



SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.

*With Vision...By Faith...Through Action
Strengthening Churches...Empowering Leaders... Transforming Communities*

**NEWS ADVISORY
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**Press Contact: Rhoda McKinney-Jones
267-218-4023, rmjwriter@comcast.net
Rev. Joan R. Harrell, 773-269-1416
joan.harrell@gmail.com**

“Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference Provides Restoration and Public Policy Orientation For Howard University Students in New Orleans”

Just last month in New Orleans during the 4th annual Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC) *“In the Wake of Katrina: Lest We Forget...Call to Renewal”* 1,000 African American faith leaders sent out the clarion call to other African American ministers, laypersons, and seminarians. They summoned them to travel to New Orleans because the Crescent City, especially the Ninth Ward still needs rebuilding. “Once again Howard University answered the call. This is the second year Howard University students responded to the *Alternative Spring Break Program* in New Orleans; 500 students loaded buses and traveled to New Orleans to help Hurricane survivors,” said Dr. Iva Carruthers, General Secretary for the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference.

While reflecting on the lost of life and devastation at the Memorial for the Dead located at the foot of the Claiborne Bridge in New Orleans the SDPC formed a coalition with local pastors, community leaders and politicians in New Orleans to restore the lives of the thousands of traumatized children, women, and men. Carruthers collaborated with The Honorable Cynthia Willard-Lewis, New Orleans Councilwoman and Joe Givens, community leader to orient students for their work with churches, children, home owners, and other persons in need in New Orleans during the 2007 Spring Break season. Carruthers emphasized, “We reminded the students that they are Ambassadors for Justice and will be voters in the 2008 presidential election. It is imperative that needs of the people in New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast Region must become an issue on the presidential election platform. Because residents are still displaced and people are still dying each day as a result of the government’s lack of speed to provide quality of life for all of the victims and survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.”

SDPC worked to ensure the Howard University students would experience personal pilgrimages of the lower and upper Ninth Ward where the devastation remains. Howard University students are under the leadership of Dr. Bernard Richardson, Dean of the Andrew J. Rankin Memorial Chapel. Richardson said, “This is a new day and a promising opportunity for student, faith and labor communities to work towards justice in this nation.” During the SDPC restoration and public policy orientation Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis, asked, “Why do the neighborhoods and communities of New Orleans look like war zones? Why is it that not all of the children are back in school here in New Orleans? Why is the Road to Recovery Program not working?”

Reportedly, more than 200,000 women, men and children were forced to leave their homes when Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit New Orleans and the Gulf Coast Region. According to historians, this is the largest population of displaced African Americans since the Civil War. Hundreds of thousands of residents still have not been able to return to New Orleans almost two years after the hurricanes destroyed their homes.

The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference is the fastest growing and largest African American ecumenical social justice organization in America and has been responding to the needs of the people in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast since August 2005.

If you would like to interview Iva Carruthers, Ph.D., students and other volunteers on the ground in New Orleans please contact Rhoda McKinney-Jones at 267.218.2023, rmjwriter@comcast.net or the Reverend Joan R. Harrell at 773.269.1416, joan.harrell@gmail.com.