

Joe Compian named Unsung Hero

By Bronwyn Turner | Posted: Sunday, April 26, 2009 12:00 am

Joe Compian envisions a mini-mall of social service agencies for Galveston County — one-stop shopping never short on compassion.

It's a vision that emerged after Hurricane Ike when several agencies left waterlogged and homeless found sanctuary at Holy Rosary Catholic Church.

“Once we cleaned it up ... we offered the facility as an extension of parish social ministries to various nonprofits” Compian parish social minister said.

“It became a little social services center there.”

The quick coordination of resources was a typical example of Compian's ability to huddle together help said Ted Hanley executive director of The Jesse Tree a social services organization.

“His connection with FEMA and the Red Cross in the early days after Hurricane Ike and his connection with Holy Rosary Church resulted in an immediate opportunity to open the ‘mini-mall of compassion’ in the Holy Rosary school building where The Jesse Tree the Chamber of Commerce the Children's Center Help4Galveston and many other groups rallied while in transition after the storm” Hanley wrote.

“Very few knew that Joe was coordinating the space making the introductions and sweeping the floors.”

For his work on behalf of community social agencies both in times of disaster and times of calm Compian has been selected as a 2009 Unsung Hero.

Compian who lives in La Marque joins others selected by The Daily News recently honored with a plaque at a reception.

“Joe literally lives the scriptural admonition that when one practices charity the right hand should not know what the left hand is doing” Hanley wrote in his letter nominating Compian for the honor.

“In fact Joe flies so low beneath the radar screen we often wonder if he himself truly knows the good he accomplishes in this world.

“So much good work happens simply because Joe is in the background that he exemplifies the Unsung Hero.”

Compian speaking by cell phone from a food fair for The Jesse Tree relishes his role in the background.

“For so long my work was my passion because making money was important” said Compian who in pre-retirement years worked as president of REMAX of Texas one of the largest real estate franchise organizations in the nation.

“When circumstances changed I started wanting to get back to the church to explore other avenues to use my educational and professional background and discovered the nonprofit organizations” he said.

Compian now is coordinator of The Jesse Tree Prescription Advocacy Program.

He uses a program he developed with Kyaw Lim that identifies the best possible price for a drug and enrolls clients the majority of whom are uninsured in patient assistance programs.

Compian also is active in Gulf Coast Interfaith the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and Galveston County Restore and Rebuild.

He hopes part of Galveston’s recovery will be a project setting up a facility for “one-stop option for social services in our community” working with Holy Rosary’s social services ministry.

And Compian would much rather talk about that than himself. E-mail him at jcompian@gmail.com for information.