

Katrina by the numbers...

293,000 Homes destroyed (FEMA estimate)

90,000 Square miles affected by Katrina

50,000 Troops deployed by National Guard for relief/recovery.

10,000 Workers filing for unemployment due to Katrina.

700 Million dollars raised for Katrina victims by charities (Sept. 11 figure)

1 Billion dollars spent per day by the federal government for relief efforts.

— Source: The Seattle Times

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KAYLEY RICHARDS, FEATURES EDITOR

80%

The percent of New Orleans that was underwater after the events of Hurricane Katrina. Breached levees lead to much of the area's flooding.

90%

The percent of buildings in Biloxi and Gulfport, Miss. that were completely wiped away by the storm surge after Katrina.

Katrina survivor starts over at WHS

BY KAYLEY RICHARDS
FEATURES EDITOR

Two months ago, Josh Carrere was a relatively carefree teenager. He lived in the small town of Belle Chasse, La., a suburb of New Orleans, and had just started his junior year in high school, where he was a drummer in the marching band. As far as Carrere was concerned, he was right where he wanted to be. Little did he know that in a matter of weeks, life as he knew it would be changed forever.

Residents of Belle Chasse have a familiarity with the threat of hurricanes that can only be gained by living near the Gulf Coast, and Carrere is no exception.

"I've gone through like five hurricanes," said Carrere, "but we've never had to leave our homes before."

So when news first came about Hurricane Katrina, Carrere assumed it would be nothing out of the ordinary.

"I was thinking it was going to hit Florida," said Carrere. "I had no idea this would end up affecting me so much."

On Aug. 29, Carrere was visiting his grandparents at their home in Houma, La., located about 40 miles from New Orleans. It was then that the full force of Katrina hit, and Carrere realized just how serious the situation could become.

"I really like nature, so I went and stood out side as the hurricane came in," remembered Carrere. "The clouds started spiraling, and things started flying through the air. I almost got hit by some roof shingles."

Despite a mandatory evacuation of the area, Carrere and his family were unable to leave due to damaged roads and were forced to stay in his grandparents' flooding home with no electricity and no certainty of what lay ahead.

By Sept. 4, an emergency route to an airport was created. Carrere's family arranged for him to fly to Washington to live with his aunt here in Wenatchee. Carrere's mother, an Air Force nurse, was stationed in Biloxi, Miss., and the rest of Carrere's family chose to stay in Louisiana to begin rebuilding.

"I basically came here with just the clothes I was wearing," Carrere said. "All my stuff was back at my house in Belle Chasse, and I had no idea if it even survived."

In the short time since his arrival in Wenatchee, Carrere has been busy regaining a

Carrere isn't alone...

Twelve hours before Katrina hit, Abed and Sukoot Alsarama's family fled from their home in New Orleans to escape the wrath of the hurricane. According to Abed Alsarama, now a junior here at WHS, the Alsarama family expected to return to New Orleans within a few days and had no idea the hurricane would create so much damage. The Alsaramas are now staying with family members in Wenatchee. Abed and his sister Sukoot, a freshman, plan to attend WHS until they can return home.



Sukoot Alsarama



Abed Alsarama

sense of normalcy, enrolling in classes at WHS and becoming a drummer in the Golden Apple Marching Band. Local organizations like Stem-ilt Growers have provided Carrere with new clothes and other necessities. Carrere's most prized possession — his drum set — survived the hurricane and will be shipped from his home in Belle Chasse.

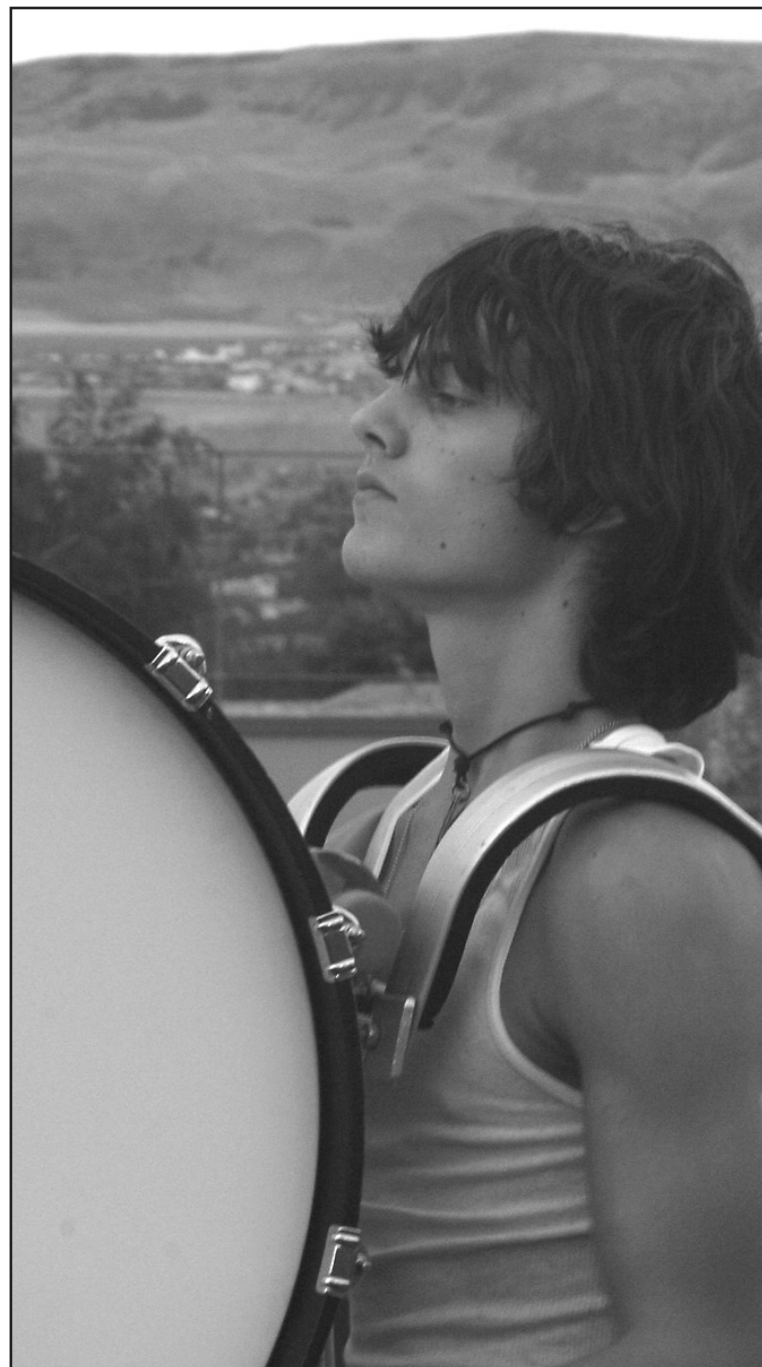
Despite his ordeal, Carrere knows he's one of the lucky ones. Unlike thousands of other Americans directly affected by Hurricane Katrina, Carrere now has a safe place to call home. He has also been in communication with his family and friends, all of whom are safe.

Still, being uprooted from his home, his friends, and most familiar aspects of his life wasn't exactly the way Carrere wanted to start his junior year. And with cleanup and restoration from Katrina expected to take years, Carrere's very future remains uncertain.

"Before the hurricane, I was offered a music scholarship to ULL (University of Louisiana at Lafayette)," said Carrere. "That's where I hope to go... if it still exists."

Until then, Carrere is intent on making his stay in Wenatchee, and at WHS, a good one.

"Belle Chasse was a real small town — everyone there knew my name and what I was about," Carrere said, "and now I get the chance to completely start over. It's scary, but it's pretty cool."



ERIN KIICK / THE APPLE LEAF

THE BEAT GOES ON...

Junior Josh Carrere has been involved in drumming for three years and was a member of the marching band at his high school in Belle Chasse, La. before Hurricane Katrina struck. Carrere is now a drummer for the Golden Apple Marching Band and plans to pursue a musical career after high school.