

Appleseed This Week

Louisiana Appleseed Successfully Advocates to Lift Deadline for Federal "Road Home" Funding Applicants Thousands still left without title on Hurricane Katrina anniversary

August 29, 2008 - Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast three years ago today, but thousands have yet to access federal funds because they cannot prove home ownership under current Louisiana law.

Louisiana Appleseed struck an important victory this week when it successfully advocated to lift the impending deadlines for homeowners affected by Katrina to obtain grants from the federally funded "Road Home" program -- aimed at helping Louisiana residents rebuild or sell houses severely damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The imminent Road Home deadlines were widely perceived as unfair because many low-income homeowners could not negotiate the system, especially those with title clearing problems, an issue Appleseed has tackled since last year.

When the deadline was announced, Louisiana Appleseed and its newly formed board of directors quickly began working with other public service entities, such as the Loyola Law Clinic and All Congregations Together, to advocate for an extension of the deadline. Board members of Louisiana Appleseed sent letters to Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal and Paul Rainwater, executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, as well as to the Times-Picayune. They argued that lifting the deadline was imperative to ensure that the poor are not denied access to rebuilding funds. The board members who signed the letter also explained that Louisiana Appleseed is in the process of working with others to find systemic solutions to the problem of proving home ownership under current state law. Shortly after the letters were sent, Louisiana Appleseed hosted a roundtable discussion with Paul Rainwater and community advocates to discuss extending or retracting the deadline. After listening to the advocates' pleas, including those of Louisiana Appleseed volunteer Malcolm Meyer, Sr., Paul Rainwater announced at this meeting that the deadline would be lifted.

"The lifting of this deadline gives legal services providers more time to work with individuals to clear title or come to some resolution within the Road Home program," said Christy Kane, ConocoPhillips/Adams and Reese Fellow for Louisiana Appleseed. "It also gives Louisiana Appleseed time to work with others to formulate a more streamlined title-clearing process to help those in need."

Read the Times-Picayune article [here](#).

Louisiana Appleseed's newly formed board includes:

Kim Boyle
Partner, Phelps Dunbar

David Cressy
City Attorney, City of Mandeville

Caroline Fayard
Westerfield Fellow, College of Law, Loyola University New Orleans

Donna Fraiche
Partner, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

Leah Guerry
Executive Director, Louisiana Association for Justice

Harry Hardin
Partner, Jones Walker

Bill Hines
Partner, Jones Walker

Shannon Jones
Executive Director, Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives

Roselyn Koretzky
Partner, Milling Benson Woodward L.L.P.

David Marcello
Executive Director, The Public Law Center

Gary Ostroske
President/CEO, United Way

Betsy Regnell
Vice President Sales, LexisNexis

Mark Samuels
President, Basin Street Records

Edward F. Sherman
Professor, Tulane Law School

Martin Stern
Partner, Adams and Reese LLP

Phillip A. Wittmann
Partner, Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann L.L.C.

For more information on Appleseed, visit www.appleseednetwork.org. To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).

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