



Who is my neighbor?

In answer to the question “And who is my neighbor?” in Luke 10:25, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan, an outcast traveler who stops along the road to give assistance and sustenance to a victim of violence.

Every day, the staff of Lutheran Community Services Northwest reach out, reflecting the compassionate face of God, in service to our neighbors and our communities. Here is the story of some of the thousands of lives touched each year through our ministry.

Meet our neighbors, The Ploegstra & Reed Families *Shelter from the storm*

Excerpted, by permission, from the *Lake Stevens Journal*

Six adults, four kids, one bathroom. That’s the situation at Steve and Brenda Ploegstra’s 1,200 square foot farmhouse in Lake Stevens, Washington, where the Ploegstras are relieved their grown kids and young grandchildren are safely evacuated from New Orleans.

Gathered around the kitchen table, son-in-law Mike Reed talks about the night Hurricane Katrina struck. He’d stayed behind in Keller, LA, just outside New Orleans. Wife Theresa and the kids took a borrowed car to find shelter 60 miles away in Baton Rouge.

“Nobody was prepared for what was to come,” said Reed. Wind tore off part of the roof and broke out the back window. Water started seeping up, inch by inch. When it was four feet deep he climbed on top of a car and spent the rest of the night on what was left of the roof.

In Baton Rouge, Teresa and the kids spent two sleepless nights on the floor of a high school gym. “I was alone with four kids. I didn’t

know what I was going to do,” she said. Somehow Mike found her. Reunited, the Reeds left the shelter and were able to get in touch with their family. The Ploegstras flew them all to Lake Stevens. “We don’t have a lot of room but it’s big enough. I’ve got my grandbabies safe. That’s enough,” said Brenda Ploegstra.

The Reed Family is one of six families of Hurricane Katrina evacuees being helped by Lake Stevens Family Center (a program of Lutheran Community Services Northwest). “We are here to help by linking them with resources, providing clothes, school supplies for their kids, and whatever we can do to help,” emphasizes Family Center community service coordinator Mary Toews. “These are people who have absolutely nothing. You start talking about their homes and they just cry. It breaks your heart.”

“God’s got us this far,” said Ploegstra. “He’ll get us the rest of the way.”

Lake Stevens Family Center is one of five LCS family support centers serving communities in Washington’s King and Snohomish Counties. Each of the centers actively involves local residents in developing resources and programming to address the unique needs found in its community.

“Who is my neighbor?” presents the many faces of social outreach ministry, as carried out by our agency in communities across the Northwest.

For more information about the programs of Lutheran Community Services Northwest, and to learn how you can help support our ministry, contact your nearest LCS office or visit our web site at www.lcsnw.org

