



# settling

ABOVE (far left): Demario Strickland '07, president of the Undergraduate Student Association [USA] and Luigi Rodo '07 (far right), vice president for business and finance for USA, gather with Louisiana students Sarah Sweeney, Jaime-Lee Capen, Patrick Enloe, Michael LaRosa and Chris Ong.

## Chris Ong was on his way to Loyola University New Orleans

for the start of the fall semester when he saw a steady stream of cars headed in the opposite direction on Interstate 10. It was then that he realized the voluntary evacuation sparked by Hurricane Katrina had become *mandatory*.

"I planned to bring my things to my campus apartment and then check to see if the hurricane had shifted," said Ong. "But when I saw the traffic, I knew I had to turn around."

Ong returned to his parent's house in St. Charles Parish and drove north with his family to seek refuge with friends. They arrived late Sunday evening in Many, LA, just hours before the eye of the hurricane made landfall in the early morning of Monday, August 29.

The severe destruction to Louisiana and the coastal regions of Mississippi and Alabama left more than 1,200 people dead and an estimated \$200 billion in damages. A few days later, the Ong family returned home to severe wind and water damage. "There was no power, no food and no clean water," said Ong. They lived on the supplies they brought with them until later in the week when military trucks delivered MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), water and ice.

Meanwhile, Loyola University sustained only minimal damage. However the severe conditions in the city of New Orleans and lack of services forced the college to close for the fall semester. More than 6,000 students

were displaced from Loyola New Orleans alone and 75,000 to 100,000 more students from universities across the city were also without a place to go.

Ong decided to join his friends who were headed to Canisius College. Patrick Enloe, Julie Tergliafera, Michael LaRosa and he arrived in Buffalo on September 6. They are four of 21 Loyola students and three Tulane University students who now call Canisius home.

"Our goal was to provide our visiting students the opportunity to continue their education uninterrupted," said Jill E. Conlon, associate vice president for enrollment management. "We worked to make the transition as easy as possible to eliminate any additional stress to the students and their families."

Patrick Enloe, a Loyola senior and New Orleans resident noted Canisius exceeded his expectations in making him feel comfortable. "Advisement, classes, housing, everything was taken care of," said Enloe. "People from the Admissions Office even picked us up from the airport!"

Senior music major Justin Hopkins added, "Canisius even created a conducting course for me in order to keep me on track with my major requirements."

Canisius also chose not to charge tuition. All told the college waived a total of \$240,900 in tuition costs and \$61,695 in housing fees. "The visiting students are only required to pay for meal plans, if they are participating in one, and college fees," said Conlon.

The student government was eager to do their part, as well. The organization put together welcome kits for

BELOW: USA members delivered Canisius welcome kits to each visiting Louisiana student.





## student spotlight

BY EILEEN C. HERBERT '04

When Hurricane Katrina triggered an epic exodus from Louisiana, Canisius College welcomed students from its sister school, Loyola University New Orleans. Now, as they settle in to their new surroundings, the Jesuit tradition of men and women for others keeps these Loyola students feeling close to home.

visiting students. Rite Aid donated toiletries and food items such as macaroni and cheese, fruit juices, pudding cups and chips. Target stores donated bath towels and wash cloths. The kit even included a Canisius USA backpack.

"USA members walked door-to-door to deliver the packages, meet each visiting student and personally welcome them to Canisius," said senior Demario Strickland, president of the Canisius Undergraduate Student Association (USA).

USA also organized a Canisius Cares fund raiser to help all Loyola New Orleans students. The association matched each dollar they collected from the college community and will send a check for \$4,400 to the student government at Loyola.

"Our thought was that the Loyola student government would be able to determine where the money was needed most," said Canisius senior Luigi Rodo, vice president of business and finance for USA. Rodo, who is also president of the Residence Hall Association (RHA), noted that RHA donated \$800 to Canisius Cares from a red wristband sale. The bands read, "Respond, Relieve, Recovery, Rebuild, Remember." Individually, Canisius students are also doing their part.

"Everyone in our building has stopped by to say hello and many have offered to take us out on the town," said Ong, who shares a Main-Humboldt Apartment at Canisius with Enloe; Michael Gosack, a graduate student from Loyola; and Ryan O'Donnell, a Canisius senior. "Our RA (resident assistant) organized a get-together for us and ordered wings and pizza. And Ryan has been really

helpful. He has a car and is very generous when it comes to driving us around."

Brian P. Smith, director of leadership development, is very proud of the efforts by Canisius students but not surprised. "Our students exemplify the Jesuit tradition of caring for others."

The Louisiana students are also fine examples of the Jesuit tradition. Jaime-Lee Capen, a Loyola freshman from Duxbury, MA, plans to return to New Orleans and volunteer in the community. "I want to return as soon as the school reopens and help New Orleans in any way I can," she said.

Capen shares a room at Canisius with Sarah Sweeney, a Loyola freshman who is from Buffalo. Capen and Sweeney met in their Loyola residence hall while watching news of the hurricane. "Sarah was coming to Canisius and I said I would go too, if we could room together."

Now, midway through the fall semester, Capen, Sweeney and the other Louisiana students are settled in at Canisius and enjoying their stay in Western New York. Many have toured Niagara Falls, and most have enjoyed Buffalo wings, pizza, beef-on-weck and a big helping of Canisius' hospitality. But thoughts of "their" school are never far from their minds.

"I will never forget the images of Katrina in my home town," said Ong. "The experience will be with me forever. I'll also never forget Buffalo and Canisius which became my new home, even if it was just for a while." ■



The college's Resident Hall Association (RHA) donated \$800 to the Canisius Cares fund raiser from the sale of red wristbands on campus.