



Hurricane Katrina Update

October 3, 2005

Helping Families in Crisis & Beyond

How We Help

Since Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast, Foundation Communities has provided housing and services for more than 300 hurricane evacuees.

We were among the first to do triage housing and services for the City's Convention Center shelter, assisting those with the most need—families with small children, those with medical conditions, and the elderly.

Short-term Support

We are providing homes and support for about 200 people at Hearthside Extended-Stay Hotel. Through partnerships with social service agencies and volunteers, we provide:

- Resource Center
- Transportation
- Food & Clothing
- Kids' Corner
- Counseling
- Economic Education
- Employment Help

Permanent Housing

We're matching families with our own affordable housing, linking them with other apartment providers, obtaining furniture, and providing ongoing support and referrals as needed.

How to Contact Us:

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New Life in Austin for Five Children: The Porter Family

With five grandchildren, there's never a dull moment with the Porters—especially when their current home consists of two connected efficiency apartments at Hearthside.

Theresa Porter, 65, and her husband Glyn Esco, 57, are raising the children. They range in age from 3 to 13, all boys except for the oldest, Michelle.

After more than two weeks at school, the children are making friends, and both grandparents are managing health problems. The family has



The Porter Family at Hearthside

Photo by Alan Pogue

been nominated for the Austin American-Statesman's Season of Caring program—their wishes are for a 4-bedroom house (so Michelle can

have her own room), a van, preschool for Rashaan, and dentures for both Theresa and Glyn, who lost them in the storm.

Courage Under Pressure: Jermaine Robinson

With an easy laugh, twinkly eyes and a fringe of dreadlocks, Jermaine Robinson is always there when his family needs him.

Jermaine, 19, dropped out of high school to help support his mother and siblings. So it wasn't surprising when he stepped up again to help during Hurricane Katrina, swimming into rising flood waters to find a boat, rescuing his family and several strangers.



About 35 members of his extended family are living at Hearthside, including his mom, siblings, several "aunties" and cousins. He is now enrolled in a program to get his GED and dreams of a new house—one that his entire family can live in.

How many ways can you make a difference?

The Adopt-a-Family program is matching families with volunteers who provide a foundation to build new lives in numerous ways:

Families adopted by volunteers	50
Volunteers involved	100
Value of gifts from individuals	\$5,000+
Value of direct gifts to families	\$15,000
Random acts of kindness	Infinite

Recalling the Storm's Aftermath: The Smith Family

Geraldine Smith rode out the hurricane in her 8th-floor apartment in New Orleans. When the wind blew out her windows, she spent much of the storm avoiding glass and mopping up water that blew into her home.

When it became clear that she couldn't stay, she and her family went to the Convention Center, where they spent several harrowing days. Rumors of deaths and rapes flew, and the heat and smells were so awful that the family decided to set up camp outside. Geraldine was afraid to sleep in case her grandchildren should wander off, and when she finally closed her eyes one night, the sound of gunshots startled her awake.

The family was eventually moved to Austin, where they found temporary housing at Hearthside. She just signed an application to live at Trails at Vintage Creek Apartments. She doesn't plan on



Geraldine Smith fills out an application for an apartment at Trails at Vintage Creek.

returning to New Orleans in the immediate future. "I was one of those people who, when a hurricane came near New Orleans, I'd say 'I'm staying,'" Geraldine said. "Hurricane Katrina changed my mind. I think I'd leave if there's a little tropical storm now."

Many Generations Under One Roof



Robert McCoy listens to a CD of him singing with his gospel choir.

The hurricane drove rich and poor, old and young alike out of New Orleans – and in few places is it more evident than at Hearthside. The hotel is serving as a temporary home for ages 1 month to 103 years old.

The youngest resident was born on Sept. 18 to Deshawna Johnson. Mother and baby are doing well.

At 103, the oldest resident is Bishop Robert McCoy, a former Tuskegee Airman and nephew of renowned gospel singer Mahalia Jackson. He doesn't need help doing anything – especially when it comes to carrying a tune. The bishop's voice soars through the hallways of the hotel from a recording of his gospel choir. Passersby stop to listen, and he says he doesn't mind too much – he's looking for a new wife.

Unsure of What the Future Holds: The Jones Family



The Jones Family at Hearthside. The family has since found an apartment in Austin.

It's no secret that Norvin, Jr., a 9-month old with chubby cheeks and fuzzy hair, is the light of his daddy's life.

Norvin Jones and his wife Alice came to Hearthside with their two daughters, ages 6 and 11, and the baby. The couple say their future is not yet clear. Norvin worked for the City of New Orleans, and with just 12 years until retirement, he's eager to go back to work there. But with family in Texas, they are considering other options.

For now, Austin is home, and the family has moved into an apartment with help from volunteers. Norvin Sr. is seeking work and Norvin Jr. is teething.

How much does this cost?

To be honest, we're not sure. We are operating at a \$100,000/month deficit, but FEMA may reimburse us for housing costs. We anticipate additional short-run costs of \$100,000 for additional staff and high operating costs for the hotel. Long-term expenses include ongoing help accessing aid for evacuees, creating a Louisiana community tax center, and expansion of our supportive housing programs to handle increased need citywide.

You Can Rebuild Lives...

- **\$100** – Provides for miscellaneous costs not covered by other programs (medical, dental costs, transportation, equipment required by job, etc.)
- **\$200** – 1 week stay in a furnished extended-stay hotel for one family
- **\$500** – 1 month rent in an apartment for a family starting a new life in Austin
- **\$1000** – Provides resource center & computer lab for evacuees 7 days a week for one whole month
- **\$2500** – Gives 1 month of one-on-one support with a licensed case manager to 50 families

Give or make a monthly pledge at www.foundcom.org/KatrinaAid.htm or send a check to Foundation Communities at this address:

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