from homeless to a first time homeowner. Katrina has turned out to be a blessing in disguise for me."