

North America's Reform Jewish Community Continues to Support New Orleans

Support Now Totals More than \$4.2 Million in Cash, Millions More Given in In-Kind Donations

June 7, 2006—New donations to the Reform Movement's disaster relief funds have brought the total raised to help the victims of the 2005 hurricane season to more than \$4.2 million.

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Southeast coast, the Union opened its disaster relief fund and donations poured in for both general relief and relief to the area's synagogues. Then, as the extent of the impact to the four Reform synagogues in Greater New Orleans became more fully known, the Union launched SOS New Orleans to directly benefit these synagogues.

"To date, the Union has funneled more than \$800,000 in direct aid to the four Reform congregations and their members, and has reserved another \$800,000 to help congregations cover uninsured losses," said Rabbi Deborah Hirsch, who has been leading the Union for Reform Judaism's hurricane disaster relief efforts with Rabbi Marla Feldman.

"While all Jewish institutions need and deserve aid during this crisis, it has been particularly important to sustain the synagogues, which provide community and spiritual support to the Jews of the area," said Rabbi Hirsch. "And, since 75 percent of New Orleans Jews are Reform Jews, it has been particularly important for us to sustain and rebuild this community, which has played such an important and historic role in the development of Judaism in North America. It is critical that we help these congregations remain viable."









While much of the Union's efforts have been directed at keeping these congregations viable until their members return to New Orleans, it also has directed more than \$1 million toward general relief, donating funds to agencies that are working on the ground in the affected areas.

Within the past month the Union approved a \$125,000 grant to UJAMAA Community Development Corporation based in the Tremé neighborhood in order to renovate a building to house up to two dozen volunteers and consultants rebuilding the area. In addition, a \$100,000 grant was given to the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta to assist African American churches in the Central City neighborhood restore their after school programs, computer centers and other community service programs.

"While Katrina may be off the front pages of newspapers, interest in helping has not abated," said Rabbi Feldman. "Hardly a day goes by that we don't hear about another congregation that has organized a mission, or learn of another religious school that has undertaken a project, or receive additional donations to our relief funds," she said.

Donations to the Union's Hurricane Disaster Relief Fund may be made online at www.urj.org/donate or mailed to Union for Reform Judaism Disaster Relief Fund, 633 Third Ave., New York, NY 1017. The Union is absorbing all overhead costs other than fees charged by credit card companies.

Grants made to date: (A description of each agency and how the funds will be used are available online at www.urj.org/relief):

-  Jewish Fund for Justice - \$372,500
-  Enterprise Corporation of the Delta - \$160,000
-  Jacobs' Ladder: A Project of the Union for Reform Judaism - \$125,000
-  UJAMAA Community Development Corporation - \$125,000
-  Reform Congregation Mini-Grants - \$110,000
-  Nechama, A Jewish Response to Disaster - \$100,000
-  The Working Interfaith Network of Baton Rouge - \$60,000
-  ACORN - \$50,000

- 🏠 Children's Health Fund - \$50,000
- 🏠 Houston Habitat for Humanity - \$50,000
- 🏠 Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (LCADV) - \$50,000
- 🏠 Girl Scouts - \$35,000
- 🏠 Health Care Centers in Schools - \$35,000
- 🏠 AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families - \$30,000
- 🏠 American Friends Service Committee - \$30,000
- 🏠 America's Second Harvest - \$30,000
- 🏠 Direct Relief International - \$30,000
- 🏠 International Medical Corps - \$30,000
- 🏠 Mercy Corps - \$30,000
- 🏠 Oxfam America - \$30,000
- 🏠 House of Hope/Casa de Esperanza de los Ninos - \$20,000
- 🏠 Jewish Federation of New Orleans - \$20,000
- 🏠 Baton Rouge Area Foundation - \$20,000
- 🏠 Greene Family Camp - \$12,166
- 🏠 Equality Mississippi - \$10,000
- 🏠 Jackson Jewish Welfare Fund- \$10,000
- 🏠 Farm Share, South Miami Dade County - \$10,000
- 🏠 Jewish Federation of Baton Rouge - Katrina Relief Fund - \$10,000
- 🏠 United Jewish Communities of Broward County - \$10,000
- 🏠 Faithful Friend Center, Hialeah, FL - \$5,000
- 🏠 Fourth District Baptist Association - \$5,000
- 🏠 Temple Shalom, Succasunna, NJ for its Adult Mitzvah Corps - \$5,000
- 🏠 North American Federation of Temple Brotherhood - \$2500

<http://urj.org/pr/2006/nolaupdate/>