

Office of the
Attorney General
Employee Newsletter

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Attorney General of Texas



Answering the Call Agencywide Volunteer Efforts



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[@Work Main Page](#)

THE BIG PICTURE:
[Making a Difference](#)
[Kudos for Texas!](#)

DISASTER RESPONSE:
[Assisting the Evacuees](#)
[Agencywide Efforts](#)
[More Hurricane Tales](#)

CLEAN AIR
COMMITMENT:
[Extraordinary Measures](#)
[Calculate Savings](#)
[Solutions for the Field](#)
[Cut Down the Commutes](#)

CASE STUDY:
[In Re Commitment of](#)
[Michael Fisher](#)

PROTECTING HISPANIC
CONSUMERS:
[Fraude Conference](#)
[Tres Casos de Fraude](#)

FACES OF THE AGENCY:
[Missy Cary](#)
[Mission to Africa](#)
[Case Solved](#)
[Kudos](#)
[The Gallery](#)
[Lump Sums Report](#)
[Longevity Awards](#)

[@Work Archives](#)
[Intranet Home](#)

The call for in-kind donations for hurricane evacuees went out the Friday before Labor Day. Before 8:00am Tuesday morning the first loading van outside the William P. Clements building was full and on its way to the warehouse. By Wednesday our office had fourteen palettes of material stacked four to five feet high ready to be delivered to the Salvation Army. The spirit of giving permeated our agency as hundreds of employees volunteered with the Red Cross, Salvation Army and Legal Aid while others made financial donations totaling almost \$10,000.00.



On Wednesday, September 28, Barry McBee presented Mr. John Welton, Development Director for the Salvation Army, with a large envelope containing all of the checks written by employees. An unknown donor had agreed to match our OAG donations 1:1.



(David Ockletree, Stephanie Morales and Alan Creekmore)

The first request for volunteers was from the Salvation Army, where almost 150 employees volunteered to cover four-shifts. The response was so great that the Salvation Army asked 80 others to go on their waiting list.

The shifts were not easy. Thousands of boxes containing tons of materials had to be sorted, stacked, marked and organized. Volunteers worked in an unairconditioned warehouse sorting clothing, school supplies, toys, canned goods and diapers. Agency employees were committed to the work, though. As one volunteer put it, "There was a definite sense of getting the job done." Their diligence did not go unnoticed. The Salvation Army warehouse manager was in awe of the work rate, remarking during one shift that what he expected would take three days was nearly completed in four hours.



(Rick Sosa, Beverley McGaffey and Carla Garza)

Another 22 agency employees volunteered with the Red Cross. Volunteers received training as case workers and were asked to agree to provide 32 hours of service.

Their primary function was to issue landlord verification forms to evacuee individuals and families. The landlord verification form allowed evacuees to secure housing by providing them funds for the first month's rent and security deposit. They could also issue evacuees stored value cards similar to debit cards and vouchers for credit at Goodwill.

Volunteers worked five-hour shifts, spending sometimes as much as an hour assisting family members, answering questions and providing

referrals. One volunteer spied Sandra Bullock in the shelter handing out items.

Others like Alan Huddleston (at right) with Child Support were already involved in volunteer efforts when Katrina struck. Alan's SAR Team 8, an official volunteer search and rescue team, worked in conjunction with the Red Cross.



They worked tirelessly over the weekend at local shelters. Alan presided over the three main dorm rooms at the Austin convention center which housed more than 4200 evacuees at one point. Following Hurricane Rita, Alan and the team were deployed to East Texas to do damage assessment and search and rescue operations.



(Hurricane Katrina Evacuees at the Austin Convention Center)

These were just the volunteer efforts organized agencywide. Individuals and divisions gave and pitched in on their own terms as well. You can read about some of their efforts in the articles on [More Hurricane Tales](#).

All told, our agencywide volunteer effort contributed hundreds of hours of labor, tons of clothing, food and other necessities and, thanks to a matching donor, nearly \$20,000 in relief for victims of the deadly storms of 2005.