



## *Bonita's Wish*

Helping Cancer Patients to  
Rebuild their Healing Homes



HOLD FOR RELEASE  
March 21, 2007  
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# Volunteers Honor Life of Bay St. Louis Mom by Rebuilding Home & Hope for Gulf Coast Cancer Patient

*New volunteer group -- Bonita's Wish -- to help finish first home  
rebuilding project in Diamondhead, Miss. weekend of March 23-25*

**March 21, 2007 - Bay St. Louis, MS** - When Bonita Keely passed away last December at age 39 after a three year battle with cancer, she left behind hundreds of friends and family inspired by her courageous struggle to rebuild her home following Katrina while also battling cancer. She also left behind a legacy of love and caring for others. To commemorate Bonita's extraordinary will to live, over 30 friends and relatives from the Gulf Coast and as far away as Wisconsin and Montana will gather this weekend, on what would have been Bonita's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, to help one more cancer patient rebuild their Gulf Coast home. The group hopes this first *Bonita's Wish* home will be one of many.

"Everyone who knew Bonita was struck by her faith, her grace, and especially her sense of humor while battling cancer and struggling to rebuild her home. When she passed, she had the peace of mind knowing that her home was rebuilt and that her family was together under one roof and we hope to carry on Bonita's spirit by passing on that blessing to others," stated Jeff Parness, one of the Founders of *Bonita's Wish*.

### **A Small Organization with Big Dreams**

The new group's focus is twofold: to help Gulf Coast cancer patients rebuild their healing homes; and to empower cancer survivors and their friends and families with the unique opportunity to help rebuild the homes of cancer patients in disaster areas nationwide. The first rebuilding project is taking place at the new home of Shirley Paulus, a 67-year-old great-grandmother of nine who has been battling Leukemia for 10 years. *Bonita's Wish* volunteers from around the country have been helping to build Shirley's home and have assisted with the framing, roofing, and wiring. This coming weekend, over 30 volunteers are expected to descend on Shirley's house to help paint and landscape. The weekend's effort will culminate with a Sunday morning service at Shirley's new home to celebrate the effort and Bonita's loving spirit which brought them together for this unique mission.

"We're going to start small, one house project at a time. And as we collect more volunteers and more support we hope to reach out to other special folks in need and carry on Bonita's loving spirit."

### **Time/Place/Contact**

Rebuilding work will take place at the home of Shirley Paulus, 9410 Kawananaoka Place in Diamondhead (off Bayou Drive and Kolo Way) from Friday March 23 through Saturday March 24. A Sunday celebration service will be held on Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup> at 10AM and will be led by Chaplain Steve Holden of the United States Emergency Chaplains Corps. For more information, please call Jeff Parness at 917-806-8061 or visit [www.BonitasWish.org](http://www.BonitasWish.org). Media welcome for the weekend events.