

EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL COMMUNITY

Opening doors to open minds.



2009 Educational Travel Conference 2nd Annual Volunteer Experience

Giving Back to New Orleans: Hands on a Home
Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Volunteers: David Clemmons, Founder/Co-Director, VolunTours and Founder, Voluntourism.org, and Elisa Sabatini, Executive Director of Los Niños International

*"Volunteerism is an act of heroism on a grand scale and it matters profoundly.
It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds." -Unknown*

Volunteering offers the ultimate experiential component to travel and allows travelers the opportunity to give back to the people and places they visit. This year, volunteers will work with OnSite Relief to assist a New Orleans family in restoring its home.

OnSite Relief is a small non-profit organization founded in 2007 by Hurricane Katrina volunteers with the sole mission to aid families who have been devastated by natural disasters in the recovery and rebuilding process. OnSite relies exclusively on volunteer labor and donations to purchase building materials to rebuild homes. This organization was selected for two main reasons: its commitment to rebuilding in New Orleans' lower-income communities such as the Ninth Ward, which is still in great need of recovery assistance from Hurricane Katrina; and because of its goal not only to maximize the time and effort put forth by its volunteers but also to provide volunteers with a deepened appreciation for the people and culture of the Ninth Ward.

David Clemmons and Elisa Sabatini, both of whom have extensive volunteer experience, will be volunteers on the trip. You'll have a chance to debrief with David and Elisa at lunch, after the experience, and again at the ETC Voluntourism Session, "Communicating the Voluntourism Experience: A Compelling Market Advantage for Educational Travel," on Thursday, February 19th, from 1:30 p.m.–3 p.m.

As an ETC/OnSite Relief volunteer and team member, you will be building and/or restoring someone's house, so please be prepared to work hard and to the best of your ability. Some activities you can expect to be doing include painting, scraping, installing insulation and drywall, landscaping, texturing, taping, installing floors, installing appliances, tiling, and much more. No experience is required, as an OnSite staff member will supervise you and provide instructions on how to do unfamiliar tasks. On average, it takes 8-12 weeks and about \$10,000 worth of building supplies to completely rebuild a house that has been gutted to the studs, so your work will represent one piece of a larger, important home-building project. Whatever your skill level, you will be making an invaluable contribution toward rebuilding a family's house.

ETC 2009 Giving Back to New Orleans: Hands on a Home Itinerary, February 18th, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Please note: We strongly recommend that you *not* bring backpacks or purses with you on this Volunteer Day, because the bus will not be staying at the project site. Holding onto your belongings will be difficult as you will be engaged in hands-on-work, possibly outdoors, and there is no “secure” area staffed to watch your belongings. While you must bring a photo ID and your session ticket, we recommend you place this in your pocket, along with a credit card, and some pocket change. Do *not* bring your Conference badge. If you must be “connected,” we suggest you wear a belt-clip for your cellphone. Please do not bring anything of personal value other than the items mentioned here. Thank you!

Wednesday, February 18th, 2009

8:00 a.m. Meet in the lobby (ground floor) at the front of the New Orleans Marriott Hotel. David Clemmons and Elisa Sabatini will be there to greet you. Eat a hearty breakfast before you leave! The bus will depart at 8:15 am sharp! You will need a photo ID to board the bus along with your session ticket for the Volunteer tour (provided to you with your registration materials). You also will have had to complete and mail a hard copy of your signed releases for Travel Learning Connections (ETC) and Onsite Relief to the TLC office. You will not be able to join the tour without these two signed waivers, a photo ID, and a session ticket. Security dictates this protocol without exception.

8:30 a.m. Arrive at OnSite Relief’s office located at 4032 Burgundy Street, New Orleans. The Onsite Relief team leader will provide you with an introduction to the organization and the project. You’ll receive the tools you need and any accompanying lessons.

9:00 a.m. Work begins!

12:00 noon

Enjoy a boxed lunch and a facilitated discussion of the day’s progress so far, and set goals for the afternoon. Lunch will include a New Orleans favorite, “a muffuletta” (see www.colorpro.com/great-sandwiches/muffuletta/history.htm for a description of this sandwich filled with assorted cold cuts of meat), chips, two bottles of water, and a dessert prepared by Jack Dempsey’s (www.jackdempseys.com) famous restaurant in the upper Ninth Ward. If you signed up ahead of time for a vegetarian option (a dinner salad and bread) this selection will be provided to you.

3:00 p.m. Work winds to a close as you complete your tasks and assist in cleaning up the project site.

3:15/3:30 p.m. Board the bus with Justin Bhagat, OnSite Relief founder and project manager, for a guided tour of the lower Ninth Ward areas where the levees breached. This educational tour will help you to better understand the catastrophic flooding this area suffered during Hurricane Katrina and how reconstruction and recovery is progressing; you will see some homes have been fixed, while others have yet to be touched. Along the way you also will see the Musicians’ Village, conceived of by Harry Connick, Jr. and Branford Marsalis, to provide local musicians the opportunity to own a home in a thriving community of committed individuals and families. Pending availability, a homeowner assisted by OnSite Relief, may join the tour to discuss his or her personal experience of post-Katrina life in the Ninth Ward.

4:00/4:15 p.m. Tour concludes. En-route to the hotel evaluations will be distributed for your reflection, and collected prior to departing the bus.

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What to Bring and How to Prepare:

Health & Safety

Most of OnSite Relief's current project sites have less exposure to safety hazards now that major gutting projects are complete; however, it is still advisable to have a recent tetanus shot in case of exposure to such things as rusty nails. First aid kits will be accessible, but please bring any special medications or supplies you may need such as an asthma inhaler.

Water and Snacks

OnSite Relief will provide water and snacks, and ETC's boxed lunches, as described in the itinerary, will include two water bottles per person. If you would like extra water, in case water runs out, you may consider bringing your own water bottle as well.

Clothing & Accessories

Work conditions may vary, as will tasks, so please dress in comfortable work clothes that can get dirty. We recommend you do not wear jewelry and that you consider layering for outdoor and indoor conditions. New Orleans temperatures have been varying between 40 to 50 degrees, and there will not be heat if you are working in a home. Past volunteers have recommended the following clothing and accessories:

-long-sleeve shirt, sweatshirt/outer coat, and long pants such as jeans (It is especially important to have your skin covered if you are doing tasks such as installing insulation.)

-sturdy shoes or work boots

-work gloves (recommended)

-sunglasses

-raincoat

-head covering

OnSite Relief will provide protective gear like face masks and latex gloves, if needed, but it would not hurt for you to bring your own protective equipment if you have items like safety glasses, knee pads, and Handiwipes or hand sanitizers.

It is strongly recommended NOT to bring purses, backpacks, or any valuables that would need to be left aside in order for you to work. The bus will not be parked at the project site, so you will need to carry whatever you bring. Please take with you a picture ID and your session ticket, needed to board the bus. However do not wear your conference badge.