



Katrina Hurricane - Special Issue

At ABHOW, we know that “family” comes in all shapes, sizes, and relationships. There are those we have connections to because of blood relation, and those who are close to our hearts.

Staff and residents of the ABHOW communities and home office have experienced “family” with those who are close to our hearts. They are our neighbors, our housekeepers, our co-workers, our campus chaplains, and so many others.

“Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love.”

- Lao Tzu

When the vivid pictures of New Orleans hit our television screens, we could not help but feel horror at the scenes we witnessed, sadness for the tremendous loss, and compassion in our desire to help.

ABHOW along with the national association of AAHSA (American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging) and our local communities rallied to support our neighbors in need – our “family” in the Gulf States.

This special edition issue is dedicated to these efforts of support. We wish to share with everyone what activities we currently have in process and how you as an individual can become involved.

Our hearts go out to everyone affected by this tragedy.



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“American Baptist Homes of the West, as an expression of Christian mission, seeks to enhance the independence, well-being and security of older people through the provision of housing, health care and supportive services.”

ABHOW and AAHSA



Faced with the decision of how to support the need in the south, the ABHOW Foundation was quick to act and voted to contribute \$10,000 to the relief effort of the Katrina victims. As a member of the national organization of AAHSA, our corporation was aware that an AAHSA relief fund had been developed and wished to work with this larger organization. The McGregor Foundation, a long-time AAHSA member, issued a challenge grant to augment the AAHSA Gulf States' Hurricane Relief Fund. McGregor donated \$50,000 to the fund and offered to match up to another \$50,000 in gifts. By working with AAHSA, our Foundation was able to double their donation!

Websites Receiving Contributions

AAHSA's Gulf States' Hurricane Relief Fund at www.aahsa.org

Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund at www.bushclintonkatrinafund.org

Red Cross at www.redcross.org

Salvation Army at www.salvationarmyusa.org

Individuals Reaching Out Through Specialized Training



American Red Cross

The Red Cross has offered disaster relief training and is coordinating teams to provide support to the victims of the Gulf Coast. Two of the ABHOW home office employees have already received training in Red Cross Mass Care, Shelter Operations and Disaster Relief, and are currently awaiting notification of deployment. **Drew LeBlanc** finished his training on Labor Day and is actively on the list for a three-week deployment. Drew is part of the ABHOW Informational Technology Department and was personally affected by the hurricane. (See more about Drew on page 3 of this issue.) **Suzanne Saucier** of Human Resources has also received specialized training and hopes to receive orders in early December. In the meantime, Suzanne collected 600 pounds of pet food and delivered it to the Sacramento animal shelter where 100 displaced animals are being housed. Utilizing Red Cross training, ABHOW hopes to facilitate employee teams to participate in the relief efforts.

Personal Stories

Many employees and residents were personally touched by the tragedy of Katrina. Two employees – **Reggie Lyles**, Executive Director of Piedmont Gardens and Grand Lake Gardens and **Drew LeBlanc**, Senior Database Administrator – both have extensive family in the area.

Reggie shares that he has “over 40 family members, displaced evacuees, who are in Atlanta, Dallas and Houston. They have lost everything. They are business owners, school teachers, former superintendent of New Orleans Public Schools, Police Officers, parents and Christians.”

Drew has 20 immediate family members affected by Hurricane Katrina. His paternal grandmother, Mary LeBlanc, is in her mid 80’s and has been living with 20+ family members in a single house in Houston. “She is still numb and filled with trepidation about what she will find on her return to her house in the Carrolton area of New Orleans,” states Drew.

The recovery phase for these families and all those affected by the hurricane will occur over a long period of time. Our on-going prayers and support are with you.

Opening Our Doors

Losing everything, without a place to call home is inconceivable for most of us, and yet, that is exactly what the victims of Katrina are facing. Several communities and individuals are addressing this pressing need.

Nera Adams, resident of San Joaquin Gardens (located in Fresno, California), has family in Mississippi that has lost everything in the recent storm. Her nephew is a pastor and lost his church while his wife’s place of employment is gone. This couple, along with their three children, came to California for family support. The community of SJG adopted them providing housing for a week as well as toys and clothing donations.

Ancel Romero, Senior Vice President for Affordable Housing has been working with HUD to secure guidelines to accept displaced seniors into our affordable housing communities. The guidelines were received, and he has communicated to our affordable housing administrators regarding the necessary paperwork, so that those without homes will now have a place to stay. Through this program, we are welcoming a new resident who lost their home in the storm.

Finally, one of our employees has anonymously donated their home to a needy family for a period of up to one year. They have moved in with other family members to make room for this family in need.

The Help Continues . . .

ABHOW home office has heard from many communities regarding fund-raising and other support for those in need. Here are just some of the efforts currently in progress:

Several communities have made contributions to the Katrina Relief Fund through the American Red Cross including \$1,000 from **Mount Rubidoux Manor** (affordable housing in Riverside, California), \$6,240 from **Piedmont Gardens** (a continuing care retirement community in Oakland, California), \$6,745 from **Plymouth Village** (a CCRC in Redlands, California), and \$1,095 from **Judson Park** (a CCRC in Des Moines, Washington). **Rosewood** (a CCRC in Bakersfield, California) has raised \$4,117 for the Red Cross and Salvation Army. In addition, several communities have started their own relief fund drives including the **Terraces of Los Gatos** (a CCRC in Los Gatos, California) and **Pilgrim Haven** (a CCRC in Los Altos, California).

Judson Terrace Home and Lodge (affordable housing in San Luis Obispo, California) raised \$1,454. Through a matching gift program, they were able to double their donation to almost \$3,000.

Casa de Redwood (Affordable Housing in Redwood City, California) has started a fund drive to benefit Habitat for Humanity.

Randy McConnell, Administrator of **Bellflower Friendship Manor** (affordable housing in Bellflower, California), hand delivered relief funds to a church

in Houston. While there, Randy and his son were able to help out in the kitchen, serving evacuee families.

Valle Verde (a CCRC in Santa Barbara, California) has already contributed over \$18,000 to the Red Cross. In addition, the community is offering four skilled nursing and two dementia care beds for displaced seniors as needed. Resident, Paul Edwards – noted watercolor artist and former Disney animator, held an art show/sale with all proceeds going to the relief efforts.

Finally, the employees of two communities were very creative with their fund drive. The employees of **Plymouth Village** were given the opportunity to purchase a “dress down day” (casual working attire) for \$5 while the **Rosewood** employees participated in “Jean Day” where individuals could purchase the chance to wear jeans to work, also for \$5. All proceeds went to their communities’ relief funds.

These stories are just the beginning of a long period of support from ABHOW to our “family” in the gulf. As we receive new and updated information, we will share that with you via our *ABHOW Communications*. In addition our ABHOW website will be updated with a Katrina relief work link. This is now in the process of being finalized and once completed, can be accessed via the ABHOW website at www.abhow.com.

Thank you for your generosity including your pocketbooks, time and energy, as well as heart. Our gulf “family” needs us, and we will be there for them.