

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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### **There's NO Place Like Home**

***With arrival of furniture, Gentilly woman moves out of FEMA trailer;  
watches Saints game in her home for first time since Katrina.***

(New Orleans) Joyce Guient, 67, has been living in a FEMA trailer in her front yard for three and half years, trying to save money to finish rebuilding her home in Gentilly. With the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall at hand, Joyce's wish is coming true.

On **Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup>** at 5:00 p.m., United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area, in partnership with St. Bernard Project and Operation Nehemiah, will host a Welcome Home/Saints pregame party at Guient's home in Gentilly (1687 Pratt Drive). Friends and neighbors will gather to celebrate Joyce's homecoming and join her in watching the New Orleans Saints game from the comfort of her own (furnished) home for the first time in five years.

Guient has worked most of her life in the service industry and has been a line cook at the Treasure Chest Casino for nearly 11 years. She received assistance from the federal Road Home program and used the money to hire a contractor to rebuild, but ran out of funds before the job was finished. Since then, she's been trying to save from each paycheck to finish the repairs. **United Way's NO Place Like Home campaign provided the remaining funds she needed to get the work finished in time to move home before Katrina's 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this weekend.**

*NO Place Like Home* is a national online engagement campaign that has been rebuilding homes in New Orleans since its launch in March of 2010. United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area (UWGNOA) collaborated with United Way Worldwide and Blue State Digital, and St. Bernard Project provided the volunteer labor to rebuild the homes of dozens of families in the greater New Orleans who have still been unable to rebuild in the last five years.

When United Way found out that Joyce did not have any furniture to move into her new home once complete, they contacted Operation Nehemiah's Furniture Bank. Touched by Joyce's story, they agreed to help by furnishing her entire home. **United Way and Operation Nehemiah will be surprising Joyce with a truckload of furniture at 3:00 p.m. before her Welcome Home Party on Friday.**

"They say home is where your heart is and mine is here," says Guient. "I can't wait to get home."

Nearly 600 other greater New Orleans area families are still living in FEMA trailers, though, with thousands more in temporary apartments and other housing alternatives longing to come home. So far, over 10,000 people have signed *NO Place Like Home's* pledge to rebuild New Orleans, and the program has raised over \$100,000 for Gulf Coast Recovery from local and national donors.

**To learn more about the Gulf Coast Project and how you can join, go to [www.rebuildnola.unitedway.org](http://www.rebuildnola.unitedway.org).**

#### **About United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area**

United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area is advancing the common good. By partnering with donors, employers, nonprofits, faith groups and government, United Way brings a coordinated approach to solving community problems in Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington Parishes. For more information, please call 504.822.5540 or visit [www.unitedwaynola.org](http://www.unitedwaynola.org). You can find us at [www.facebook.com/UnitedWayNola](http://www.facebook.com/UnitedWayNola) or follow us on twitter: @UnitedWayNola.

**About Operation Nehemiah:**

Operation Nehemiah is a faith based non-profit organization committed to the cause of helping all individuals in the New Orleans community rebuild all aspects of their lives in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Using volunteers from all over the United States and even from other countries we are determined to be source of hope for a city that will not give up. For more information, visit <http://www.operationnehemiah.com> or call (504) 782-3337.

**About the St. Bernard Project:**

The St. Bernard Project (SBP) is a nonprofit disaster rebuilding organization in New Orleans, LA, dedicated to rebuilding the homes and lives of Hurricane Katrina survivors. Our programs are designed to address the physical, emotional, and psychological devastation caused by the storm. Using volunteer labor, SBP takes gutted houses and makes them livable again in approximately 12 weeks for \$20,000 worth of building materials. Since its inception in July 2006, SBP has rebuilt more than 280 homes with the assistance of more than 22,000 volunteers. SBP has expanded its rebuilding program with the joint goals of assisting more families and developing a replicable model for post disaster rebuilding. For more information visit, [www.stbernardproject.org](http://www.stbernardproject.org), find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/stbernardproject](http://www.facebook.com/stbernardproject) or follow us on twitter: @stbernardproj.

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