

From the Left: Organizing and Activism

Although the list of profiteers, cheats, and downright villains is long, there are also quite a few individuals and organizations that deserve accolades for their tireless efforts. We've compiled a short list with contact information if you'd like to learn more or show your solidarity.

East Biloxi Coordination & Relief Center: Immediately after Hurricane Katrina hit, the needs of East Biloxi were unfathomable. Local Councilman Bill Stallwort and his community reacted quickly, creating the Coordination Center with the help of Oxfam America in an effort to bring some order to the chaos and relief to those in need. The Center provides basic services, such as internet and phone, attempts to secure peoples' needs, such as housing, connects citizens to other aid organizations, and acts as a general meeting place for community members. Contact: 228-383-1290

Turkey Creek Community Initiatives: TCCI was working hard even before Katrina hit to preserve the historical, low-income, black community of Turkey Creek, Mississippi. Now with widespread devastation, and rebuilding efforts threatening to destroy the historical remnants of the community even further, the group is working to distribute aid to residents in need and protect the watershed's culture, environment and housing resources. Contact: www.turkey-creek.org

Community Labor United/People's Hurricane Relief Fund: Based in both New Orleans, La., and Jackson, Miss., Community Labor United has built an outspoken grassroots movement of community members, organizers, and organizations to support hurricane survivors throughout the Gulf region. The Fund demands that local leadership, especially from people of color, be included in relief and reconstruction efforts. Some of the Fund's various efforts include providing immediate aid to victims, participating in hurricane evacuees' protests around the country, and assisting in the prevention of home demolition in the Lower Ninth Ward. Contacts: 888-310-7473 or www.communitylaborunited.net

New Orleans Housing Emergency Action Team: Housing has quickly become one of the most challenging issues facing Katrina survivors. The NOHEAT coalition has been working to help poor and working class residents whose homes are marked for demolition, as well as those who are being threatened with eviction. The coalition has successfully fought against the evictions of hurricane survivors from hotels by FEMA and is organizing protests in order to continue pressuring the government to provide long-term housing options. Contacts: 504-803-8225 or www.no-heat.org

Mississippi Low Income Childcare Initiative

P.O. Box 204, Biloxi, MS 39533-0204

To make donations that go directly to the people Jearlean Osborne has been helping in East Biloxi and its environs (see p. 31), write "community people" in the memo line of your check. To support the availability of childcare for low income storm survivors in the same area, write "child care" in the memo line. MLICI is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

Saving Our Selves Coalition: This Coalition of more than 100 local groups is working to answer questions about health care, housing, education, and jobs for those most harmed by Katrina. The coalition has six sites set up throughout the Gulf Region to assist relocated families find the services they need. Contact: 866-372-9767 or www.sosafterkatrina.org

Common Ground Collective: A community-initiated volunteer organization created just a week after Katrina hit, Common Ground has been coordinating effective temporary relief to hurricane survivors, as well providing long-term planning for some of the communities most devastated. The Collective also runs a free health clinic, which has been essential to many individuals who would not otherwise be able to afford health care. The Collective has set up centers directly in the Lower Ninth Ward to distribute equipment, lend tools, and provide meals, and runs a mobile health center into the area two times a week. Contact: www.commongroundrelief.org

Safe Streets/Strong Communities Coalition: In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, large numbers of groups, individuals, and organizations saw the need to address Louisiana's criminal justice system. The large coalition, including the Family and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children, the Southern Center for Human Rights, the ACLU, and many others, is attempting to ensure a transparent, democratic system that protects communities from street, domestic, and law enforcement violence. Contact: 504-522-3949 (Louisiana Justice Coalition)

Mississippi Workers' Center For Human Rights: The Center, a group that has been organizing low-income workers since 1996, has been vital to the response and rebuilding in Mississippi. The Center has been providing food, bicycles, and other necessities, as well as operating a communications center for victims. The Center also has created Witness Delegations of law students and professors, to provide legal aid to Katrina victims in Mississippi threatened with eviction or other legal problems. Contact: 888-949-9754 or www.msworkerscenter.org

Loyola Law Clinic: The clinic has been providing free legal help and advice to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Staffed by student volunteers and progressive lawyers, the clinic has already won a decision against hotel evictions and reached a settlement with New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin to prevent the bulldozing of homes in the Lower Ninth Ward.

In addition to the local organizations mentioned, many national organizations have done their part in providing services and support in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, including:

The Advancement Project: www.advancementproject.org/

Food Not Bombs: foodnotbombs.net/katrina.html

Oxfam America: www.oxfamamerica.org

Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights: www.lawyerscomm.org

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One year later, Hurricane Katrina survivors still rebuilding—support their work!