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SPECIAL HURRICANE EDITION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Seasons come in many forms. There are the four seasons, the season's of life, the monsoon season, holiday season, gone for the season, in season, out of season and hurricane season to name but a few.

Without exception, seasons are a part of all our lives. Normally we go about our daily business and we might notice small mentions of these daily occurrences until one day it hits so hard and so personally that everyone notices. The hurricanes have done just that. They have refocused all of our eyes on just what can happen and who in our society is most vulnerable to be adversely affected.

At The Box Project, we have traditionally been aware of the seasons from a little different perspective. People living in rural poverty across all of our service areas feel the impact of seasons in ways some might not expect. They are impacted by winter heating issues, or fall back-to-school needs that create even more challenges for families that are struggling just to make ends meet every day.

As a result of the many phone calls, letters and emails that The Box Project receives, we often see and hear the very personal impact that an unforeseen event as seemingly small as an unpaid gas bill or as monumental as a hurricane can have on a family—often creating despair and a feeling of hopelessness.

Much larger and more visible agencies have stepped in to provide the valuable and necessary immediate assistance to people in the areas hardest hit by the hurricanes. But equally valuable is the work of The Box Project, here for the long term to make a difference in the lives of our members over generations.

We will continue our work mentoring, creating valuable relationships, and offering hope. We will assist our families through whatever

obstacles they may face while providing them with valuable tools to increase their long term self-sufficiency.

The work that we do would not be possible without the incredible support that we receive from our members. I would like to thank you once again for trusting us and helping us to carry out our mission.

The Board of The Box Project is also seeing the end of one season and the beginning of a new one.

At our 43rd annual board meeting in October, we will hold our election of directors and officers. This meeting will include a full day of visits with our referring agencies and match families in Mississippi hosted by the St. Gabriel Mercy Center in Mound Bayou. We are all looking forward to this visit as an opportunity to learn even more about the regions and people that we serve.

My term as President will end in December, and although I will remain active and on the board, this will be my last letter to you. I would like to say thank you to each of the members that I have had the opportunity to work with, and those who have become my friends. The quality and integrity of the people I've met and worked with are of the highest caliber and I feel blessed and honored to be associated with them and with this organization.

Most Sincerely,

Cindy Shearer

President



FROM THE OFFICE OF SUSAN PATNEAUDE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This has been a summer of agonizing pain and loss caused by horribly destructive hurricanes one right after the other. The long-term ripple effect of these storms on our recipient families in Mississippi is yet to be fully felt. Much of Mississippi is still in crisis from Katrina and our recipient families are still struggling day-to-day, many with the added dimension of having evacuees moving into their homes—their own friends and family—taking refuge from the storm. Family resources are strained to their outer limits and they're living closer and closer to the edge.

This edition of our newsletter had a very different focus before Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. Since then we have been working to make contact in each of our recipient areas to determine impact and need, and we have been updating our sponsors about area conditions for their recipient families in the path of the storm. We've been actively seeking out situations that we can help with in our service area, and thanks to the generosity of our committed and generous members we have made a difference in the disrupted lives of many families.

Our most useful vehicle for communication has been our own daily online Chatterbox. We post updates there and we learn from others posting information about their families as they get news. It's been working pretty well, and we have been able to get help on short notice for people needing emergency aid, resources, current information, or simply encouragement.

If you want to receive the Chatterbox updates please go to our website at www.boxproject.org, click on Discussion Groups, and sign up for the e-mail digest. If you follow the instructions to sign up for full access of the Yahoo! group Website, you will find the previous digests and glean some very valuable information. You will get the compiled digest on your e-mail daily, and you'll be impressed with the wealth of information that is shared every day! Naturally situations can change pretty quickly, but the Chatterbox digest should give you the fastest and most up-to-date information if you have a family in the area impacted by the storm.

The Box Project has been a quiet presence in Mississippi for 44 years and we intend to be there long after emergency responders have left and headlines have driven national interest in another direction.

Katrina brought about some significant donations and that has enabled us to help with some critical emergencies. We continue to assess and communicate the long-term needs of families in MS that have resulted from this storm to sponsors and others. The Red Cross, The Salvation Army, FEMA and other front line organizations figure prominently in the first few weeks, but when emergency services begin to diminish The Box Project will still be helping families survive day to day.

I recently read a letter from a sponsor in Chatterbox and I wanted to share the essence of it with you. The sponsor said she had begun to send boxes to her family in Mississippi again since the hurricane. Instead of sending boxes she has been helping to get the daughters into college and buying books, but her recipient family Mom told her that between escalating gas prices, hoarding started by rumors, and the influx of evacuees, she has been having a very hard time getting the basics for her family and feeling pretty unsure of the future. She ended her letter by saying "I'm keeping prayed up". I love that expression, and I understand it's a common one in Mississippi.

So in light of these hard times for our families in Mississippi, and all of those affected by the hurricanes of 2005 let's all make sure we "keep prayed up". It's the least we can do.

Most sincerely,
Susan Patneau
Executive Director



Join Our New & Improved Holiday Match Program

Many Family Match sponsors have expressed how challenging it can be to help meet the basic needs of their families and still provide some extras to make the holidays brighter. Starting in the fall of 2005, Family Match sponsors can request a Holiday co-sponsor to lend a hand with their regular recipient family—just for one holiday season. This should be particularly helpful to sponsors whose recipient family may have taken in extra family members after the hurricanes, but any sponsors who would like a partner to help them through the holidays may request a holiday co-sponsor (especially if they have large families or families with special needs).

Our hope is that this new format will provide additional benefits for everyone involved. The regular sponsor will work with the co-sponsor to plan how to meet their family's holiday needs. This will be a guided and well-supported experience that we think will be rewarding for everyone.

If you have been in the Holiday Match Program helping the same family for several years, you can stay matched with that family or you can join the new program format. It's your choice.

If you're a current Family Match Sponsor who would like a co-sponsor for your family for the holidays, please call 1 800-268-9928 or email the staff at info@boxproject.org. The deadline for applications is November 1, 2005. We need your name and address, your match family's name and address, and some information about what your family might need for the holidays. This will help us find you the best possible match.

We also need new Holiday Sponsors to make this program a success. Please help us get the word out! If you, your friends, clubs or other groups want to be a Holiday Match sponsor, join online at www.boxproject.org/forms.html or give us a call at 1-800-268-9928.

RESOURCES FOR THE AFTERMATH OF THE HURRICANES AND BEYOND

For the communities in Mississippi that have been declared disaster areas, the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (the agency that is actively managing federal assistance to the affected areas) are coordinating efforts to provide assistance to local residents in need.

The following is a list of some of those programs and the agencies that administer them, as well as a few other sources for information. Many of these resources are available by phone or internet access so that sponsors can either access the information or pass the list on to their match families.

To check on mail and package delivery by area:

Check on **USPS** mail delivery in Mississippi by ZIP Code at <http://www.ribbs.usps.gov>. Click on "Impacted Delivery Areas". Or to see a map, visit www.usps.com and click on the link to Hurricane Katrina Map of Affected Post Offices.

Check the updated **FedEx** delivery status online at: <http://fedexmaps.hwaxis.com/>

Visit the **UPS** Website at www.ups.com and click the link for "Hurricane Service Update" for a list of zip codes where service has been temporarily suspended.

Visit **DHL** at www.dhl-usa.com and click the link for either Hurricane Rita or Hurricane Katrina service updates.

Employment opportunities:

Hurricane Recovery Job Connection

The Department of Labor's program connects workers impacted by the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina with employers who want to hire them. It also provides information about jobs for the critical clean-up efforts in impacted areas. Visit them online at:

www.jobsearch.org/hurricanejobs

Collecting unemployment compensation:

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

The Department of Labor is working to issue unemployment insurance and disaster unemployment assistance to people who are no longer at their permanent addresses and whose employment suffered because of the hurricane. For more information, call 1-866-4-USA-DOL (1-866-487-2365) or visit America's Service Locator online at:

www.servicelocator.org/hurricane_katrina_info.htm

Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Visit <http://mdes.ms.gov/wps/portal> to file an unemployment claim or get information about disaster recovery jobs, or for assistance, call their toll free number: 1-888-844-3577.

Employee benefit filing extensions:

Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA)

As a result of Hurricane Katrina, a number of participants and beneficiaries covered by group health plans, disability or other welfare plans, and pension plans may encounter problems in continuing coverage or filing their benefit claims. EBSA is extending pension plan filing deadlines, and www.dol.gov/ebsa provides more details.

Disaster assistance:

FEMA

Hurricane Katrina has proven to be one of the most dangerous storms in U.S. history. Hazards from weakened

and damaged trees, downed power lines, high water, and other dangers may last for months.

Families may be asked to remain in shelters or safe places until the Federal government decides that it is safe to return. Individuals who lived in the counties that were declared disaster areas can register online for disaster assistance at www.fema.gov or call FEMA's toll free registration line at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362); for the hearing impaired TTY 800-462-7585.

You can also download a FEMA disaster help manual entitled: Help After a Disaster: Applicant's Guide to the Individuals & Households Program at:

www.fema.gov/about/process/individual_assistance.shtm

FEMA provides links to resources for Basic Assistance at: www.fema.gov/press/2005/katrinabasic.shtm

Red Cross

Survivors can register for emergency financial assistance 24 hours a day by calling toll-free 1-800-975-7585. The Red Cross Website offers a wide array of resources for hurricane victims—including emergency needs, shelter and housing assistance, finding loved ones, job assistance, and much more through their Website at:

<http://katrina.redcross.org/gethelp.html>

Health resources:

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

HHS is offering streamlined access to benefits for Hurricane Katrina victims. States can enroll evacuees without documents such as tax returns or proof of residency. Evacuees who have lost all identification and records should be able to give their address or other information to be eligible. The special evacuee status will apply to the full range of benefits including HHS programs that provide services through Medicaid, family assistance through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), child care support, foster care assistance, mental health services and substance abuse treatment services.

HHS Crisis Counseling

HHS announced the availability of a toll-free hotline for people in crisis in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. By dialing 1-800-273-8255, callers will be connected to a network of local crisis centers across the country that are committed to crisis counseling.

Housing:

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD has established a single toll-free housing hotline (1-888-297-8685) to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina with all housing concerns. This number operates from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. CDT, seven days a week.

Legal:

The American Bar Association has lawyers offering pro bono services for legal help on housing, insurance, lost documents, public benefits, unemployment assistance, and probate matters. You can reach their Mississippi toll-free Disaster Legal Services Hotline at 1-866-255-4495, or visit www.abanet.org/katrina/victims.html for even more resources on taxes, health, social security, insurance claims and on property, shelter and housing.

COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (CAP) AGENCIES PROVIDE LONG-TERM HELP

The local CAP Agencies provide long-term assistance. This is a government program that has been in existence for forty years. CAP Agencies can be a resource for a number of recipient family needs, both for the aftermath of the hurricane and in the long term. The Community Services Network is made up of more than 1,100 local, private, public and non-profit agencies across the country, called Community Action Partnerships (or CAP). There is usually one CAP agency serving each county.

The CAP programs were set up to serve low-income American citizens in an effort to alleviate poverty and help people live independent of any public or charitable assistance. Specifically, their goals are to secure adequate employment, secure adequate education, teach people income management, secure adequate housing, provide emergency services, improve nutrition, achieve self sufficiency, and create links among anti-poverty programs

They do this many ways, including GED preparation courses, job training, vocational education and credit counseling programs as well as parenting and income management classes, child care programs, entrepreneurial development and small business incubators, and domestic violence and other crisis intervention programs.

No two CAP agencies are exactly alike since they are community-based and are thus tailored to the needs and resources of their individual communities, and even though their goals are all the same, different agencies may meet them in different ways.

In general, families in need can call on the services of a CAP office for: help in finding housing; weatherization; job training; emergency home services; energy programs (energy assistance as well as emergency services); vocational training; education; and a wealth of others. For a complete listing of localized CAP agencies in Mississippi, visit www.mscommunityaction.org or call 1-601-944-1747.

For information on CAP Agencies in other states, visit these websites:

- www.ncaf.org/#COMMUNITY%20ACTION - the National Community Action site detailing programs and locations
- www.ncaf.org/cacaa.html - an overview and information about Community Action Programs in the United States
- www.nascsp.org - the people who administer the community action programs nationwide

Community Action Partnership Programs (CAP) in Mississippi:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>AJFC Community Action
101 Clifton Avenue , P.O. Box L
Natchez, MS 39120
Lamar A. Braxton , Executive Director
Phone: 601-442-8681 Fax: 601-442-9572
Email: ajfcdbraxton@bellsouth.net</p> | <p>LIFT, Inc.
Old Highway 78 West - P.O. Box 28
Tupelo, MS 38802
Linda Blackwell, Executive Director
Phone: 662-842-9511 Fax: 662-842-5575
Email: lblackwell@liftcaa.org</p> | <p>Rankin Co. HRA
1545 W. Government Street-Suite C
Brandon, MS 39042
Katrina McLin, Executive Director
Phone: 601-825-1309 Fax: 601-824-0036</p> |
| <p>Bolivar County Community Action Agency
321 South Shark - P.O. Drawer 180
Cleveland, MS 38732
Billy J. McCain , Executive Director
Phone: 662-846-1491 Fax: 662-843-0173
Email: capdir@panola.com</p> | <p>Madison County Human Resources Agency
P.O. Box 726 Canton, MS 39046
Walter C. Jones, Executive Director
Phone: 601-859-5703 Fax: 601-859-2023</p> | <p>Simpson Co. CAA
P.O. Box 607
Mendenhall, MS 39114
Jerlean Rogers, Executive Director
Phone: 601-847-5552</p> |
| <p>Central Mississippi, Inc.
101 South Central Avenue - P.O. Box 749
Winona, MS 38967
Tela Wilson-Collins, Executive Director
Phone: 662-283-4781 Fax: 662-283-2352
Email: tcollins1@ayrix.net</p> | <p>Mid-State CAA
204 North Church Street - P.O. Box 270
Charleston, MS 38921
Helen H. Bell, Executive Director
Phone: 662-647-2463 Fax: 662-647-5868</p> | <p>Simpson Co. HRA
406 N. Main Street
Mendenhall, MS 39114
T.J. Moore, Executive Director
Phone: 601-847-4611 Fax: 601-847-1192</p> |
| <p>Coahoma Opportunities, Inc.
615 DeSoto Avenue - P.O. Box 1445
Clarksdale, MS 38614
Dorothy Banks, Executive Director
Phone: 662-624-4887 Fax: 662-624-4915
Email: dotbanks@clarksdale.com</p> | <p>Multi-County Community Service Agency
2900 St. Paul Street - P.O. Box 905
Meridian, MS 39301
Callie Cole, Executive Director
Phone: 601-483-4838 Fax: 601-482-9861
Email: ccole@multi-county.org</p> | <p>Southwest Mississippi Opportunity, Inc.
601 Martin Luther King Dr. - P.O. Box 1667
McComb, MS 39648
William Franklin, Executive Director
Phone: 601-684-5593 Fax: 601-249-3996
Email: smo@locnet.net</p> |
| <p>Gulf Coast Community Action Agency
PO Box 519, Gulfport, MS 39501
Doyle Moffett, Executive Director
Phone: 228-896-1409 Fax: 228-897-9075
Email: doyle@gccaa.com</p> | <p>Northeast Mississippi Community Service
801 Hatchie Street - P.O. Box 930
Booneville, MS 38829
Steve Gaines, Executive Director
Phone: 662-728-2118 Fax: 662-728-8720
Email: nemcs@iname.com</p> | <p>Sunflower-Humphreys Counties Committee
414 Martin Luther King - P.O. Box 908
Indianola, MS 38751
Bobbie White, Executive Director
Phone: 662-887-5655 Fax: 662-887-4888
Email: shcpio@deltaland.net</p> |
| <p>Hinds County Human Resource Agency
258 Maddox Road - P.O. Box 22657
Jackson, MS 39312
Kenn Cockrell, Executive Director
Phone: 601-923-3930 Fax: 601-923-3925
Email: kennco@hchra.org</p> | <p>Pearl River Valley Opportunity
756 Highway 98 Bypass - P.O. Box 188
Columbia, MS 39429
Helmon Johnson, Executive Director
Phone: 601-736-9564 Fax: 601-736-6268</p> | <p>United Community Action Agency Committee
Box 338 - 120 Ripley Street
Ashland, MS 38603
Willie R. Daughtery, Executive Director
Phone: 662-224-8912 Fax: 662-224-8142
Email: ucac@dixie-net.com</p> |
| <p>Jackson County Civic Action Committee
P.O. Box 8723 Moss Point, MS 39562
Diann Payne, Executive Director
Phone: 228-769-3292 Fax: 228-769-3264
Email: info@jccvaction.org</p> | <p>Prairie Opportunity, Inc.
P.O. Box 1526
Starkville, MS 39760
Laura Marshall, Executive Director
Phone: 662-323-3397 Fax: 662-323-8754
Email: lmarshall@dixinet.com</p> | <p>Warren-Washington-Issaquenna-Sharkey
Community Action Agency
1165 South Raceway - P.O. Box 1813
Greenville, MS 38702
Jean-Marie Hill, Executive Director
Phone: 662-378-5857 Fax: 662-378-5859
Email: jcwilli@techinfo.com</p> |

HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF WARM THIS WINTER

Not only is the cold weather uncomfortable for many people, but it also presents some very serious risks and dangers, such as:

- Frostbite, or freezing of body parts exposed to the cold. Frostbite can be mild or severe. Frostbite will destroy body tissue, and in the worst cases, the frostbitten areas of your body will have to be amputated. Mild frostbite is treatable, but it always causes some damage to your skin and the tissue inside your body. The parts of the body most at risk are nose, cheeks, ears, toes, and fingers.
- Hypothermia, or the loss of body heat due to lengthy exposure to the cold. Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition. You are more likely to rapidly lose body heat when your clothes are wet.

How can families stay warm this winter without using costly heating fuel, turning up your heat, or using expensive electric space heaters or an open oven door? Here are a dozen simple, low cost or free things to help match families keep warmer and feel more comfortable this winter—and some are great ideas for sponsors to include in their boxes:

1. Layer clothes. Natural fibers like cotton or wool allow air to circulate, so keep those fabrics closest to your body and other fabrics on the outside layers.
2. To stay warmer at night, layer sheets and blankets and put a cotton sheet or blanket closest to your body.
3. Use fluffy comforters to trap air inside the fluff and better insulate you. Use a sheet or blanket underneath a comforter and you'll be extra warm.
4. Long underwear is perfect for layering because it fits snugly. So are tee shirts. Wear a hat, even in the house, since most heat escapes through your head. Keeping your head covered helps your body hold heat inside. When you are outdoors, layer two hats and make sure you cover your ears.
5. Wear mittens instead of gloves. Your fingers will keep each other warm, and the mitten will hold in the body heat. Make sure your mittens are made of something that prevents cold air from getting in.
6. Wear socks with your slippers when you are inside. Slippers will keep your feet warm, but socks inside will keep them warmer. Try wearing two pairs of socks indoors or when you go to sleep.
7. Soak your feet in a tub of very warm water to warm them up and increase circulation.
8. Use polar fleece when possible. Polar fleece pajamas, night gowns, night shirts, robes and blankets are made to keep you warm.

Outdoors, make sure you wear several layers of natural fiber clothes, like cotton or wool, under a polar fleece jacket or vest.

In cold, biting wind, wear a layer of plastic (such as a rain coat or wind breaker, or even a plastic garbage bag with holes cut out for your head and arms) on top of the polar fleece to cut the chill of the blowing wind.

9. Use cotton flannel sheets on your bed. If you have just one flannel sheet, you can fold it in half and sew it into a cozy sleeping bag. Put the sleeping bag on the bed and layer sheets, blankets and a comforter on top of it.

10. Add some moisture to the air to make the temperature feel two or even three degrees warmer. Place pans of warm water on top of radiators or in front of heating vents.

11. Keep your feet dry. If your feet get wet, you will get cold. Carry an extra pair of socks, wear plastic bags over cotton socks inside your shoes, or change shoes or boots to make sure that your feet stay warm and dry.

FREE LEGAL HELP FOR MISSISSIPPI FAMILIES

More than 1,800 Mississippi attorneys volunteer their time and expertise to participate in the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project. The project is a joint venture between The Mississippi Bar and the six Legal Services Programs in our state. More than 5,000 low income citizens are assisted by the Project each year.

Contact the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project at 1-601-960-9577 or 1-800-682-0047 or e-mail: mvlp@msbar.org.

Mississippi's Legal Services Resource Center is available online at www.mslegalservices.org and provides information on finding legal services as well as offering non-legal resources.

North Mississippi Rural Legal Services at www.nmrsls.com also provides free online legal information and if you click the link to their Relief Hotline, it provides a toll free number, 1-888-808-8049 and also lists more details about their free legal services to families impacted by the hurricane.

Many other states have similar organizations offering free legal aid for low-income citizens. An online search is often the best way to identify and research available resources.

Hurricane-related Legal Assistance

The American Bar Association has also set up a Website to connect lawyers offering pro bono services with people affected by Hurricane Katrina who may need legal help on matters such as housing, insurance, lost documents, public benefits, unemployment assistance, and probate matters. The Website address is www.abanet.org/katrina/victims.html.

The Website provides links to valuable information on taxes, health, social security, insurance claims and property, shelter and housing. It also provides links to other information for hurricane victims and lists the following toll free phone numbers to reach the ABA Disaster Legal Services Hotlines:

Alabama: 1-800-354-6154
 Louisiana: 1-800-310-7029
 Mississippi: 1-866-255-4495
 Texas: 1-800-504-7030

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the volume of calls into the Northern Gulf Coast region, these numbers may not connect every time. Just redial and try again.

PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR COLDER WEATHER

As fall and winter approach, so does the time to prepare homes for the colder weather. A few small projects now can help reduce heating bills and keep you and your family warmer.

1. First and most importantly, make sure that your windows don't leak and allow cold air to come in. Often the glass is too thin to keep the cold out or too loose in the frame to keep cold air from leaking in.

The easiest way to keep cold air from leaking in is to use a sheet of clear plastic and tape it in place so that it covers the entire window. This will create a cushion of dead air that will act as a buffer between the cold temperature outside and the warmer temperature inside. Clear plastic for insulating comes in rolls and can be easily found in many stores.

Window insulation kits are available in stores as well; some are more complex than others, but most consist of two or three sheets of plastic and maybe some tacks and cardboard strips to nail the plastic to the wall.

For loose window panes, buy a roll of rope caulk to seal up leaks. You just unroll the rope and press it into the space between the glass and the frame where cold air is leaking in.

2. Use heavy curtains or curtains lined with plastic during the cold weather. Close the curtains at night for an extra layer of insulation on the windows.

3. Scatter area rugs around your living space. Even if you have carpeting, you can layer an area rug on top of it for more floor insulation.

4. Use weather stripping around your entry doors. Cold air also leaks into homes from exterior doors. Use plastic weather stripping made especially for doors and nail it along the inside of the frame where the door closes. This will keep out the cold air that can seep in around the edges of a loose door.

You can also tack a weather strip across the bottom of the door if air comes in there. If cold air is seeping in under the door, roll up some towels or old clothes into a 3-foot long cylinder shape and put it against the inside bottom of the door to block the cold air.

5. Rearrange some furniture. Your exterior walls will be colder than the walls in the middle of the house. Moving your furniture to a different place for a few months may also keep you warmer. Make sure that beds are not up against exterior walls. Move couches and chairs away from windows and exterior walls. Even moving furniture 6" will make a difference since the colder air will be further away from the people sitting on the furniture.

6. Don't sleep or sit on the floor if you can sleep or sit higher up. Remember, the air closer to the floor is cooler than the air closer to the ceiling, so don't sleep or sit on the floor if you can be on furniture.

7. Plug up holes around attic doors, clothes dryer vents, and fireplaces. These are all direct openings to the outdoor cold air.

The clothes dryer duct goes right outside through a four-inch hole in the wall of your house. You can stuff rags, socks, plastic grocery bags, or insulation around the duct to plug up any opening that lets the cold air in.

To test if your attic is leaking cold air, try this experiment: at night, turn on the attic light and close the attic door or trap door and look for any light shining through around the edges. The light will show you where there are gaps that add up to a large opening where your heated air leaks out 24 hours a day. It's like leaving a window open all year round. If you block the cold air from being able to come into the house, you will save both heat and money. Also remember, the warmer air is closer to the ceiling, so the air that you are losing is the warmest air in the house.

A fireplace that leaks can cost you more than \$500 in heating bills per winter. Your chimney acts like a giant straw, sucking the heat right out of your house if the damper is open or not closed properly. Close the damper in your fireplace until you are ready to use it. Try to make it as airtight as possible, maybe by placing a wooden screen or some other item in front of the fireplace opening to block the suction of warm air out.

The key behind all these suggestions is to keep the warm air in your house and to block the cold air from entering. The more cold air you can keep out, the warmer your home will be.

EXTRA HELP FOR MS MEMBERS HELPING FAMILY OR FRIENDS

So far the reports from the field have indicated that most of our member families sustained limited damage from the hurricanes. But even families that weren't hit hard by the storms were still impacted. They may have lost power for a few days, lost perishable food, experienced wind damage, or had other emergencies that were helped by FEMA or other emergency programs. We also heard of limited food and gas supplies in the beginning, but things seem to be better now. Our hope is that the storms didn't affect our member families at all!

We are hearing stories about member families that have been able to help others—friends or family that were evacuated or displaced from the storm. Our referring agencies tell us over 2000 people relocated to the Mississippi Delta after Katrina, and even more after Rita. The generosity of families in the Delta during this challenging time is heartwarming.

Match families that have temporarily taken in friends and family after the hurricanes are often experiencing a bigger strain on finances. It is even more difficult to pay bills, buy medications, or keep food on the table for the everyone. Sponsors are not expected to help everyone in these expanded households now, and that is where The Box Project can help.

Match families (or their sponsors) can call or write to The Box Project to let us know about extra people living in the match family house as the result of the hurricanes. Because of the extraordinary circumstances, we are temporarily waiving our "one sponsor per household" requirement to accommodate families in transition. We will send information about how to enroll these temporarily displaced families in The Box Project Family Match Program so we can try to get them sponsors of their own to help them through this crisis and maybe even beyond if they need it. Please call 1-800-268-9928, email us at info@boxproject.org, or write to us at 100 Business Center Drive, Suite 26, Ormond Beach, FL 32124.

Each One Ask One

The hurricanes of 2005 will have a long-term impact on the lives of recipient families in Mississippi. We need your help so we can quickly respond to increased demand from:

- Evacuees relocating to the Mississippi Delta who will need to be matched with sponsors to help them recover and regain self-sufficiency.
- Current recipient families already in our program who will have greater needs and require more resources. Existing sponsors will be called upon to help their recipient families find resources to meet new needs and help family and friends who may now be living with them. They are going to need extra help from us.
- Even more families who will now be plunged into poverty. The already struggling economy of the Mississippi Delta will be further compromised, and families that were self-sufficient before the storm may need help to regain that self-sufficiency.

This issue of the News Box is dedicated in part to helping sponsors find the resources necessary to get help for their match families if they have hurricane-related long-term needs. We are also determined to increase the number of sponsors we have so we can be ready when and if new recipient needs arise out of this disaster. In order to do that, we need your help.

If each existing sponsor can ask one friend or family member to become a sponsor we will significantly increase our ability to match families in general and respond to hurricane created recipients in particular. If you sponsor a family that has taken in others and you want a temporary co-sponsor to help you, please notify The Box Project and we will do our best to find help for the new family members.

Margaret Meade's famous quote comes to mind: *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."*

Chatterbox Provides

Hurricane Recovery Updates

For up-to-date status reports on our service areas hit by Katrina, join The Box Project online discussion group, Chatterbox (visit www.boxproject.org/discuss.html for more details).

Chatterbox has always been a great way to meet other sponsors, share ideas, and get feedback, and now it's also a great way to get the latest information about the conditions in Mississippi after Katrina.

Recent posts have included the status of food supplies and phone numbers and Website addresses for more information. There have also been details of the price of a gallon of gasoline, the availability of food, and the electrical supply in specific towns.

If you join Chatterbox, you may choose to receive the posts individually, once a day in digest form, or not at all and read the posts on the Yahoo group page. Because there are often many posts a day, we recommend that new members opt for the daily digest, which will send all the day's posts in one e-mail at the end of the day.

The Box Project staff members frequently communicate with a number of our contacts and referring agencies in Mississippi, and we pass on the information we receive via Chatterbox.

If you haven't already joined this group, sign up now and see what you've been missing!

Winter Heating Costs are on the Rise

With the rising costs of fuel oil, many of our recipient families will be facing astronomical heating bills and perhaps long periods where they cannot afford to heat their homes.

Often, when there is no oil for heating or cooking, families will turn to electric space heaters, electric blankets, hot plates and electric frying pans instead, also increasing their electric bills beyond what they can afford. In the spring, they will be faced with power disconnect notices, and if they cannot make the payments they may spend part of the summer without electricity. This can become a vicious cycle.

But there are heating assistance programs that can help them, and there have been hints that there will be even more help from the federal government this year because of the dramatic rise in fuel prices.

As a sponsor, you should know that the federal HEAP Program will provide assistance to pay for heat and most recipients know how to access that program through agencies in their own community. Match families can call their local CAP Agency (listed on page 4 of this newsletter) to enroll. Before you pay for fuel, make sure that your match families have exhausted all other resources first. This is just one step toward self-sufficiency that they can make on their own behalf. Once they have done all they can on their own, you might want to discuss with your match family the option of occasionally paying toward the fuel oil bill instead of sending a box or other aid. Ask them for the name and phone number of their heating fuel company. Contact the company yourself for information and for details about what methods of payment they accept—for instance, will they accept credit cards or debit cards, or do you need to send a check or money order? Do they have a minimum purchase requirement before they'll make a delivery of oil or propane?

Some fuel companies will require that you have an account number before they'll take payments from you (or allow you to place an order for fuel), and others will accept the payment and credit it to the proper account with only a name and address. If you feel uneasy asking your match family for their account number, ask the fuel company if they require it or if they can just use your match family's name and address instead.

The insert (pages 3 - 6) of this issue of News Box contains suggestions for keeping warm in the coming winter months, among other things. You can remove it and add it to your next box or mail it to your recipient family. You may also use it for ideas of items to send to your family to help with winterization and to help decrease heating costs this winter.

Use Your Talents to Help Us Realize Our Mission

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is responsible for our organization's overall financial well-being, its integrity and accountability to our mission. Ours is a special group of people who give of their time and financial resources to govern The Box Project and further our goals.

The Board meets in person and telephonically several times each year in various parts of the country. We are currently looking for board members who have expertise or talents in one or more of the following areas: finance/accounting, fund development, legal, or sponsor development.

The Board is responsible for governing, setting policy, setting measurable goals, attending meetings, overseeing employment issues and policies, and for ensuring the financial health of our organization. Visit us at www.boxproject.org/board.html for more details about this special opportunity.

The Nominating Committee is looking for new Board members who have the time and talent our organization needs.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, download an application at www.boxproject.org/boardapp.html or contact us with any questions.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Because we hold our members' names and contact information confidential, many of the office tasks must be completed in our offices.

We are always happy to have volunteers come to the office to help us make matches, handle phone calls or mailings, and provide general help to the office staff. We especially appreciate people who can provide onsite computer data entry.

If you are near our Ormond Beach (Daytona Beach adjacent) offices and can help, please call or email our office to let us know of your availability.

FedEx Increases Shipping Discounts

Sign up now for the shipping discounts offered to Sponsors through FedEx. The discount program for The Box Project members has recently been improved with even greater discounts. The discounts are based on weight and range from 12% to 20%. Remember, this discount applies only to packages delivered to a residential street address; FedEx cannot deliver to a PO Box.

Details and more information about signing up for this updated program are online at www.boxproject.org/fedex.pdf.



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www.boxproject.org