

# ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE



Seventh-day Adventist Humanitarian Agency in the United States and Bermuda

## Restoring hope and wholeness



Sung Kwon  
Executive Director

Hurricane Katrina, the most catastrophic disaster to strike the U.S., taught us-- church leaders, government officials, disaster relief agencies, U.S. citizens and others--many lessons. In the fight to relieve the human suffering that pervaded the Gulf Coast states in last August and September, the

life principle became so clear--'it is the moral duty of every human to help the suffering.'

On this premise, ACS Disaster Response operates and provides avenues for community members to assist disaster victims. In the midst of loss and devastation, ACS Disaster Response offers hope to survivors and helps bring restoration. As the needs of disaster victims increase and the rate of disasters become more frequent, ACS Disaster Response continually adapts new strategies and seeks ways to improve our operation.

The aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita has provided ACS Disaster Response an opportunity to reveal our commitment to aid disaster victims to recovery. We have initiated the Community Rebuilding Project to assist the survivors who lack insurance and financial resources and we continually seek ways to help those less fortunate in our society.

## after Katrina and Rita



Joe Watts  
National Disaster  
Response Director

From across the nation help was generously given to assist ACS Disaster Response to aid Hurricane Katrina and Rita victims. Church members and other supporters gave their time, energy and funds to make a difference in the lives of those who lost their homes and possessions. Every Union and Conference assisted in the response in some way.

I thank each one of you for helping ACS Disaster Response take action. Because of you we were able to manage eight multi-agency warehouses, more than fifteen distribution centers and support countless churches and schools across the nation that became collection centers. As a result, the victims were housed, fed and clothed. A special thanks to our universities, colleges and academies that responded enthusiastically to every aspect of the disaster response and to all of the ministries who partnered with us.

Donations flowed in record amounts from around the world and without these funds, the far-reaching response would not have been possible. I thank God for each one of you because by working together we did make a difference.

### ACS Disaster Response helps disaster victims through:



**crisis response counseling** - a service that provides disaster victims emotional and spiritual care and an opportunity to ask questions, chat informally or request prayer.



**emergency distribution of relief supplies** - a service that provides goods necessary for victims' survival such as drinking water, groceries, clothing and more.



**donation distribution centers** - locations where donors can ascertain the real needs of disaster victims and donate goods.



**warehouse operations** - a service where volunteers sort, package, store and transport donated goods for distribution.



**community collection centers** - locations where community members can volunteer for disaster response.

**Together We Can Help Communities in Crisis**

TOGETHER WE CAN HELP COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

## Do You Know?

### These 10 Facts about ACS Disaster Response

**1** ACS Disaster Response works in a written agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**2** FEMA recognizes ACS Disaster Response as one of the top voluntary organizations active in disasters in the U.S.

**3** ACS Disaster Response works in more than 200 cities across North America providing disaster relief services with over ten thousand trained volunteers.

**4** In the Katrina and Rita relief efforts, ACS Disaster Response volunteers managed \$40 million worth of goods at an approximate cost of \$200,000.

**5** For every dollar spent for Katrina and Rita expenses, ACS Disaster Response volunteers delivered \$200 of product to the survivor.

# LOOKING BACK

## *Moving Forward*

“Everything I had was washed away but I know God is in charge and everything that happens to me must meet His approval,” said Cyndy Jones (formally Janusa). Cyndy found her thirty-year collection of books and music, memories and much more under seven feet of water when she returned to her home in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina ravished the area.

Cyndy and her family fled her home to New Iberia, Louisiana four days before the storm with the feeling that things would never be the same. In refuge, she went to gather needed supplies at the local Walmart where she discovered across the street the ACS Disaster Response donation and warehouse site. Immediately, she volunteered her services. “I believe there is healing in helping others and by being able to be there, I was helped,” Cyndy stated.

When Cyndy began volunteering, she was able to fill a crucial need as the office manager and oversee the purchasing, record keeping and accounting. “Every time we had a need at the warehouse, God filled it.” As volunteers came from all over the country to assist at the warehouse, Cyndy made new friends. She also met her new husband.

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**“We will not give up. We will not quit. It is not hopeless.”**

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“Katrina washed my old life away, but God has given me a new one. I’ve never experienced so much change, adventure, travel and rich blessings in one six-month period in my life. I would never imagine that a disaster would turn out this way,” said Cyndy.

Yet, as she recollects on all the destruction in her hometown, she expressed that photographs cannot adequately depict the devastation. When she frequents her home, she feels that most of the world has forgotten the problem since there has been little progress even though much time has elapsed.

Cyndy summarized, “When you drive down the street, you will see a house with the roof caving in, without walls and the floor is gone, yet it is decorated for Christmas and Mardi Gras. Although, we’ve been hurt and shattered, we will not give up. We will not quit. It is not hopeless.”

Like Cyndy, Octavia James, returned to her home in Groves, Texas to assess damages after Hurricane Rita struck and realized her neighbors needed help. Octavia with her husband and two sons began a distribution center out of her home. She contacted ACS Disaster Response and a mobile distribution unit filled with supplies was deployed to her location. Mobile distribution units are semi trucks loaded with prepackaged clothing, personal care items, blankets and sheets. Octavia, her family and friends unloaded the items and distributed them to the hurricane victims.

There are many others like Cyndy and Octavia who were victimized by the recent disasters, yet volunteered their time to help others. Their example strengthens ACS Disaster Response’s commitment to offer hope and long-term recovery assistance for disaster victims.



Community Rebuilding Project is designed to assist community members and Seventh-day Adventist Churches that suffered great damage by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and need to rebuild but cannot due to lack of financial resources and insurance coverage. The scope of the redevelopment includes reconstruction for the church and immediate surrounding areas in the community where the church is located. While the aim is to clean up, repair and rebuild churches and homes, the mission is to touch lives and help people regain faith and wholeness. For more information about how you can get involved with the Community Rebuilding Project, visit [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org).

### Rebuilding Seventh-day Adventist Churches

Through the Community Rebuilding Project, ACS Disaster Response has identified nine Seventh-day Adventist Churches in New Orleans, Louisiana to assist with repairing damages.

“We need carpenters, electricians, painters, general contractors and anyone who is willing to assist us,” said Ben Francois, volunteer coordinator for Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Orleans.

ACS Disaster Response is also working with the local conference offices in the devastated areas to identify Seventh-day Adventist members who were affected, have relocated and need assistance.

### Rebuilding Devastated Communities

ACS Disaster Response aims to assist with the repair of the communities in New Orleans, where a large number of homes suffered great damage.

As the New Orleans City Plan is still underway, ACS Disaster Response is working with local church pastors to identify community members who desire to remain in New Orleans and rebuild.

“We are committed to executing the Community Rebuilding Project in New Orleans and will do our best to aid those most deprived,” said Sung Kwon, National Executive Director of ACS who estimates that the project may take 2-3 years.

### Ten Dollar Homes

ACS Disaster Response has partnered with Pathfinders and Youth Ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America to fundraise to house families who were affected by Hurricane Katrina and Rita.

On April 29, 2006 youth across the nation will solicit \$10 contributions towards the purchase of permanent homes for 10 families with children. Their goal is to raise \$500,000, which the Adventist Community Services National Headquarters will match up to \$250,000.

For more information about Ten Dollar Homes, visit [www.adventistyouthministries.org](http://www.adventistyouthministries.org)

**6** ACS Disaster Response raised more than \$2 million to aid the Katrina and Rita victims and allocated the funds to the communities in the devastated areas.

**7** Since 1969, ACS Disaster Response has been a member of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD), a society of more than 40 emergency management agencies.

**8** Last year, ACS Disaster Response volunteers cared for nearly 2 million disaster victims.

**9** ACS Disaster Response, in partnership with Aidmatrix Foundation launched the first Inventory Control System for emergency warehouse management, an internet-based software that allows donation distribution centers anywhere in the U.S. to go on-line to learn what is available in the warehouse and order on-line for goods to be delivered.

**10** ACS Disaster Response has developed alliances with sister agencies to provide optimal services for communities in crisis.

## Why Be a ACS Disaster Response Volunteer?

*"Without our volunteers we would not be able to do what we do. We had over 600 volunteers help at the New Iberia warehouse, where we supplied donated goods to distribution sites in every county in the state of Louisiana. Volunteers from all over the country came to assist and we were able to manage a 24/7 hour operation for 6 months and serve 300 sites. Our volunteers make our work possible."*

- Lavidia Whitson, ACS Disaster Response Director, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference

*"There are thousands of people who need to know they are not forgotten. I left Louisiana wanting to do so much more. I feel the way all volunteers feel, I left with more than I gave."*

- Cindy Stephan volunteered in New Iberia

*"When I arrived to help rebuild the destroyed community in Pearlington, Mississippi, the stench was unbearable for me. But, I prayed and God gave me strength to continue on. Volunteering provides an opportunity to see God answer prayers."*

- Matthew Weeden, Center for Youth Evangelism We Care Participant

*"I am glad that I've become a ACS Disaster Response volunteer because it helps me to see beyond myself to the needs of other people."*

- Aileen King volunteered in New Orleans

*"I believe volunteers are the right arm of God because they are willing to give themselves to assist a disaster, not knowing what to expect. Volunteers are disciples who spread the good news about Christ through action and love."*

- Linda Walker, ACS Disaster Response Coordinator, Southwest Region Conference



## ACS Disaster Response Wants...

Every day brings another disaster somewhere in the world. By partnering with ACS Disaster Response, you help disaster victims to receive immediate loving care in their time of need. As a sponsor, ACS Disaster Response volunteers act on your behalf to provide disaster relief services.

About \$200 provides ACS Disaster Response with necessary funds to provide 10 blankets and adequate food for 10 individuals for one week at most disaster sites. In the Katrina and Rita relief efforts, ACS Disaster Response volunteers provided needed supplies for up to 40,000 people in the very critical 72-hour window after the storms. Your contributions enable ACS Disaster Response to purchase exactly what is most urgently needed by disaster victims and provide transportation to distribute the supplies.

## ...to Partner With You!

Today, we invite you to join us in our mission to help communities in crisis.

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*"Hurricane Katrina created a need so great that it required an extraordinary effort from everyone to do their part so I felt compelled to do something. I chose to donate to ACS because I really admire the work they do and trust them to use the money for the relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina victims or for the right purposes."*

- Noelene Johnson, Director  
North American Division Children's Ministries

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To get involved, contact ACS Disaster Response:  
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904  
301-680-6438 or 1-877-ACS (227)-2702  
[www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org)