

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RANCHO SANTA FE FOUNDATION**

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“I survived Betsy in New Orleans, Camille, Elena, Frederick, George and now Katrina on the coast. Katrina is the most emotionally crippling event I’ve been through. It destroyed the coast’s landmarks and history but it will never destroy our soul.”

These are the words of a community foundation colleague from Mississippi who joined the flood of e-mails that have been pouring in over the last two weeks from people all over the country who are searching for ways to help the victims of hurricane Katrina. The initial generosity of Americans has exceeded \$800 million in cash donations to thousands of different relief organizations in the Gulf Coast area and we are now beginning to see the results of this outpouring as families are re-united, businesses are re-opening and hope is being restored. There seems to be no doubt in anyone’s mind that this region will rise again, but how and when remains to be seen. This is where our work, today, will have an impact, as phase two of the recovery process begins.

Money has come from many sources ... wealthy individuals as well as poor, adults and children reached into their pockets and their piggy banks, small groups held bake sales and charity concerts, corporations matched employee contributions in some cases as much as two-for one, and once again the American spirit has prevailed over a natural disaster that may have broken levees, but will never break our soul.

The community of Rancho Santa Fe can be included in this list as we proudly announce that we have contributed nearly \$130,000 through the Disaster Relief Fund at the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation. 100% of these funds have been sent to the San Diego Chapter of the American Red Cross. In addition, we have been able to re-direct a donation of new clothing, valued at more than \$21,000, from the North County owners of a national retail chain. These clothes will be shipped to people in the Louisiana area, at the company’s expense, immediately. This would not have been possible, in such a short amount of time, had it not been for the support and collaboration of the Rancho Santa Fe Review and our local non-profit partners, the Rancho Santa Fe Association, the Community Center, Gayle Gillies Travel, R. Roger Rowe School and the Senior Center.

A variety of government and private agencies are now in place to assist victims of hurricane Katrina and federal officials have asked people wanting to help not to proceed to the affected area unless directed by an agency. Trained volunteers will ultimately be more effective. However, cash donations will continue to be needed to allow volunteer agencies to issue cash vouchers to victims, to purchase the things needed to house and care for displaced families, and so much more.

The Disaster Relief Fund will remain in place indefinitely to accept your donations of cash. And on behalf of the Foundation and the Rancho Santa Fe Review, we applaud our community for its generosity.