

Junior League of Memphis Responses to Hurricane Katrina

We have all read and watched the news of the growing magnitude of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Our members have responded overwhelmingly to the needs in our community by sending monetary donations, donating items through various drives and volunteering their time at relief centers across the city. Below are some of the present projects, we welcome the public's assistance.

The JLM Repeat Boutique has been providing clothing free of charge to evacuees who are able to show ID from the hurricane-affected areas. During the first week, over 75 people were served through this effort. The Repeat Boutique has also set up a Hurricane Relief station where evacuees shopping in the store may pick up toiletries and hygiene items. Regular store customers have enthusiastically embraced this effort by donating these items. The Repeat Boutique can be contacted at 327-4777

In response to the growing needs of hurricane evacuees who have relocated to the Memphis area, the Junior League of Memphis has been working with relief agencies to determine the greatest needs and best ways to direct our volunteers to help.

The agencies coordinating efforts through the Emergency Management Agency have indicated a slowdown in the initial surge of volunteers, and have identified several critical areas where Junior League of Memphis volunteers can make the greatest impact. We will begin scheduling volunteers to help staff the following areas:

- The Red Cross Headquarters at 1400 Central Avenue is in desperate need of volunteers to assist victims with applications for assistance. Although two other Red Cross locations have opened, the largest numbers of people are still coming to the Central Avenue location. Volunteers are needed for any length of time to help process applications, direct people where to go for help, and to provide hospitality by distributing drinks and snacks while they wait in line (often for many hours).
- Volunteers are needed to help entertain the children waiting with their parents at the Red Cross Central Avenue location. Mid-South Reads and WKNO Memphis have set up a program and need volunteers to provide storytime to the children and distribute free books and coloring pages while their parents are waiting for paperwork to be processed. Volunteers are needed to fill 1-2 hour reading shifts.
- EMA has set up a Displaced Citizens' Assistance Center through the Convention and Visitor's Bureau to handle calls from displaced citizens and direct them to the help they need. There is a great need for volunteers to work morning or afternoon shifts at the call center. Volunteers are needed every day, but the day they currently have the greatest need for help is Monday.

Many organizations are collecting items for donation to hurricane evacuees, and the JLM's Community Resource Center will be a collection location for two such efforts.

- The Red Cross has indicated an ongoing need for **Hygiene Items and Toiletries**. A collection box will be set up at the CRC for donations of soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss, shampoo/conditioner, shaving cream, razors, feminine hygiene products and other such items.

- **"Bear Hugs With Love"** Junior League member Natasha Nassar is helping coordinate a major teddy bear/stuffed animal drive in Memphis, Austin and Houston, TX. The youngest victims of Hurricane Katrina had to leave most precious possessions at home and this effort seeks to give each child a little something for comfort in this devastating time of loss in their lives. The bears collected in Memphis will go first to children in Memphis, then to those children who have evacuated to Houston, Austin and Dallas. Donated animals don't have to be bears, but must be NEW. More information can be found at www.bearhugswithlove.com . collection box has been placed at the CRC.

We will have ongoing hurricane relief information posted on the JLM website (www.jlmemphis.org). Please continue to check the site during the upcoming weeks for the most updated information on how you can help JLM's relief efforts.

With Gratitude,

Courtney Murrah
President,
2005-2006
Junior League of Memphis