

# CCI-sponsored New Orleans family plans to stay in Idaho

By Colette Cowman  
ICR editor

BOISE — When Katrina came to New Orleans Aug. 29, it was a relief for Daren Duncan and his family in some ways.

"Maybe it helped break the negative that was going on there," he said in Boise Sept. 28. He said he was at the point that he wanted "to get far away and not go back."

"There was a lot of drug trade in New Orleans and the murder rate is high," he said. "There were 350 murders in the city by July this year. That happens every year in New Orleans. There is a lot of poverty, and unemployment is sky high."

He had already been thinking about moving his family to someplace else in Louisiana that would be a better place to raise children. He wants a large family. When the hurricane struck, the family evacuated to Houston where they met Kristan Schlichte from Catholic Charities of Idaho, who had gone to Houston to help with disaster relief.

When Schlichte invited the family to come to Idaho, unlike many Katrina refugees who could only think of going back to New Orleans, they made the decision to come.

Dymon Lynn, 5, and Maurice, 10 months, a place to live, assistance to purchase food, clothing, medical treatment, transportation and work for Daren. Dymon is enrolled in kindergarten at a Boise public school, and Tasha, who is five months pregnant, is looking for work and hopes to enroll again in an online program to study business administration.

"She wants to work at home and have time with the kids," said 23-year-old Daren.

He has put his plans on hold to return to technical school to study multimedia, audio visual and graphic design, so he can work and save for a down payment on a house.

"Eventually I would like to look into opening a New Orleans cuisine restaurant in this



Daren Duncan with son, Maurice

They have not looked back — except to make sure their extended family members were okay. Many of their relatives are still in Northern Texas, Houston, and Georgia, waiting to return to New Orleans.

"In order to have a better quality of life, you have to remove yourself from cultural strongholds — anything that

keeps you from living the kind of life you choose to live," said Daren. "We removed ourselves. Katrina was the thing that sealed the deal. It was the confirmation."

Thanks to the generosity of many donors, Catholic Charities of Idaho staff has been able to find Daren and Tasha, and their children,

area," said Daren. The family plans to stay in Idaho. They like it here.

"I want to thank everyone for all their help," said Daren. "I hope that God blesses them and their families. And I ask that they keep us in their prayers, and we will keep them in our prayers."

One of his recreational goals for now is to catch a fish before the snow flies.

"That will be the first fish I have ever caught," Daren said. "I'm going to take a picture."

He is also looking for a couple of pets for his children — "like kittens."

He invites anyone who might have kittens or anyone who wants to send him pictures to email him at [macioduncan@yahoo.com](mailto:macioduncan@yahoo.com).