

## SPECIAL ENEWS

From: Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

Re: TODAY'S UPDATE (9/14/05) — Hurricane Aftermath

### SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

>>Needed: volunteers at the Hurricane Katrina Find Family Call Center in Baton Rouge. "This call line is a 24/7 information and support resource to compassionately address the needs of families who have family members that they believe have perished or are missing in the storm. The phone service is specifically for beginning of the process of reuniting persons with their deceased loved ones, and to make referrals for other needs. Volunteers are trained in the process, so no experience is necessary, other than compassion and a sense of caring. Volunteers are supported by professional staff, and there are members from the DEMORT staff on site. Trainings are held several times a day. This is more sedentary volunteer work than is available in some other settings, so it may appeal to a different group of volunteers, who may not be physically or emotionally able to work in shelters, etc.

Please get the word out to friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers who might be willing to help us. Shifts are designed to be 8 hours, but can be flexible if needed.

The number to call for further information or to sign up for a training time and shift time is 225-709-7870.

### INFO AND NEWS BRIEFS

>>**About the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** – Given the important role this act is playing related to displaced students, a useful resource is "The Educational Rights of Students in Homeless Situations: What Service Providers Should Know" –

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/EdRightsService.pdf>

This is a 2 page resource on the education rights of students in homeless situations. (The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B—Education for Homeless Children and Youth), reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This brief summary introduces the basic concepts in the legislation.)

>>**Feeding Displaced Children Through Federal Child Nutrition Programs** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture "has made it easier for schools, afterschool programs, and child care centers/homes that are located in areas devastated by the hurricane or in areas where significant numbers of persons are displaced to feed children through the child nutrition programs." See

[http://www.frac.org/html/disaster/disaster\\_index.html](http://www.frac.org/html/disaster/disaster_index.html)

>> **Louisiana Schools Superintendent Cecil J. Picard** is cited in reports as indicating that:

>>>"Hurricane Katrina displaced one-quarter of the teachers in the New Orleans area and several districts will have to rebuild. He advised displaced teachers to seek jobs in areas where they are staying. The Department of Education placed a full-page ad in Louisiana newspapers on Friday instructing teachers how to apply for jobs elsewhere in the state. The state estimates 12,000 teachers have been displaced.

>>>Louisiana's school districts will need \$2.8 billion in federal aid this school year to recover

>>>As many as 100,000 of the public school students displaced in the New Orleans area may return to their home schools by January. That would leave about 55,000 students from New Orleans and one of its neighboring parishes without a home school to return to during the current school year.

>>>The \$2.8 billion in federal aid would provide districts with enough money to replace

state and local revenue for schools lost in the aftermath of the hurricane that ravaged southeastern Louisiana, effectively erasing the tax base of the area for the short term and crippling it for several years to come.”

>>**From *The New York Times*** -- “Hurricane Katrina has produced a diaspora of historic proportions. Not since the Dust Bowl of the 1930's or the end of the Civil War in the 1860's have so many Americans been on the move from a single event. Federal officials who are guiding the evacuation say 400,000 to upwards of one million people have been displaced from ruined homes, mainly in the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Texas has taken in more than 230,000 people, according to Gov. Rick Perry. But others are scattered across the United States, airlifted from a city that is nine feet below sea level to mile-high shelters in Colorado, to desert mesas in New Mexico, piney woods in Arkansas, flatlands in Oklahoma, the breezy shore of Cape Cod and the beige-colored Wasatch Mountain front in Utah.

Many say they will never go back, vowing to build new lives in strange lands, marked forever by the storm that forced their exodus. They seem dazed and disconnected, though happy to be alive, to be breathing clean air, to be dry. Others say they still feel utterly lost, uprooted from all that is familiar, desperate to find a missing brother or aunt.”

>>**National Education Association** has pledged to raise \$1 million to go directly to students, teachers, and school employees affected by Hurricane Katrina.

>>**A report from Sacramento, CA** indicates it is “gearing up to accept 300 ‘survivors’ from Katrina ... in addition to all those that may already be here but not officially recorded.”

## **OTHER RESOURCES BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION**

In addition to what we have online already at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/crisisresp.htm> , here are some more that were brought to our attention:

>>While updated direct links to many relevant resources developed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) have always been included in listing major resources on our website (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/hurricane.htm> ), several folks were concerned that perhaps there was a need for a reminder. For the latest from NASP, go to – <http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/katrina.html>

>>Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) has launched “S.O.S. - Serve our Students” to provide information and suggestion for assisting and accommodating displaced students with disabilities – <http://www.ahead.org/resources/katrina/sos.htm>

>>The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children's (TLC – a non profit program of Children's Home of Detroit. Info for professionals and non-professionals. Hurricane Katrina resource page is <http://www.tlcinstitute.org/hurricane.html>

>>NEA Hurricane Helpline – tell what you need or can offer – toll free 1-866-247-2239 or email [katrinarelie@nea.org](mailto:katrinarelie@nea.org)

>>When Children Grieve — How counselors and others can help bereaved kids <http://www.asbj.com/2005/08/0805research.html>

>>Disaster's Aftermath — what we can learn from two previous national disasters about helping kids – <http://www.asbj.com/2001/04/0401research.html>

## **IDEAS & SUGGESTIONS**

In planning certain interventions, it is feasible to use challenging situations to accomplish multiple objectives. Here is an example (excerpted) that a colleague is recommending in which students host displaced newcomers and, in the process, the school is strengthening social-emotional development in addition to providing counseling as needed.

>>"Parent/Student Support Services Response Plan for Hurricane Victims"

"1. Campus Response: A momentous disaster of the magnitude that we are experiencing provides us with a great opportunity to have both historical and humanitarian discussions with all our students. We have a great opportunity right now to discuss kindness, understanding, and empathy with our students. Please consider the following:

Teachable opportunities:

- a. Take a few minutes to reflect on the incoming students situation. Inform everyone about the initiative that your own school, clubs, PALS, organizations, etc. are doing to help the relocated students and families.
- b. Consider having a school-wide 30 minute period of time for teachers to discuss the events with their students both from a historical and humanitarian standpoint.
- c. Discussions on kindness, sharing, caring, giving, and stewardship are very appropriate and timely for all students. Counselors have numerous resources to help the teachers develop a discussion. Counselors are encouraged to email each other and share their ideas and topics.

2. Counseling and support services: Counselors need to make these students a priority and monitor their transition, behavior and progress. We are in the process of finding a location to have evening counseling sessions and support groups for our families. Our plan is to provide a light dinner and conduct support groups. We will be needing volunteers for childcare to help us during the evening sessions...."

## **WHAT'S BEING DONE TO ADDRESS NON-WELCOMING DYNAMICS OF PEERS?**

We know that schools are making major efforts to ensure displaced students are welcomed and provided with social supports. At the same time, it would be naive to ignore the problem of hostile reactions to newcomers. Please let us know what is being done in your locale to address this matter so we can share the practices.

## **FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PSYCHOLOGIST**

The following are the concluding comments from a statement on Hurricane Katrina by Robert Atwell, the National President of the Association of Black Psychologists (Posted: September 6, 2005) on the Association's website: <http://www.abpsi.org/>

The Association of Black Psychologists denounces the utilization of the usage of the term refugees for domestic citizens who have been displaced from their homes due to an act of God.

- We further denounce the utilization of the word looters, in a discriminatory manner, for those individual seeking the secure some of the necessities of life.
- We further denounce the utilization of the term renegade for those who have applied their genius to engage in an act of heroism in time of need.

- We further denounce the application of the term rapist to a large portion of African Americans who are honorable and respectful.

The utilization of such terms is psychologically damaging and also delays the hurricane survivors from receiving the assistance that they need because people are less likely to help people that hurting them.

- We advance that more appropriate terminology (e.g. hurricane survivors, evacuees, displaced citizens) be used to ensure that the adequate assistance is rendered to displaced people of the Gulf coast.
- We vow to render the culturally appropriate assistance to these evacuees wherever they may be found. This assistance will be in line with the essence of a people who have experienced years of benign neglect.
- We further vow to assist the survivors of Hurricane Katrina with career counseling and job readiness training.
- We seek to ensure that the children receive an appropriate education in an environment that is understanding of their unique situation of being displaced.
- We seek to inspire the inherent value and worth of these estranged children by acknowledging their strengths of resilience and resourcefulness.
- We seek to assist the families with securing adequate housing, healthy food and clean clothes, employment, and childcare and charge our membership to facilitate such acquisition by opening their homes to displaced evacuees in the spirit of African kinship.
- We recognize that this effort to enhance the well being of our people is a long-term undertaking that involves working in conjunction with the existing crisis response teams that are already in operation to achieve immediate results. This work must be followed up with collaborative engagement with many existing agencies and service networks to address the long-term needs made so evident by this disaster. We are committed also to utilizing our expertise to create culturally congruent programs where it becomes apparent that none currently exist.

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**Please keep on sending us information to share with other across the country.  
It is greatly appreciated.**