

QUOTABLE

Best of the Blogs

On volunteering in New Orleans: “This was real, like a Bio-HazMat scene out of a childhood nightmare, sifting through the rubble hoping to help even just a little bit. Maybe we as a group, including myself, could contribute to restoring the calm and regularity of daily life this family once had. Maybe then the human link will have clicked....”

—Michelle Ross, on <http://keshercollege.org/gulfcoast/>

On Shabbat: “It’s like trying to describe the taste of chocolate to someone who has never eaten chocolate. Shabbat has to be experienced in order to be understood.”

—Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, on <http://blogs.rj.org/shabbat/>

On Israel: “In Israel, even in Reform synagogues, most of the kids who have an *aliyah* to the Torah when they turn 13 are boys. In a country where women fought side-by-side the men in the 1948 War of Independence, where women hold important positions in government, and where women run major corporations, it is hard to believe that girls by and large are not encouraged to enter the religious sphere.”

—Rabbi Stacey Blank, on www.rj.org

On God: “You can’t ‘give God’ to another person in crisis—but witnessing them in the struggle [is] a Godly thing to do.”

—Marge Eiseman, on www.rj.org

On slowing down: “I went running from meeting to meeting, from conversation to conversation, from phone call to phone call today—never with a moment’s rest. [Yet, while moving, I experienced] the most memorable, satisfying aroma.... I’m pretty sure it was a tree breathing.”

—Rabbi Andy Bachman, on www.andybachman.com

ACTION Confronting the Healthcare Crisis

→ “More than 47 million Americans are uninsured and lack basic medical care, and 9 million children do not see a physician because their families can’t afford it,” Union for Reform Judaism President Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie stated at

the Center’s first partners. The congregation’s religious school students help too, collecting sufficient funds this past year to provide 200 people with a day of services. “I am often asked, ‘What’s a nice Jewish boy like you doing promoting the Church Health Center?’” says Rabbi Michah Greenstein (photo #1), a close friend of Dr. Morris. “And I say, ‘It is the most Jewish place I know.’ Elie Weisel said our job is to make the world more human, and if this is our mission as Jews, then we need to work at the Church Health Center.”



HEALTHCARE RALLY IN BOSTON.

the Union’s 2007 Biennial convention in San Diego, California. He called upon the 5,000 Reform delegates to take action in their home communities to expand access to affordable healthcare in the United States.

So what are Reform Jews, Reform congregations, and our Movement doing to help these families?

For the past eleven years, the Church Health Center has treated the working uninsured of Memphis, serving 50,000 people a year for about \$20 a visit. Founder Scott Morris, a physician and ordained United Methodist minister who developed the largest such clinic in the U.S., explains that he “grew up in Atlanta and was always interested in two things: providing faith and health or pitching for the Braves, but the Braves never called.”

Among the clinic’s mostly volunteer staff are hundreds of doctors, nurses, dentists, and non-medical professionals from Temple Israel of Memphis, one of

When Hurricane Katrina hit, Pastor Mary Overstreet of Powerhouse Temple—Church of God and Christ in Portland, Oregon put her plans for a free neighborhood health clinic on hold and, instead, brought and established forty families affected by Katrina in Portland. To fund the evacuees’ transportation, provide three months

of housing and utilities, and help organize their employment and medical care, she sold her second home in

Arizona. “I wanted to give people a key, not a cot,” she says.

Reading about Pastor Overstreet’s actions in the local newspaper, Dr. Jill Ginsberg (photo #2), a member of Congregation Beth Israel and the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, was inspired to help. She collected donations to continue to support these families, and



METROWEST FREE MEDICAL PROGRAM.

TOP TO BOTTOM: PHOTO BY MARA BROD; PHOTO BY ART ILLMAN