

Louisiana Fellowship People

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National Coordinator Candidate Suzii Paynter with George Mason, chair of the search committee

Suzii Paynter Selected National Coordinator Candidate

Suzii Paynter of Austin, Texas, has been named candidate for the position of Executive Coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Paynter currently serves as the director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission and director of the Advocacy Care Center of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). Paynter directs all public policy initiatives for state and federal issues and builds relationships with other religious bodies. In addition, she oversees church outreach, the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering, community care ministries of restorative justice, anti-human trafficking, hunger and poverty, healthcare ministries, the Texas Baptist chaplaincy program and Texas Baptist counseling services.

As a leader at the BGCT since 2001, Paynter has envisioned, created and managed large-scale programs and projects that focus on ministering alongside and advocating for the least of these. Her experience and accomplishments reflect her commitment to the missional and cooperative work of Baptists at all levels – local, state, national, regional and international, as well as ecumenical and interfaith ministry.

Over the past decade, Paynter has gained a national reputation for her advocacy on important ethical issues such as religious liberty, [Continued on p. 4](#)

Mark your calendar!

Suzii Paynter will speak at the CBF-LA Spring Conference May 17-18 at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Baton Rouge.



Meet Jenny Hodge: New Together for Hope Missionary

She's here! Jenny began her work with CBF-LA in Lake Providence on January 15. Our Missionary Search committee selected a gifted Social Worker and Minister to coordinate the Together for Hope Work in Louisiana. A recent MSW graduate from Baylor and soon to be MDiv graduate from Truett Seminary, she comes to us from the Waco Regional Baptist Association where she served as the Hunger Ministry Coordinator.

Read more inside about her and the ongoing work in East Carroll and Tensas Parish and better yet plan a call or visit to her to get involved first hand.



Winds of the Spirit

Reid Doster, CBF-LA Coordinator

Nominee for Executive Coordinator

As you have heard, Suzii Paynter has been named candidate for the position of CBF Executive Coordinator. I believe she is an excellent choice. In her biographical information listed on our cover story, you see the many gifts and experiences she will bring to the position. Suzii was selected by a 10-member Executive Coordinator Search Committee led by George Mason, pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. The CBF National Coordinating Council will vote on her appointment in February and, if approved, Suzii will begin her work March 1.

This is a healthy development for the Fellowship. We are also pleased to announce that Suzii will be our keynote speaker for CBF Louisiana's Spring Conference, May 17 & 18, at Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge.

Update on Our Hurricane Isaac Response

As of today, there remain 484 open cases of families needing help with home repair in LaPlace. Understandably, South Louisiana temporarily fell off the radar once Hurricane Sandy dominated the news. But logistical challenges in implementing a meaningful response in New York and New Jersey, have prompted some CBF teams to refocus on LaPlace, where all the logistics are in place. In the next few weeks, we will host

teams from First Baptist Pendleton, SC, Smoke Rise Baptist Stone Mountain, GA, First Baptist Columbus, GA, and First Baptist, Dalton, GA. Baylor and Stetson are sending students over their Spring Breaks.

An exciting development is the formation of a local partnership with Fuller Center for Housing, with whom CBF National enjoys a Memorandum of Understanding. The

LaPlace need is for repairs, not building from the ground up, and we can use volun-



teers of various skill-levels to work either with St. John the Baptist Parish Long Term Recovery Team or Fuller Center for Housing. We are partners with both.

Please contact me at reid.cbflouisiana@gmail.com or (985) 778-6049, if you have interest in helping, because we will need volunteers through the end of this year.

Our New Together for Hope Missionary Jenny Hodge

Jenny is settling in and I hope you will do two things in particular to help her feel welcome. First, invite her to your church to tell the Lake Providence story.

Second, plan a visit with her in Lake Providence. Our Missionary House can accommodate a good-sized team, in case Jenny has a community project underway. You will love her! Contact Jenny at 318-418-5133 or hodgejv@gmail.com.

A Gift from St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church

The Missions Committee of St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church contacted me about a Katrina Mental Health Fund which they have maintained in safekeeping. Knowing that I also serve as Coordinator for Behavioral Health services for a New Orleans based primary healthcare network --- www.excelth.com --- focusing on service to the poorest and most under-served, they asked if we could put this money to good use, since it was designated specifically for the mental health needs of Katrina survivors. I suggested that the funds be managed by our Social Services Department, to assist mental health patients with some very basic needs. For example, I have seen several patients who suffer orthopedic problems and who have sufficient bus fare to come to the clinic, but not enough to return home! Some tell me with tears that they are hungry. Others lack the few dollars for the co-pay for their medication. Our experienced social workers have a keen eye for those who are most appropriate for assistance and will manage wisely the St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church gift of over \$2,700. Surely, there is no greater disaster in America than poverty, with depression and anxiety as its near constant companions.

May the Lord bless you with good health and deep joy as you begin this new year.

In His Love, *Reid*

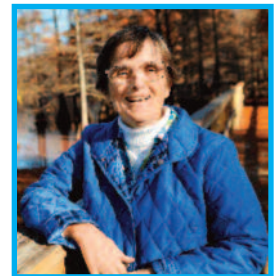
Congratulations Sister Bernie!

Our long time partner, mentor and friend Sister Bernadette Barrett of Lake Providence was honored by Louisiana Life magazine in its current issue as a "Louisianian of the Year."

Originally from Ireland, she is a member of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, and has lived in Lake Providence with a special calling for 10 years now. "I feel this is where God wanted me," she states in the article which goes on to say: "One day may find her lobbying the City Council about blighted buildings or a problem with stray dogs. At other times she's working with economic development organizations to fund job training that can lead local youth and adults toward employment.

Although she has spent much of her career as an educator, Sister Bernie says she often feels more like a student in Lake Providence. "A lot of people up here have great faith," she says, "and they teach me a lot."

Sister Bernie continues to teach and inspire us daily. Thanks to her and the God who sent her.



[See Louisiana Life article.](#)



The past two weeks have passed in a blur of moving boxes and trying to figure out where the silverware is going to go or finding flour at Jong's! Needless to say, the boxes are all moved in, the silverware has a home, and the mission house's flour canister is full! In between those events, I've managed to begin meeting some of the community residents and introducing myself as the new person in town.

This past Monday I was able to experience my first taste of community building here in Lake Providence. Not surprising, it was an amazing experience! I was invited to attend the annual celebration service for Martin Luther King Jr. where his legacy was reflected on by community members of all ages. From the passionate speech of the guest speaker to the high school male step team, members of the audience were charged with keeping the dream of Dr. King alive. Specifically, we were asked to remember that we have to take advantage of the opportunities in front of us, especially for the future of the next generation. Also, we are accountable to each other as we strive to meet those opportunities.

Not surprising, I find myself beginning to think about the dreams I heard from others in the community and from myself. I heard dreams of a community where children can live out their goals and hopes for their future. I heard dreams of a community where every member has enough to eat and hunger is an experience of the past. I heard

dreams of a community where every member works together for the good of the individual and the whole community. My dreams revolve around these community dreams. I dream about a school system that has everything it could possibly need to support this generation of students. I dream of community gardens, market stands, and garden internships as an approach to address both hunger and poverty needs. I dream of a community where all members look forward to celebrating and living together as equals.

I'm often referred to as the "New Stephanie" so I know I have some big shoes to fill as I work to continue the good work Stephanie started! I'm looking forward to seeing what else God has in store for this community and for Together for Hope here in Lake Providence over the coming months and years. I dearly love the mission house and cannot wait to have visitors (I mean you!) come and share it with me. I cannot wait to

meet all the folks who have generously supported Together for Hope in Lake Providence. I covet your continued prayers, support, and time as this New Year gets started!



Meet Rascal the Mission House Dog

Hello, my name is Rascal Hodge and I am a Louisiana Catahoula Mix! I'm 7 1/2 years old and I love to be petted or



played with. I really like being a mission house dog! I've already found my favorite nap spots: at the end of Jenny's bed and the corner of the brown couch. I do consider myself to be a lap dog, so if you sit on

the couch I may invite myself over for a snuggle! You'll find my jar of treats in the living room and you can give me one whenever you like. I won't tell Jenny if you won't...

"I love being commissioned for service with the laying on of hands, come see me and lay'em on."

NEW SIGN - NEW CHAPTER

Kenny Crump, putting the finishing touches on our new sign at right, was one of nine volunteers to come to Lake Providence in recent weeks for sprucing up. With your help, the house should be completely finished in the next month. Help still needed with painting and minor repairs.

Check our on-line "[needs list](#)" and "[punch list](#)" for the latest.

We also prepare for mission trips ahead. Can your church participate in a mission retreat, VBS, Book Buddies literacy event, recreation camp, home repair, painting, roofing or something else? Maybe you would like to serve on our advisory committee? **Contact Jenny: 318-418-5133 or hodgejv@gmail.com.**



*Together for Hope Hot Sauce
2 for \$10, \$60 per case. We deliver!*



The Fellowship

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Louisiana

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Paynter - continued from front

hunger and poverty, environmental justice, human trafficking and immigration reform. She has been recognized by religious and secular organizations nationwide – North American Association of Christians in Social Work, Baptist Center for Ethics, Sierra Club, Samaritan Counseling Centers, American Association of Retired Persons, Criminal Justice Coalition. Paynter's work has been highlighted on television programs, including Moyers on America, and in print publications, such as the Wall Street Journal and The New Yorker.

An ordained deacon at First Baptist



Church, Austin Texas and Sunday School teacher of more than 40 years, Paynter, who grew up at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas, has consistently held positions of leadership at the Fellowship churches in Texas, Kentucky and Mississippi where she has been a member. She has served congregations alongside her husband, Roger Paynter, who currently pastors First Baptist Austin and teaches at the Seminary of the Southwest.

*Prayers and sympathy are extended to the family of **Alvin W. Simpson** of Baton Rouge in his recent death with much appreciation for his support of CBF-LA through the years.*

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John Henson, Moderator; Terry Ellis, Moderator-Elect;

Chris Thacker, Past Moderator and National CBF Representative

CBF-LA Receipts	Sept-Dec	Fiscal Year 7-1-12 to 6-30-13
Undesignated	\$29,844.28	\$40,056.44
Together for Hope	\$3,543.67	\$11,771.80
Missionary Fund	\$11,125	\$11,875
Disaster Relief	\$4,920	\$4,920
Other	\$30	\$50
TOTAL	\$49,462.95	\$68,673.24



Picture God's Love
Give to CBF-LA



I want to be part of something new God is doing through CBF-LA:

CBF-LA Ministry Budget \$ _____ New Church Start \$ _____
 Together for Hope Rural Poverty \$ _____ Disaster Relief \$ _____
 Hope (Missionary) Fund \$ _____ Other: _____ \$ _____

Your name (please print) _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Make checks payable to CBF of Louisiana, 2220 South Vienna Street, Ruston, LA 71270

[You may also give on-line here.](#)