



Profiles of Engagement Investments: Citizen Engagement in Response to the Gulf Coast Hurricanes

Fall 2005 Edition

Profiles of Successful Engagement Investments

Autumn 2005

The 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes caused tremendous damage and heartache, and also brought forth countless initiatives of individual service, citizen participation, and community organizing. The foundations and donors who are members and friends of **PACE** have been supporting a wide variety of organizations and projects that demonstrate the power of citizen engagement in disaster response and recovery, and this issue of *Profiles of Successful Engagement Investments* highlights a baker's dozen of examples.

This selection, nominated by **PACE** members and friends, is by no means the full range of citizen-intensive engagement investments in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, but it's a good starting point for some reflections. In addition to relieving immediate suffering and rebuilding community infrastructure, these investments all strengthen democracy through citizen engagement. The programs illustrate three categories of the **PACE** Strengthening Democracy framework:

- **Individual participation**, which includes community organizing, national service, public service, faith-based community organizing, volunteering, service-learning and youth organizing.
- **Direct democracy**—issue organizing, citizen commissions, public policy education campaigns, communication and advocacy efforts.
- **Deliberation** (the process by which people with different perspectives come together to learn about one another's interests and work together to address and resolve complex community problems)—town hall meetings, listening circles, community-wide planning, other activities that gather individuals for quality public discourse and problem-solving.

For a complete alphabetical listing of the thirteen programs in this issue, see the Table of Contents Page.

PACE is a community of grantmakers and donors committed to strengthening democracy by using the power, influence and resources of philanthropy to open pathways to participation. Our mission is **to inspire interest, understanding and investment in civic engagement**. We are interested in the full range of engagement strategies – community and youth organizing, civic education, voter education and mobilization, service-learning, national service, military service, public service and volunteering. We believe philanthropy can substantially improve the impact of civic engagement investments by better understanding and promoting the relationships between and among different engagement strategies. Our goal in finding and supporting the connections between engagement strategies is to leverage the value of each to maximize the collective impact of all.

If you want to know more about **PACE**, nominate a program or become more active in our community of grantmakers, please contact us by phone at (510) 665-6130 or at info@pacefunders.org.

*P.S. **PACE** continues to collect and expand our list of successful engagement investments, including those related to hurricane response and recovery. We invite all funders and donors to nominate your successful engagement investments, either online at <http://pacefunders.org/survey.html> or using the nomination form on the last page of print copies of this review.*

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NOMINEE	21st Century Youth Leadership Project
NOMINEE CONTACT	Malika A. Sanders 334/874-0065 (phone) malikaasanders@yahoo.com (e-mail)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>This project is helping youth in New Orleans and the Gulf states to be skilled community leaders, empowering themselves and their communities for positive change. They have transformed their Leadership Training Camp in Perry County, Alabama into a shelter for over 65 hurricane victims. They are making arrangements to accommodate at least 50 more people. They are also establishing a school for the children at the site as well as support programs. 21st Century Youth Leadership Project also plans to use this unplanned convergence as an organizing opportunity to help address the larger systemic and institutional causes of racism.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Robyn Davis of the Southern Partners Fund	

NOMINEE	Acadiana Outreach Center
NOMINEE CONTACT	Valerie Keller 337/237-7618 (phone) vgkeller@gmail.com (e-mail) www.acadianaoutreach.com (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>The Acadiana Outreach Center in Lafayette, Louisiana, designed the Transitional Recovery Action Center for Katrina and Rita (T.R.A.C.K.) program to help evacuees help themselves. All personnel hired at the center are hurricane evacuees. T.R.A.C.K. engages evacuees in the recovery effort of their communities and also provides a steady income. Evacuees have taken active leadership roles in addressing long-term rebuilding, planning, and coordination as well as providing relief assistance to their fellow citizens. The Acadiana Outreach Center provides services to address mental health concerns, substance abuse, housing and transportation needs, employment, skills training and child support.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Michael DeHart of the Stuller Family Foundation	

NOMINEE	Community Labor United: The People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Oversight Coalition
NOMINEE CONTACT	Becky Belcore 888/310-7473 (phone) www.communitylaborunited.net (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>The objective of this coalition is to build and maintain a coordinated network of community leaders, organizers and community-based organizations with the capacity and organizational infrastructure to support self-determination efforts of those whose lives have been most impacted by Katrina. The coalition will engage hurricane survivors in controlling, overseeing and determining their own relief, recovery and reconstruction.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Susanna Schwartz of the Vanguard Foundation	

NOMINEE	League of Young Voters Education Fund: Shana's New Orleans Relief Fund
NOMINEE CONTACT	Billy Wimsatt 212/283-8272 (phone) billywimsatt@yahoo.com (e-mail)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>The League of Young Voters Education Fund supports young people (under 35) nationwide to build power to create solutions in their own communities. Because of the Fund's special relationship with young organizers in New Orleans, it has allocated resources to support young people (under 35) from New Orleans to asset map, organize and advocate on behalf of their families, homes and neighborhoods, to ensure that community residents' voices and interests are included in the re-building process.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Jason Sanders of the Tides Foundation	

NOMINEE	Mississippi Renewal Forum
NOMINEE CONTACT	Irena Wolfe 305/373-8616 (phone) www.mississippirenewal.com (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>The Mississippi Renewal Forum is sponsoring “town hall” meetings in 14 communities affected by the Gulf hurricanes as well as a six-day “charrette”¹ with national experts in community development. Over one hundred experts in planning, architecture and land development from across the nation gathered in mid-October for the charrette.</p> <p>The Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal is taking ideas from the charrette directly to local leaders and citizens in "town hall" meetings in the 11 towns and three coastal counties. These meetings are providing a chance for citizens to engage in recommendations for the proposed planning of their communities. The Forum will also conduct meetings for more specific issues (transportation, tourism, government contracting, education, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, among others) engaging broad and diverse groups of community leaders and citizens.</p> <p>¹ (“Charrette” originally an architecture and design term for a short, intensive design or planning activity is used to describe a workshop that stimulates ideas and involves the public in community planning.)</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Alfredo Cruz of The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation	

NOMINEE	Petition for Media Coverage of Survivors’ Participation in Katrina Reconstruction and Decision-Making
NOMINEE CONTACT	Anita Daley 415/441-0706 (phone) adaley@wfnet.org (e-mail) www.wfnet.org (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>Supported by nine Women’s Funds throughout the nation, this online petition allows concerned citizens to rally support for women and people of color who are survivors of Katrina, and to demand that their voices are included in the planning of post-Katrina reconstruction. Individuals can add their name to the petition online at www.ThePetitionSite.com. As of October 27, 2005, the petition had 2,732 signers.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Anita Daley of the Women’s Funding Network	

NOMINEE	The Saving Our Selves (S.O.S.) Coalition
NOMINEE CONTACT	LaTosha Brown 866/922-8683 (phone) brown1133@bellsouth.net (e-mail) www.sosafterkatrina.org (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>The formation of the coalition was prompted by the plight of so many working-class, poor and Black citizens living in small, rural communities still in desperate need of food, water and basic relief 10 days or more after Hurricane Katrina devastated their homes, jobs and land. The Coalition has rallied organizations, churches and businesses for relief assistance efforts. The Coalition will involve grassroots organizations in creating and implementing strong plans for rebuilding, strengthening and transforming communities and the lives of rural poor and working class in the South.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Reverend John Vaughn of the 21 st Century Foundation	

NOMINEE	Southern Echo, Inc.
NOMINEE CONTACT	Leroy Jackson 601/982-6400 (phone) souecho@bellsouth.net (e-mail) www.southernecho.org (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>Southern Echo is an education, training and development nonprofit committed to building accountable leadership and organization through building political skills, organizational development and policy formation at the grassroots level and the development of an intergenerational model for grassroots organizing. Training, technical and legal assistance are provided to low income grassroots communities throughout rural Mississippi and 11 other Southern states.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Jason Sanders of the Tides Foundation	

NOMINEE	Southern Mutual Help Association, Inc. Rural Recovery Response
NOMINEE CONTACT	Helen Vinton 337/367-3277 (phone) dearsmha@southernmutualhelp.org (e-mail) www.southernmutualhelp.org (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>Southern Mutual Help Association has created a hands-on Rural Recovery Task Force, with three phases. Phase One is providing focused direct relief in rural areas of the 10 Louisiana parishes most directly affected by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. In Phase Two, they will spearhead a recovery and rebuilding effort including: training people to voice their needs and advocate in the public policy arena at the local, state and federal levels. Phase Three will focus on long-term development.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Jason Sanders of the Tides Foundation	

NOMINEE	Volunteer! Baton Rouge
NOMINEE CONTACT	Blythe Daigle 225/343-8270 x216 (phone) bdaigle@volunteerbatonrouge.org (e-mail) www.volunteerbatonrouge.org (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
<p>Since late August Baton Rouge has seen its population increase by over 100,000 people, many of whom come from the most disadvantaged populations. Since that time Volunteer! Baton Rouge has played a major role in the relief efforts. One effect of the disaster is that many people, including those in or near poverty, are housing relatives and friends and will be for an indefinite period of time. The nonprofits that serve these individuals have seen their client bases double as a result of the crisis.</p> <p>Volunteer! Baton Rouge is establishing a Volunteer Reception Center in an underserved neighborhood to recruit both long-time residents and displaced families from the New Orleans area to volunteer and help ease the load on the social service community. This will help residents and newcomers connect through neighboring and volunteering. Volunteer! Baton Rouge is also assisting area nonprofits with assistance in volunteer management and working with disadvantaged communities.</p>	
NOMINATED BY	
Miriam Parel of the Volunteer Center Disaster Recovery Fund (funded by the Walt Disney Company Foundation, the Salesforce.com Foundation and other donors)	

NOMINEE	The Volunteer Center of the Virginia Peninsula
NOMINEE CONTACT	Carolyn Kincaid 757/262-0190 (phone) volunteer@volunteerpeninsula.org (e-mail) www.volunteerpeninsula.org (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
The Volunteer Center of the Virginia Peninsula is currently working directly in the affected Monroe, Louisiana area, establishing volunteer connections and donation matches, including the "Pajama Program" which has distributed 8,000 pairs of new pajamas to those affected by the hurricanes in their community.	
NOMINATED BY	
Miriam Parel of the Volunteer Center Disaster Recovery Fund (funded by the Walt Disney Company Foundation, the Salesforce.com Foundation and other donors)	

NOMINEE	The Volunteer Center of Madison County
NOMINEE CONTACT	Diane Blocker 256/539-7797 (phone) diane@volunteerhsv.org (e-mail) www.volunteerhsv.org (web site)
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM/SERVICES	
Immediately after Hurricane Katrina the Volunteer Center of Madison County recruited and coordinated round-the-clock volunteer staffing for the Red Cross Service Center, a key resource for area evacuees. The Center partnered with local government, civic organizations, and 180 area churches to organize job fairs and a resource fair to help evacuees find long-term assistance. The Center placed 202 evacuees in local empty homes and apartments through their Adopt a Family Program, and continues to serve as a State Coordinator for the Open Your Home program (www.openyourhome.com), linking individuals offering temporary housing with evacuees in need. The Center has been responding to an average of over 200 calls daily from evacuees and volunteers, and installed additional telephone lines to avoid sending callers to the default voicemail.	
NOMINATED BY	
Miriam Parel of the Volunteer Center Disaster Recovery Fund (funded by the Walt Disney Company Foundation, the Salesforce.com Foundation and other donors)	