

Hurricane Relief Manual

Responding to the Need

This manual was assembled by a group of students from William Jewell College who journeyed from Liberty, Missouri down to the hurricane-affected area to help the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita during their fall break in 2005. Our hope is that, through the production and distribution of this manual, we can help to enable other groups to take such trips.

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We've all seen the photos, heard the reports and watched as the hurricanes of 2005 devastated entire populations of people within the United States. It left most of us stunned but, above all, it left us wanting to do something - wanting to reach out to those in need.

Progress is being made in the region. Neighbors are helping neighbors and strangers are helping strangers; Progress is being made by people who are determined to overcome - people who saw the needs and have resolved to help meet them.

But the needs continue to exist.

You may feel inadequate. We did. Truly, alone, we are inadequate. But when we went to the disaster area we saw that, by working together, volunteers are making a significant difference in the region.

The city of New Orleans was not forever changed in our weekend trip.

We helped families. We witnessed the devastation. And we left changed.

But we also left a lot to be done . . .

Hurricane Relief Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Experience	.....	1
The need	.....	4
Meeting the need	.....	4
Organizations	.....	5
Considerations	.....	6
Insurance	.....	7
Immunizations	.....	7
Expenses	.....	7
Funding	.....	8
Transportation	.....	9
Additional Preparation	.....	10
Questions and Answers	.....	11
Promoting the trip, attracting and informing the participants	.....	12
Sample documents	.....	13
Before you embark	.....	16
Upon returning	.....	17
We can't go on a trip but we still want to help	.....	17
Helpful websites	.....	18
Acknowledgments	.....	18



“It was a humbling experience, and one that I will always treasure.” - Scott Brown



“There will be a need for volunteers for a long time coming. There were great people down there, but so many more people need to volunteer. These people need help. They need help rebuilding.”
- Blaire Taylor

The need for volunteers is significant.



“The needs are many and varied . . . but they have one thing in common. They can be met by volunteers.”
- Courtney Herren

Reflections from Katrina

A surreal moment happened on our recent disaster services trip. One morning as we traveled into downtown New Orleans off of the badly damaged 10 Highway over Lake Ponchartraine our radio was turned up loudly as college students like it and a song came on called "Rock you Like a Hurricane" by the Scorpions. As the students started to sing along to the popular song we came over a rise in the highway and there before us was the New Orleans Superdome. At that moment singing along didn't seem quite so appropriate and we questioned why the station even chose to play the song. What we soon realized is that all of our worlds would be "rocked" by the devastation we encountered following Hurricane Katrina.

Having lost our family home to an F-5 tornado in Andover, Kansas in 1991 and having worked disaster relief in other tornados (including the Liberty tornado of 2003), floods, and ice storms I thought I had seen the worst. Soon I realized that the devastation left from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was the Kansas City tornado of 2003 multiplied by one-million. No camera lens is wide enough to tell the story and capture the vastness of the devastation. No reporter has a large enough vocabulary to describe the scene. The damage and destruction extends as far as the eye can see for what seemed hundreds of miles. Seeing the damage in New Orleans and the surrounding communities made me envision the 1983 movie "The Day After" which was about an atomic bomb dropped in Kansas City.

The work our William Jewell College American Humanics, Christian Student Ministries students, and faculty completed for the residents of New Orleans was called "Mud Out". This meant clearing out all the contents of family homes including the sheetrock and insulation. We would go to the Red Cross and Baptist Relief Services headquarters in Slidell, Louisiana and get our "Mud Out" assignments for the day. We worked in crews of 5-6 and each day we never knew what we were going to face but quickly figured out that we were going to be tested physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. We were meeting people at the lowest points of their lives and had very few answers for them. Each person we met had a sad story to share. These were the elderly, families, and children. For my crew each day seemed to get progressively worse in terms of challenging assignments. As we traveled through the city to find out our "Mud Out" assignment we became well-versed in reading landmarks and asking questions because most every street sign was gone. We also learned what the large red X on houses signified. The top number in the middle of the X represented the fire fighter who went through the house and the bottom number in the middle of the X was the number of bodies found in the house. The largest number a member of our crew saw was a 6.

On our final day of doing "Mud Out" work we met a grandmother outside of her home by the name of "Carolyn". As we introduced ourselves to Carolyn whose occupation was a server in a deli she shared with us how she and her grandson had been rescued from her home by a firefighter during the flooding caused by Hurricane Rita. The house had severe structural and water damage including a large tree through the top of one of the bedrooms because of Hurricane Katrina but Carolyn and her grandson continued to live there until their life was rocked for a second time by Rita. She told us they had not been in their house since the flood 30 days earlier staying with family in Mississippi.

When we opened the door to the house what we encountered was a foul stench and smell from mold and stagnant water that had been standing in the home. As we moved through the dark and dank house with respirators and masks on we saw furniture, beds, carpet, and walls with mold growing all over them. We all knew we didn't have a large enough crew to take on this task and radioed for back-up help but soon realized that no help was coming and if anyone was going to help out this woman and move her toward recovery it was going to be

us. We first opened up all of the windows in the house and then carried all of the furniture to the street and then emptied cabinets and closets of clothes. After furniture was removed we then moved on to taking out all of the carpet and hardwood floors. The cockroaches and maggots in the kitchen and throughout the house were large and rampant. With the carpet removed we could move on to pulling all of the sheetrock and insulation out of the house. Our goal was to get the house down to the 2x4 studs so it could dry out and be ready for a rebuild sometime in the future. As we moved through the house we empathized with Carolyn who was struggling with seeing all of her life's possessions going to the street in one large pile. She wanted to keep her kitchen cabinets but I had to tell her that they must go because they were covered in mold and were a health hazard. There were a few personal items we were able to help her pack up in boxes that may have been salvageable.

As we were there her insurance man showed up and walked through the house with her and we heard him tell her the heart breaking news that she had no flood insurance and only property insurance. Once again we felt like we had no answers for her and only felt more inadequate to alleviate this woman's pain and suffering. As we continued to work we grew more tired from the physical labor but developed more resolve to have this house as livable as possible before we had to load up our vans and make the 15 hour drive home to Liberty, MO. We knew whatever condition we left the house in that it was likely to remain that way for months if not years until the rebuild could begin. So, in each room we made sure to sweep up and clean up all of the debris and sheet rock remnants realizing that she would most likely be living in the home until the house was rebuilt versus living in a tent in her yard like so many other people were.

As our work day came to an end we reminded her to spray a bleach water solution on all of the studs and floors to kill the mold and open her home up during the day to air it out. Carolyn cried as we all gave her a hug as we walked out. The only words I could say to her were "God Bless You" which somehow seemed inadequate but I knew we had given her our very best and totally exceeded what we thought was possible when we started the day. Her house was now wide open with light shining all the way through the walls and studs from the windows in each room. There was now light in what was a dark and dreary home and the light represented hope which we all needed after this most intense disaster relief trip.

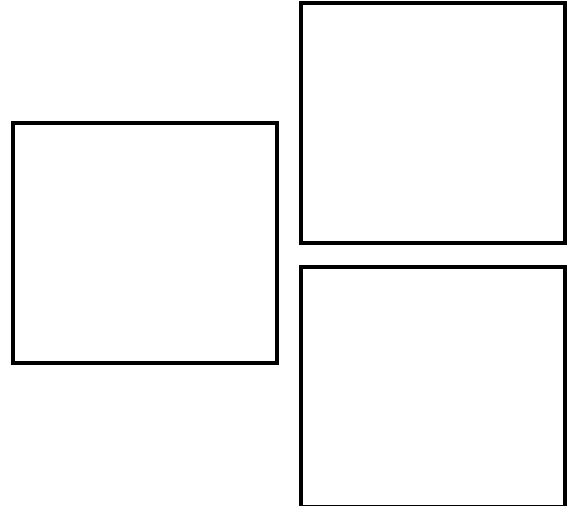
As we got in the van and knew we had a 15 hour trip ahead of us back to Liberty, Missouri we came to some realizations: We recognized that we had a moral obligation to go back and tell others of the incredible need that exists in New Orleans for workers. This need will last for years to come. There are all kinds of needs but there is a special place for college students and young adults who have the physical stamina and drive to do the kind of "back breaking" work that is so needed. The people of the Gulf Coast and problems they face need a human touch that can't be solved by heavy machinery and equipment. We also realized that there is probably not enough lumber or sheetrock in all of North America to rebuild what has been lost. The trip confirmed to us that the American Red Cross is an amazing organization that needs all of our support and financial resources to do the work that they do so well. The human spirit is incredibly resilient and that the people of New Orleans have suffered greatly but somehow, somehow will rebuild and get back on with their lives even though it will likely be years away. As relief workers we felt incredibly inadequate but not powerless to solving all of the problems we faced. In the end we did walk away with a sense of accomplishment in helping our neighbors in New Orleans, knowing that we had given them all we had over a period of 4 days, not matter how small the impact of our endeavors.

This story was submitted by Kevin Shaffstall, Director of Pryor Leadership Studies and American Humanics at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri.

As you can imagine, the needs in the area are frequently changing. Volunteers, however, will remain a constant need in the recovery effort in the months ahead.

Volunteers can serve in a variety of capacities:

- brush and debris removal (including chainsaw crews)
- preparing and serving food
- working at pantries
- gutting homes and other buildings
- disinfecting
- working at clinics
- paperwork and answering phones
- reconstruction
- . . . and the list goes on.



You may be wondering how your group will get from where you are to where the need exists - and about how to approach all of the issues that will arise between now and then.

Those are the matters that this manual intends to address.

You will find that most of the guidance offered in the following pages will be contingent on other factors; that is, answers to many of your questions will be “it depends.” However, it is our hope that we can provide helpful and relevant advice from our own experience when possible and point you and your group to those organizations that will have the most current information regarding the needs in the hurricane-affected area and the ways volunteers can help.

Organizations

We strongly recommend connecting with a relief organization early-on in the planning process. These organizations are knowledgeable of the needs that exist and will be able to connect your group in ways that will be most beneficial to the affected communities.

Organizations can do everything from organizing your entire trip to finding your group a place to work or simply finding you a place to sleep.

Below is a short list of organizations. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it should get you started.

Samaritan's Purse

<www.samaritanspurse.org/volunteer_index.asp>

Fill out the volunteer questionnaire and email it to the address provided.

The American Red Cross

<<http://www.redcross.org/where/chapts.asp>>

To perform any volunteer work through the Red Cross, contact your local chapter. Also, you will be required to fill out the application provided on the organization's website.

Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief

<http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.224451/k.BCAC/Hurricane_Katrina__Rita_Disaster_Relief_Update__Donations.htm>

This site provides updated information about the SBC Disaster Relief effort and how you can become involved.

USA Freedom Corps

<www.Usafreedomcorps.gov>

There is a volunteer match program through this site.

The Salvation Army

<http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/uss/www_uss.nsf>

Contact their Southern Territory Headquarters to find out how to help.

For a list of more organizations involved in the relief effort, visit <www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2005/katrina/help.center/#dv>.

Considerations

Regardless of the organization you choose or the location to which you venture, you will need to consider the following questions:

Where will you be staying?

Where will you be working?

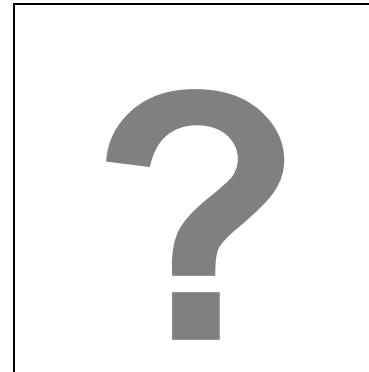
Will food be provided?

What skills will be required?

What equipment will be required?

What should participants pack?

Be certain to ask the above questions of the organization with which you partner.



You will need to make other considerations too. These, however, are considerations that are not likely to be addressed by your partner organization. They include:

Insurance.

Funding.

Immunization.

Transportation.

Expenses.

Additional Preparation.

Insurance

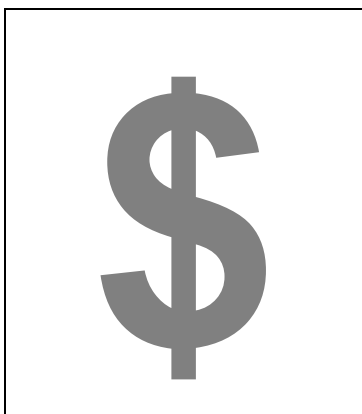
Be sure to address insurance issues before leaving on your trip. It is essential that every trip participant is fully insured as it is likely that your group will encounter health or safety hazards on some level at some time during your trip. Check to see whether your school, club or organization has a policy that will cover participants. Otherwise, ask all participants to provide verification of their insurance. See pages twelve through sixteen for details about the information required of participants on our trip.

Immunization

Because it is likely that your group will be exposed to health hazards on your trip, it is essential that all participants have and provide proof of their up-to-date immunizations. It is especially important to have current tetanus and hepatitis B immunizations, but be sure to ask your partnering organization if they recommend any other shots. Direct students to county health clinics where immunizations are administered at reasonable rates.



Expenses



Though expenses certainly vary, your group should expect to incur transportation expenses (see page nine for more detail), food and drink expenses, various supplies expenses, and promotional expenses. Don't forget to budget for some miscellaneous expenses as well!

Funding

Because your group will inevitably incur expenses, your trip will require some funding. It is possible that your group has a sufficient budget to fund the trip. However, if this is not the case, do not despair! Consider fundraising as an opportunity for others to get involved - others who, perhaps, are unable to attend such a trip themselves but who would like to contribute to the cause.

Our group used a combination of avenues to raise the requisite funds. We required participants to make a \$25.00 contribution toward the trip. We also asked for and received monetary and in-kind donations (including tools, food and drinks) from the students, faculty and staff at our college as well as from community members. The remainder of our trip expenses were paid for through our sponsoring campus organizations' budgets.

Below are some suggestions for fundraising for your trip:

***Set up a table, booth, or box collecting donations**

This works well for some cash in a short amount of time.

***Send out a letter or email requesting donations**

Even a brief letter describing the need can be a powerful appeal.

*** Sell Discount Cards**

People can buy restaurant discount cards and eat for a great price!

***Work at a concessions booth for a local High School or College**

This can be a great money maker!

*** Park cars at a professional sports game**

You don't get to watch the game, but you can make a good amount of money!

*** Holding an Event**

Sports Tournaments, Carnivals, Walk-a-Thons etc...

*** Be Creative**

Recently some high school students came up with a creative way to fundraise. They called it "Stop the Bop" and continuously played "MmmBop" in the hallways, etc. until they reached their fundraising goal. Not only was it creative - it also drew the attention of the national media, which, no doubt, helped their fundraising efforts.



For more fundraising ideas, check out these websites:

www.fundraiserhelp.com

www.fundraisingweb.org

www.fundraiser.com

Transportation

When planning your disaster relief trip you will need to address several transportation issues. First, you must decide how many people you will be bringing. Then, establish the best means of getting those people to your destination.

Regarding means of transportation, there are several different options:

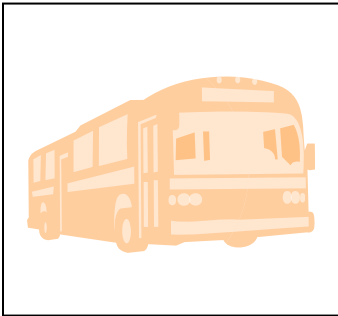
1) Vans: For our trip, we rented three vans that held a maximum of 12 people. These were very appropriate for our situation because while in Slidell we needed separate groups for separate projects. Most vans like these should be priced at about \$100 a day. One thing you need to try to establish is a set price without a charge per mile - otherwise your transportation expenses will significantly rise, especially if you are traveling a long way. Also, don't be afraid to ask for a donation. You may only receive a discount, but that is better than nothing.

2) Personal Vehicles: Another option for travel is the use of personal vehicles. Some students or faculty may be willing to drive if the school or the sponsoring group will reimburse them for gas money.

3) Buses: Large school buses or charter buses are always an option. Again, there are similar concerns with busses as with vans.

4) Local Churches: Oftentimes local churches own vans that are perfect for a trip of this nature. Also, many of them are very willing to sponsor or help

students with a project like this. Don't be afraid to ask them what they can do to help and if you can use their vehicles. Even if you have to pay some money to use them, the rate may be cheaper than renting from a company.



REMEMBER

- Whatever type of transportation you choose to use, make sure to run it by the correct college or university officials.
- You will need to obtain the proper insurance, depending on what type of plan your school uses.
- One thing you need to take into consideration is the type of tasks your group will be doing while in the disaster-affected area. That is, your group will be required to break into smaller groups or you may need to be able to drive off-road. Therefore, you may require specific types of transportation.
- When planning keep in mind that, depending on how far away you are from your destination, transportation is probably going to be your greatest expense on a trip of this nature - especially when you figure in the price of gas.

Additional Preparation

Be sure to emotionally prepare your group for the experience. One thing our group was not ready for while we were in New Orleans was the interaction with the victims and their families. Therefore, this page is dedicated to help prepare volunteers for interacting with victims. Some victims will probably need to seek professional help, but it will help you to have some knowledge of what to say to the people you are helping. Here are some opportunities and tips:

- The Red Cross offers special disaster mental health training for volunteers. Check out their website for their interactive disaster relief training. <http://www.redcross.org/flash/course01_v01/>
- According to trauma experts three things are critical to help diminish trauma
 - People need to talk about the trauma to express the pain that they are feeling
 - Overcoming the sense of helplessness
 - Social support that the symptoms they are having are normal and it is all right for them to feel how they do
- You are not expected to have all of the answers. Just lend your ear to victims, allowing them to share their emotions and experiences with you.
- Point victims toward other people or resources if you notice that they have additional needs.
- This is a link that provides helpful information about interacting with youth who are recovering from a disaster.
<<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/NIMHviolence.pdf>>
- Check out the resource section of the document at this link for additional help.
<<http://homelessed.net/help/Tips%20for%20Helping%20Students%20Recovering%20From%20Traumatic%20Events.pdf>>

Some of the above information was found in the article "When Disaster Strikes" by Hara Estroff Marano published in Psychology Today, November 2001.

Questions and Answers

Q. Should our group bring items to donate?

A. Not all organizations have the capability to distribute relief supplies. Therefore, please contact your partner organization before planning to bring items to donate.

Q. Is there really still work to be done?

A. Yes, due to the amount of damage there will be work to be done for possibly up to the next couple of years.

Q. If I don't have time to be there very long, will I still be able to make a difference?

A. Yes, any time that you are able to give will make a difference. Obviously you won't be able to help everybody, but you will be able to make a huge difference for at least a few people.

Q. What if I am not physically fit? Will I still be able to help down there?

A. Not all work involves heavy physical labor; there are jobs such as working in the kitchens, or office and organization work to be done.

Q. Is the work dangerous?

A. Not if you take the proper safety precautions. Besides, there are many jobs that do not require you to be in a dangerous situation.

Q. Will I be able to purchase supplies once I get down there?

A. Don't count on it. Many stores still are not open because they are either damaged or understaffed, so plan on bringing everything that you will need.

Once you've decided to organize a trip to the hurricane-affected area you will, of course, want to recruit participants. Though you may already have a strategy in mind, we are including in the next couple of pages posters and information sheets from our trip promotion campaign to give your group an idea of what worked on our campus. In addition to hanging the signs around the college we made posts on our campus message board, sent out an all-campus email and set up a table in a public area to recruit participants and raise awareness.

We scheduled two pre-trip informational meetings where we made participants aware of the details of the trip and gave them an idea as to what they should expect. We also utilized those meetings as a time to address any questions that the participants had.

In the following pages you will find the Personal Information Form and Information Sheet as well as other documents that we utilized.

Though our group chose not to, you may want to consider developing a liability waiver for your trip.

Finally, don't forget to check with your college to see if they require any forms for or have policies about such trips.

Five days.

Three organizations.

One cause.

WJC Hurricane Relief Project

The Details.

What: Trip to the area affected by the hurricanes to assist with the recovery efforts

Dates: October 14, 4pm – October 18, 2pm

Cost per student: \$25.00

Requisites: Hepatitis B & Tetanus Vaccinations and Red Cross Training Course (TBA)

SIGNUP DEADLINE: October 3, Noon.

Where to signup: Gano Lobby

Need more info? Contact Courtney Herren at [redacted] or visit the table outside the bookstore in the Union on Friday during lunch or Monday morning.

Required
organizational
meeting.

October 4.
5 pm.

Gano Assembly.



American
Red Cross



American Humanities

WJC
Christian
Student
Ministries

Fall break 2005.

Make it count.

WJC Hurricane Relief Project

Information Sheet

Here is your chance to roll up your sleeves and make a difference in the Gulf Coast region as they recover from Hurricane Katrina. A service team from WJC is forming to go to the Gulf Coast area over Fall Break. This will be a service trip focusing on debris removal and clean-up work for those affected by this year's hurricane season.

SIGNUP DEADLINE: October 3, Noon

Where to sign up: Gano Lobby, outside Jeff Buscher's office

Cost: \$25 per student due by October 9. The cost of the trip covers most travel and food expenses, though students will likely want to bring some additional money. Payments will be received upstairs in Gano, [REDACTED]. Please make checks payable to WJC.

What: We will be volunteering with the North American Mission Board and at Red Cross Disaster Relief Sites that have been established. Be prepared to serve with the understanding that the needs there are constantly changing.

Where: The specific location will be determined soon based on need.

When:
October 14, 4 pm – depart WJC, drive through the night
October 15, morning – arrive at destination
October 15–17 – work hard
October 17, evening – depart for WJC
October 18, 2 pm – arrive at WJC

Conditions: We will have a place to eat, sleep, shower and serve.

Requisites:

- * Attend the informational meeting on October 4 at 5 pm in Gano Assembly.
- * Complete and turn in a Personal Information Sheet and Red Cross Volunteer form to Kevin Shaffstall (Box 1024) by October 9.
- * Turn in proof of Hepatitis B and Tetanus vaccinations in addition to a photocopy of your Driver's License and insurance card to Kevin Shaffstall (Box 1024) by October 13, 3 pm.
- * Complete the Red Cross Training Course (Further information TBA)

Sponsors: William Jewell College Christian Student Ministries and American Humanics chapter together with the Red Cross have partnered to make this project happen. Also assisting with the trip are some local churches which are providing vehicles, financial support, drivers, and some adult and high-school age volunteers.

Make it count.

WJC Hurricane Relief Project

Personal Information Sheet

Personal Information

Full Name _____ Gender _____

Current Address _____

Home Address _____

Mobile Phone Number _____ Other Phone Number _____

Emergency Contact Information

Emergency Contact: _____ Relationship to you: _____

Emergency Contact Phone Numbers: _____

Medical Information

Allergies: _____

Other medical conditions: _____

Any prescription medications being taken: _____

Dietary Requirements: _____

Insurance Information

Insurance Company Name: _____ Policy Number: _____

Claim Billing Address: _____

Prescription Plan Name: _____ Policy Number: _____

Claim Billing Address: _____

Before you embark

From our experience, we suggest the following:

- Provide trip participants with the contact information (at least including address and phone number) of the place where you will be staying and ask them to, in turn, provide the information to their emergency contact.
- Before leaving, provide your college or university with information about your whereabouts whilst on the trip as well as information about how to contact you.
- Also, provide your traveling contact information to your partner organization.
- Take along a binder containing the Personal Information Sheets and a copy of each participant's Driver's License, insurance card and immunization record. Be sure to keep the binder in a secure location. Also, if your group will not be volunteering together at all times, be certain that everyone knows who will have possession of the binder in case the information it contains is needed. In fact, we developed a spreadsheet containing the most crucial information from the Personal Information Sheets and gave a copy to each team leader.
- It is also a good idea to bring along a first aid kit. If possible, take one in every vehicle.
- Consider communication issues before leaving - especially if your group will be traveling in more than one vehicle. While you may decide that mobile phones will be a sufficient means of communicating, our group chose to bring walkie-talkies. If you are interested in using walkie-talkies then check with other campus organizations to see if your group could borrow a set.
- Finally, be sure to arm yourself with good directions and an adequate amount of drivers. While maps may be obtained through internet sources, it is possible that a more comprehensive map would be a wise purchase for your trip.

Upon Returning

If your group's experience is anything like ours was, you will return to your college or university campus wishing to do more for the victims of the natural disaster. Here are a few ideas to get you going:

- Start a fundraising campaign for your partner organization
- Begin organizing another trip
- Arrange a campus presentation to encourage others to help with the relief effort.
- Collect addresses of families with whom you have made contact while on the trip. Upon returning, send the families a care package or a thoughtful note.
- If you found this manual useful, share it with other groups who might be interested in going on such a trip.
- Please give our group feedback on this manual (see our contact information at the front of the manual). If it was useful, we want to know. If it needs revision, we DEFINITELY want to know!

We can't go on a trip, but we still want to help

Of course, circumstances are not going to permit every group to take a trip to the disaster-affected area. This does not, however, preclude your group from being able to assist in the relief effort in some capacity. Consider fundraising using the techniques on page eight and donate the money your group collects to a relief organization - there are some listed on page five. **Otherwise, please pass this manual along to another group who might be able to organize such a trip.**

Helpful websites

www.redcross.org

www.fema.gov

www.namb.net

www.cnn.com/helpcenter

www.networkforgood.org

www.pointsoflight.org/about/Katrina

www.nvoad.org

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