

# YOAM NEWSLETTER

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Slidell, Louisiana

## New Orleans!

Wednesday, April 8: YOAM took a half day off of work to go into New Orleans today; we sort of meandered toward the Eastern part of New Orleans as we wound our way toward the Ninth Ward. Much to our delight, there were NO homes left piled on top of one another, and the few homes remaining that were partially intact following Katrina were now occupied! There were modern looking solar powered houses being built in the Ninth Ward! The YOAM rookies and veterans alike were equally overcome with emotion as the vast emptiness coexisted with the new construction. Three years ago, Mark Hardin was searching the grounds of the devastated Ninth Ward, as a shiny, yet insignificant object caught his eye. It was a half-marble. Thinking nothing of it, Mark proceeded to store the fragmented marble into his pocket so other activities of the day could occur. Returning home, Mark had placed this half-marble into his fanny pack for safekeeping. It had been collecting dust in that very same pack to this date. Walking aimlessly, Mark proceeded to search the grounds once more this year.



Little did he know that God would have an extremely profound and easily observable event for him. As he began his so-called “treasure hunt,” Mark had kicked a fishing lure out of his path and

looked down. Becoming immediately flabbergasted at his finding, Mark had found another marble resting at the laces of his shoes, similar to his first token found three years ago. These little events are proof of God’s presence, and reminds us that God is always watching, waiting for the smallest glimpses of his behind-the-scenes existence in each and every one of our lives.



## Evening Devotions

Evening devotions tonight were about being servant leaders using Psalm 23, Jeremiah, and a story about a Shetland sheep dog puppy that would herd the cats in its house whenever the phone rings.



This led to cats jumping up every time the phone rang...



not such a good shepherding job, but if she were a good shepherd what would that look like?



It would look like God herding us, so that we can herd others back to God. Learning to take after shepherds is not the only thing that we have taken away from our trip to Slidell. Our work sites have nurtured bonds that continue after we leave for the day, only to be reiterated at our Thanksgiving Circles each night. Aside from the daily, common enthusiasm of a hard day's work, a hearty lunch and a refreshing shower, the general consensus seems to show prevalence in the entities of happiness and glee. Thanksgiving Circles show evidence of these with each passing member's story. Tonight in Group E-H's Thanksgiving Circle, they were introduced to the idea of being thankful for having so much to *be* thankful for. Struck with the simplicity of one's response, the prospect fore-mentioned had emerged, and a general understanding of it reached out to each and every person. The Thanksgiving Circle associates began to profess their personal content with every part of their time here; subjects stretching from joy of

the work site, homeowner-worker relationships, and interpersonal bonds. To create a final summation of the night's proceedings, each member gained a speck more of knowledge as they began to head-in for a well-deserved night's sleep. With this familiarity anew in our minds, we begin to prepare for another day of labor.

