

NEXUS: The Pittsburgh Dialogues for Volunteers, Philanthropists and Activists

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NEXUS LINKS THE BEST OF NATIONAL THINKING WITH PROMISING WORK IN OUR COMMUNITIES TO BUILD TRUST AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, IN AN EFFORT TO SHAPE A COMPREHENSIVE ACTION AGENDA FOR WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

Unprecedented cataclysm strikes the Gulf Coast

Over 1500 lives lost. \$75 billion in damages. Storm surges higher than 30 feet. 80% of the city of New Orleans flooded. 26,000 people seeking refuge in the Louisiana Superdome. 90,000 square miles declared federal disaster zones. ¹

The numbers are staggering. Hurricane Katrina is believed to be the largest hurricane of its strength to ever approach the United States. It is, by far, the most expensive natural disaster in U.S. history. ² Forecasts prompted New Orleans

By year's end, a record \$2.96 billion would be donated to charity, with nearly ¾ of that total from individuals.

Mayor Ray Nagin to order the first mandatory evacuation in the city's history. In the days following the storm's landfall on August 29, 2005, Americans watched rescue efforts for the many left behind - estimates suggest 20% of the population was unwilling, or in many cases without the resources necessary, to comply with the evacuation order.

And yet, while the dimensions of the disaster are heart-rending, the charitable and voluntary response gives cause for hope. In the days following the storm, it seemed as if everyone was asking "What can we do to help?" By year's end, a record \$2.96 billion would be donated to charity, with nearly ¾ of that total from individuals.³ Tallying the number of volunteers is nearly impossible, but anecdotal information suggests the response was just as robust. For example, Habitat for Humanity reported that by October 3, 2005, more than 24,000 Americans had registered to volunteer - dwarfing the 7,500 offering to help after the tsunami.⁴

Western Pennsylvania responds generously

As New Orleans celebrated Mardi Gras 2006, the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University asked the question: How has your organization engaged in the relief and rebuilding efforts in the Gulf Coast? The responses - more than four dozen in a matter of days - represent a fraction of charitable and voluntary activity in Western Pennsylvania. The initial intent was to count volunteer hours, dollars donated and other measures. Instead, a rich picture of engagement emerged, from the largest organizations to the smallest, from individuals to clubs and congregations. The following information is by no means comprehensive, but it does illustrate the generosity and heart of Western Pennsylvania.

Channeling philanthropic giving to the Gulf Coast

Brother's Brother Foundation has collected over \$800,000 in cash contributions, much of it without issuing a formal appeal. By late October, gifts were received from over 2,000 individuals and dozens of foundations, social and religious organizations, clubs and businesses, as well as several large in-kind contributions like the 5,000 pairs of shoes sent by Crocs, Inc. of Boulder, Colorado. Total aid sent by Brother's Brother Foundation to the Gulf Coast was estimated at over \$6.5 million by late January 2006. Even the agency's accounting firm got involved. Schneider Downs employees created a cookbook of their favorites, *Accounting for Taste*, with proceeds benefiting Brother's Brother Foundation Hurricane relief work.

The Pittsburgh Foundation established two funds. *The Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund - Pittsburgh* was created to support residents who relocated to Western Pennsylvania. The *Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund - Gulf Coast* served as a means of collecting funds to support immediate relief and long-term rebuilding needs in partnership with community foundations in the Gulf Coast area.

The local affiliate of the American Red Cross raised over \$5.2 million from local citizens towards the National Disaster Relief Fund for hurricane recovery efforts. Donations were also received by many religious organizations, including the Pittsburgh Presbytery and the United Jewish Federation.

Bishop Donald Wuerl asked Roman Catholic parishes to take up a collection over Labor Day weekend. Funds from parishes and schools, plus gifts individuals sent directly to the diocese reached more than \$1.5 million by late September. Money was forwarded directly to the dioceses in the Gulf region because, according to Bishop Wuerl, they “know the immediate needs and can assure that the needs of the people are being met.” He added that more half of the funds had been distributed to local churches in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas by late September.

Many local foundations and corporate giving programs made generous gifts immediately following the storms, including some targeted for key services where the foundation has particular interest. FISA Foundation’s giving included \$30,000 to the Disability Funders Network, for the Rapid Response Fund to directly assist individuals in need; \$10,000 to the National Network to End Domestic Violence

and \$10,000 to the Relief Fund for Sexual Assault Victims, both gifts towards supporting programs and individuals affected by the storms.

CPA firm Alpern Rosenthal, like many businesses, took up a collection from employees and matched the gift, for a total of \$3,000 to the Red Cross. Later in 2005, the firm adopted a school in Gulfport that had re-opened despite suffering damages during the storms, and sent school supplies and gift certificates to support the students.

Other foundations and corporations making gifts to the local or national chapters of organizations like the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army include the Hillman Foundation (\$20,000); Alcoa Foundation (\$220,000); Mellon Financial (\$25,000 to the Pittsburgh Foundation Katrina fund plus \$200,000 to match employee gifts to the Red Cross); and Bayer (product donations).

Rebuilding critical human services

The 122.5 hours worked in six days were “most definitely the most challenging week of my life, but well worth it.”

*Larry Hokaj
Greater Pittsburgh
Community Food
Bank*

The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank’s IT Director, Larry Hokaj, was asked by America’s Second Harvest to volunteer. The Greater New Orleans Food Bank had established a temporary distribution center in Baker, Louisiana. Along with two other volunteers from food banks in California and South Carolina, Larry set up the technology required to operate the facility and developed an emergency food distribution accounting system. In four weeks immediately post-Katrina, the New Orleans food bank distributed 17 million pounds of food - or 4.25 pounds each week. Typically, the agency distributed a fraction of that volume - less than one quarter pound of food weekly.

Managing the influx of donations and the tremendous need throughout the region might have strained the capacity of a stable organization. Instead, food bank volunteers were rebuilding a system using resources they described as “skeletal” while routing a huge volume of food and supplies.

Like everyone in the region in those early weeks, the volunteers’ living conditions were primitive. Larry made the 27-hour trek to Baker in a rented mobile home to provide shelter for food bank volunteers, buying food along the way. Larry describes the grueling 122.5 hours he worked in six days as “most definitely the most challenging work week of my life, but well worth it.”

Raising the roof to build and restore homes

Jerry Cozewith writes that the 50 Rotary Clubs that make up Rotary District 7300 have pledged to assist with rebuilding efforts in Mississippi through a partnership with the Rotary Club of Biloxi. Twenty teams will spend seven days each between March and June to work on repairs and new construction projects for residential housing in the area. The Clubs have raised \$100,000 to send their volunteers and purchase construction materials.

“You may want to think about re-routing your spring break ...”

*Dan Dupee,
Coalition for
Christian Outreach*

Trading the beach for the bayou

Robert Morris University students were among the many collegians dedicating their spring breaks to rebuilding efforts. RMU sent three dozen students through two projects to Gulfport, Mississippi and Lake Charles,

Louisiana. They raised the funds necessary to make the trip themselves.

On September 6, 2005, Coalition for Christian Outreach president Dan Dupee wrote, “you may want to think about re-routing your spring break to New Orleans, Mississippi or Alabama.” Two local chapters of the Coalition for Christian Outreach at Penn State Altoona and the University of Pittsburgh did just that, connecting with churches in the region to arrange to spend time in Mississippi working on a variety of projects.

Responding to refugees’ needs throughout the South

Sister Thomas Joseph Gaines, SC is one of 114 chaplains in the U.S. trained to respond to disaster situations. This

It’s unimaginable that there is someone standing in front of you who doesn’t have a thing ... the faces of the people remain with me.

Sister T.J. Gaines, SC

September, she left her post at McKeesport’s Kane Regional Center to spend two weeks in relief efforts. She was the first chaplain to arrive at the Houston Astro Dome, working twelve hour shifts to coordinate volunteers and support those in need. Sister T.J. provided emotional support - holding hands and comforting babies - and dealt with practical concerns - finding clothing for new arrivals, helping seniors who couldn’t easily walk between to the mobile medical unit or pharmacy. She notes, “It’s unimaginable that there is someone standing in front of you who doesn’t have a thing ... the faces of the people remain with me.”

Michelle Goyak, EMT, with Pittsburgh Mercy Health System, spearheaded a donation rally. Volunteers from the City of Pittsburgh EMS, Medical Rescue Team South, Brentwood EMS, Tri-Community South and the Munhall EMS collected

459 boxes – more than 10,000 pounds – of clothing, diapers, health and beauty products, pet food and more. Southwest Airlines arranged to ship the supplies to the Star of Hope Mission in Houston, Texas, where many evacuees were temporarily housed.

Drawing on local expertise to support recovery

An interdisciplinary team from the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Education and the Watson Institute formed Project Reassure, a website rich with resources to help adults counsel youth dealing with the aftermath of the disaster. The site serves as a means to provide quick, practical suggestions to experienced and novice counselors alike. With children from the Gulf region

relocated all over the country, Project Reassure means that teachers in Texas or volunteers at a community center in New Mexico can access the resources. The collaboration intends to stay active into the future, so that their expertise is available whenever it may be required.

Hundreds of volunteers pitched in to answer phone calls ... on a 24-hour basis, with over 4,500 calls on a specially created hotline...

Dr. Nick Trombetta, CEO of PA Cyber School, led a team of educators to New Orleans to consult with local leaders on strategies for helping displaced students resume their educations. In March, they returned to meet with a team of school principals working to help 500 high school seniors hoping to earn their diplomas this spring.

Mobilizing volunteers throughout the community

The Pittsburgh Presbytery has organized trips of volunteer work teams, collecting information from each team to better prepare others. Local churches also organized to provide

Presbyterian Health and Hope in a box kits for survivors. Among the churches that have sent or are preparing to send teams are Shadyside Presbyterian Church and Waverly Presbyterian Church.

Similarly, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America organized work teams to travel to Ocean Springs, Mississippi in January and February 2006. Working with Christus Victor Lutheran Church, volunteers provided assistance at a medical center, as well as general clean-up and construction assistance.

Raffle baskets were created, including items like hand-crafted wooden birdhouses ... and raised \$1300 for relief efforts.

The local Red Cross led 86 three-week deployments of trained volunteers to Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Florida. In the offices, hundreds of volunteers pitched in to answer phone calls and provide other administrative support services. They fielded thousands of public inquiries on a 24-hour basis, with over 4,500 calls on a specially created hotline alone.

Every weekend and sometimes several times each week, they led Boot Camp - disaster training for deployment - to involve Western Pennsylvanians interested in volunteering. Tami Aubele reports that over 850 local citizens have registered as volunteers, and more than half have completed all trainings required for deployment.

Melissa Angelo reports that Villa St. Joseph residents, in cooperation with Presbyterian Senior Care, were among the many volunteers assembling care packages for Katrina victims.

Allegheny East MH/MR's Kate Bayer reports that the agency sent a staff person to volunteer for two weeks with clean-up efforts in New Orleans. Many other agencies, including Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, provided release time to allow staff to travel to the Gulf Coast with church groups or other volunteer efforts.

Community Lutheran Partners, Inc. of West Virginia and Western Maryland organized a drive among the 63 Lutheran churches in the synod. The local Lutheran community gathered 12.5 tons of relief supplies to fill a tractor trailer truck headed south on behalf of Lutheran Disaster Response. In addition to non-perishable food, water and other necessities, the volunteers gathered chain saws, generators, work gloves, tarps and tools required to begin the clean-up. Volunteers from Community Lutheran Partners also helped staff a staging area in Jackson, Mississippi, helping to sort and distribute the 50 truckloads they'd received, working 18 hours as they sorted and repacked trucks, quickly sending 42 truckloads back out to areas in need. Members of the team made a delivery to Pearlington, Mississippi, close to the storm's center, traveling towards the coast as threats of Hurricane Rita grew. On their arrival, the team unloaded the 12.5 tons of supplies into a partially-demolished school building that the Army Corps of Engineers had converted into an emergency warehouse. Additional trips are being planned.

Fundraising for relief and restoration

Staff collections were taken at countless agencies, including Allegheny East MH/MR, TECH PA, the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, the Achievement Center of Erie, Junior Achievement of Southwest PA, Partners for Quality

Foundation, Robert Morris University and Pittsburgh Mercy Health System.

Pressley-Ridge matched employee giving, for a total gift of \$5,608 to the Alliance for Children and Families.

At The Western Pennsylvania Hospital - Forbes Regional Campus, volunteers staffed a table in the cafeteria to collect cash and check donations. Raffle baskets were created, including prizes like hand-crafted wooden birdhouses and a ceramic planter. Donations and raffle ticket sales raised \$1,300 for relief efforts.

A 50/50 raffle at a Partners for Quality Foundation fundraising event benefited relief efforts. ACHIEVA gave \$10,000 donated from their Acclamation Systems Golf Outing.

The employees of PA Cyber and the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center in Midland, Pennsylvania and the Beaver County NAACP hosted a Katrina Relief fair with games, food and prizes, that raised over \$6,000. At the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center, a benefit

Restaurant canisters were designated for Hurricane Katrina relief ... locally, raising nearly \$35,700.

concert featuring the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra raised additional funds. Students in the performing arts charter school sold t-shirts to raise \$800 for their sister school, the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts.

Connecting with sister organizations

Dennis Gilfoyle at Junior Achievement of Southwest Pennsylvania reports that they've sent financial contributions from board and staff members to assist the

New Orleans JA Chapter, which has operated in the local CEO's garage since their experiential learning center suffered more than \$3 million worth of damage.

At Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh, Stephanie Schoenberg reports that the New Orleans Ronald McDonald House was destroyed. High winds ripped the roof off and 12 feet of water swallowed the building. The pediatric patients and their families evacuated to other

ACHIEVA gave \$10,000 from their Family Trust ... "in a very real sense, then, this gift is made by people with disabilities to help other people with disabilities in need."

*Christine Fillipi,
ACHIEVA*

RMHC through the Gulf region and nationwide, RMHC staff organized food, clothing, baby supplies and travel assistance to support the families. From September 10 through October 9, all collections from U.S. McDonald's restaurants canisters were designated for Hurricane Katrina relief, with matching funds, \$1 for \$1, from the McDonald's Corporation. Locally, canister collections neared \$35,700, which benefited the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and RMHC of Greater New Orleans. The local RMHC also granted \$4,150 to help rebuild their sister organization.

The Washington City Mission held a dinner at the Bella Piatto Restaurant in McMurray in support of the New Orleans Rescue Mission. Through the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, dinner proceeds were sent to help in the rebuilding.

Family Services of Western Pennsylvania made a cash contribution to the Alliance for Children and Families, to

support relief efforts by family service agencies throughout the Gulf region.

ACHIEVA's Christine Fillipi reported that, in addition to funds raised through their golf outing, they gave \$10,000 from their Family Trust's Pooled Trust for people with disabilities. She noted that the Trust agreement means that amounts in a person's account at death are used to benefit other people with disabilities. In a very real sense, then, this gift is made by people with disabilities to help other people with disabilities in need.

Josette Fitzgibbons reports that The Midwife Center for Birth and Womens Health collected 60 pounds of blankets and baby clothes for the American College of Nurse Midwives' annual Blankets for Babies campaign in September. Nurse-Midwives in Baton Rouge and Houston distributed them to Katrina evacuees.

The American Lung Association of Pennsylvania led a "Donate a Day - Work without Pay" campaign to raise \$10,000 among their chapters in Pennsylvania, Delaware and West Virginia. Along with the financial support, the chapters sent over \$7,000 worth of medical supplies and asthma medications to the Mississippi chapter.

Kathi Finch writes that The Epilepsy Foundation Western/Central Pennsylvania donated a portion of the proceeds from their annual Mardi Gras Gala fundraiser to the Louisiana Epilepsy Foundation, which was located in New Orleans until last September. Pledge cards and event proceeds raised \$10,000 towards rebuilding.

The Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill have had a relationship with the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans for 86 years. Storm and flood damage devastated the eight buildings owned and operated by the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans' Ninth Ward - including the school, nursing home and assisted living apartments. Losses total more than \$10 million. The Sisters of Charity helped in variety of ways, from personally contributing money, clothing and blankets to organizing a Jazz Mass with the Diocese of Greensburg, a pancake breakfast with a local parish and a benefit basketball game at Seton Hill University.

Altoona's Center for Independent Living reached out with a contribution to the National Center for Independent Living, which worked to assist individuals with disabilities displaced by the storms.

In Duquesne, Catholic churches St. Joseph's and Christ the Light of the Word connected with a parish in Morgan City, Louisiana, 80 miles west of New Orleans. Holy Cross Church had set up shelters feeding nearly 300 people a day and providing showers and personal hygiene items. The school had absorbed 120 displaced students and a program was work to find missing loved ones. Donations have been sent directly to Holy Cross Church to support their work. The tie is expected to be long lasting, as the pastor at Holy Cross communicates needs with his counterpart in Duquesne.

Robert Morris University's Media Arts Department sent a collection of art and school supplies to help the Louisiana State University's Art Department replenish their supplies.

A Second Chance Foundation connected with a church in Houston, Texas, housing and supporting many displaced families and made a sizable cash contribution.

Reading is FUNdamental Pittsburgh sent 100 books for distribution in New Orleans via a collection taken up by Verizon.

The Northern Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce's Mary Margaret Fisher writes that they donated \$1,000 to support chambers of commerce that were destroyed. Rebuilding the chambers allowed them to set up temporary work sites for businesses and help small business owners fill out insurance paperwork and apply for disaster relief funds.

Helping young people extend a helping hand

Maria Swanson, Girl Scout troop #898 leader, writes that the Glen Oaks Girl Scout Community asked for toiletry and medical donations. In September, over 80 boxes of necessities like toothbrushes, soap, band-aids and diapers, wipes were shipped to the Girl Scouts of Baton Rouge for distribution. The next month, Maria and other Girl Scout leaders and friends collected an additional 10 boxes of care packages for flood victims, also shipped to Baton Rouge. All supplies were sent by the local DHL shipping - gratis!

Redeemer Lutheran School's Gail Holzer reports that the Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Schools (PALS) sent a truckload of bottled water to Katrina victims in September. PALS sent a second truckload of supplies, including blankets, baby care items, non-perishable food, and first aid kits. Along with

material goods, the students collected funds for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod World Relief organization to support students and teachers from the Lutheran Schools in and around the New Orleans area to sustain them throughout their displacement.

At Seton-La Salle High School, Marilyn Walsh explains that students dedicated funds collected through “dress down days,” when a contribution allows them to wear something other than the uniform, to Katrina relief. To date, they’ve raised over \$4200. In addition, when the school hosted the National Council of Teachers of English Convention in November, books were collected to send to Louisiana schools. Seton-La Salle students raised the funds necessary to ship for the books.

Catholic schools through the Pittsburgh Diocese have taken part in relief efforts. Students at St. Louise de Marillac in Upper St. Clair held a bake sale that raised over \$2,000. In Mount Lebanon, St. Bernard students were among a group of school children selling

St. Bernard students were among a group of school children selling luminaria for the Mount Lebanon Lights the Way fundraising event in October.

luminaria for the Mount Lebanon Lights the Way fundraising event in October. Total school fundraising was estimated at over \$43,000 by late September, not counting many in-kind contribution drives for everything from diapers and bottles of water to jugs of bleach.

At the Partners For Quality Foundation, Mary Mitchell writes that Kids Doing Big Things collected donations of both goods and money to ship directly to a church in Mississippi.

They also sent funds to Health Care Centers in Schools, a Baton Rouge program serving many displaced children.

Sherry Cleary reports that the University of Pittsburgh's Child Development Center asked staff and families to bring in donations. Over thirty cartons of children's books and clothing were shipped to the Gulf Coast.

Laurel Valley Student Council led a fundraiser called "Linking Laurel Valley to the Victims of Hurricane Katrina." Paper links sold for a quarter each, with links color-coded for each grade and a separate color for teachers and administrators. By the end of their ten-day fundraising drive, 13,600 links made up the colorful paper chains decorating the lobby and \$3,400 had been raised. As their Student Council President, Romaine Gibson, noted "We have an enrollment of 385 students ... approximately 45% of our students are provided free or reduced lunches. Needless to say, our students, their families and members of the community truly know the meaning of the word generosity."

Preparing to welcome Gulf Coast residents

The Pittsburgh Project quickly mobilized to serve as a central location for assisting refugees. More than 300 beds were available and a one-stop service center for evacuees opened on September 12. Case Managers helped newcomers connect with a wide range of services, including the Social Security Administration, American Red Cross, WIC and FEMA.

On the city's North Side, Janet Emery reports that Pressley Ridge offered use of a house and the services of a variety of

therapists and allied workers for any evacuees coming to the region.

Wendy Gordon writes that North Hills Community Outreach dispatched their knowledgeable service coordinators to the Pittsburgh Project, a central location for refugees arriving in the region. NCHO staff assisted 47 families rebuild their lives with emergency shelter, financial assistance, food, employment assistance, utility help, clothes, school supplies, furniture and more. Individual and family consultations, referral to other sources of aid and advocacy with local, state and federal government entities were also provided.

When she wasn't working at Three Rivers Youth, Kymberly Seabrooks pitched in at the Pittsburgh Project, welcoming families, distributing information and processing forms. As she explains, "I didn't move any mountains, but I felt that I should do something because they are fellow human beings."

Jewish Family and Children's Services have also been part of the staffing at the Pittsburgh Project, coordinating immediate needs and longer term ones, like job search assistance through their Career Development Center and supplement food through the Kosher SuperPantry. One of the agency's caseworkers, Isabel Bloom, describes her work at the Pittsburgh Project as providing evacuees with "a shoulder to cry on, a soundboard for their frustration and an advocator of their needs."

Sandra Welsh at the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh explains that, in cooperation with TECH PA, they're working to provide a home computer to the seventy families re-located

to our region. Computers will allow kids to keep up with school work and adults to complete job searches.

The Allegheny County Bar Association and Foundation's Pro Bono Center mobilized over 60 attorneys willing to help evacuees. Working at the Pittsburgh Project, volunteers helped with a broad range of questions - especially status of leases or mortgages in the homes they'd fled and insurance coverage. In three weeks, approximately 50 families were counseled, drawing on local resources and manuals from the Louisiana and Texas Bar Associations' Hurricane Katrina Task Force.

Catholic Charities caseworkers were also among those staffing the Pittsburgh Project's center. They also worked with evacuees that had connected with a local parish through a friend or family member in Western Pennsylvania.

Brother's Brother Foundation's Carole Taylor helped 13 evacuees, ranging in age from 19 months to 80 years, temporarily resettle in Ben Avon. The evacuees are staff and their families from a New Orleans-based program that provides freight forwarding for agencies like Brother's Brother.

The Red Cross of Southwestern Pennsylvania assisted 208 evacuee families with emergency financial assistance, including those served by the Pittsburgh Project.

Caring for lost, injured and abandoned animals

Pittsburgh's Animal Rescue League sent volunteers to help rescue pets displaced during the storms and flooding.

Charlotte Grimme notes that the agency also brought back homeless dogs and pups to place with adoptive families locally.

Providing emergency medical response

Dr. Keith Conover, a Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh emergency physician, led a team of 150 members of the Pennsylvania-1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team to Waveland, Mississippi. Coastal Waveland, 35 miles east of New Orleans, had been nearly “wiped off the map,” according to state officials. Medical personnel established a field hospital, where they cared for approximately 300 patients daily. The most common need was to clean and sew lacerations from injuries during the storm. Doctors also traveled throughout the area, visiting shelter residents to provide medical care.

Two University of Pittsburgh Medical Center operating room nurses were among those staffing Lackland Air Force Base’s medical facilities just days after the hurricane hit.

Dr. Chip Lambert of Allegheny General Hospital’s emergency room, made three trips to Mississippi. Through Brother’s Brother Foundation, Dr. Lambert was also able to take over \$1.5 million in donated medicines to the Singing River Hospital System in Mississippi, which operates clinics state-wide. An additional \$600,000 worth of pharmaceuticals were delivered to the Texas Association of Community Health Centers and two additional pallets to the Louisiana Primary Care Association for distribution to 24 medical clinics in the affected areas.

Chris Ruch, chairman of the all-volunteer Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group writes that their canine search team was mobilized to search Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Two emergency medical technicians were part of the team searching for victims and survivors over ten days.

Hope Baden-Peck at the Forbes Regional Campus of the Western Pennsylvania Hospital reports that one of their family practice residents provided medical relief in the region and presented to hospital staff afterwards to raise awareness.

Looking forward to the future

The Air & Waste Management Association's Adrienne Carolla writes that AWMA has recommitted to hold their Annual Conference & Exhibition in New Orleans in June 2006. With over 2500 conference-goers, the gathering is one more way to help boost the New Orleans economy.

Engaging throughout the community

We know that this report has captured a mere fraction of the charitable and voluntary activity in our community. If your organization is not listed or you would like to add additional details, please contact us at nexus@rmu.edu. To join in the Nexus Dialogues, visit our weblog at www.xanga.com/nexuspittsburgh.

¹ See www.wikipedia.org "Hurricane Katrina"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Katrina

² As above

³ *Nonprofit Times*, 1/1/06, Mark Hyrwna, "\$2.96 billion in Fundraising for Katrina is a Record."

⁴ *New York Times*, 10/16/05, Lauren Price, "Volunteers for Gulf Coast Projects Rise Sharply."