

Hurricane Katrina – “How Can We Help?”

The General Service Office has been flooded with questions about how to help our A.A. family in distressed areas. We hope the following questions and answers are helpful.

Q. Do you suggest that we send literature and money directly?

A. In situations such as Hurricane Katrina, the local A.A. meetings often require very few contributions of money or even complimentary literature. Usually, local A.A. members are proud and happy to work together to replace any lost literature, etc. Local groups often make whatever repairs are necessary to their meeting places and are grateful to do this work with other sober members of their A.A. community.

An example of local help occurred with the Tsunami disaster. The affected countries were part of the Asia Oceania Zone and countries like Australia and New Zealand in that zone were able to provide the needed replacement A.A. material without turning to other General Service Offices worldwide for additional help.

Many of the affected areas do not have mail delivery. Our experience is that A.A. members in the past have helped as private citizens through relief organizations.

Q. What can I do to help the affected members, groups, central offices/intergroups?

A. G.S.O.’s experience shows that it is often difficult to imagine what is needed. We pray, we don’t drink and we go to meetings so that we will be ready to respond to requests for help when they are received.

Q. What does G.S.O. plan to do to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina?

A. Just as in the past, the General Service Office is ready to support the efforts of local A.A. members in all types of disasters, Hurricane Katrina, fires, floods, mud slides, etc.

G.S.O.’s experience is that we are often called upon to replace lost literature on a complimentary basis. We wait to do this until the local conditions are stabilized and local A.A. members have an opportunity to let us know exactly what is needed.

Q. So exactly what is the General Service Office doing right now?

A. G.S.O. has contacted and offered their support to intergroups and central offices in cities and towns where thousands of evacuees will be living for the next few months.

Q. Can I send money to G.S.O. and specify that it be used for Hurricane Katrina Relief activities?

A. The General Service Office does not have the means or staff to earmark A.A. funds that are received at this office. Every A.A. dollar received at G.S.O. is used on a priority basis to carry A.A.'s message when a need is expressed. This includes responding to literature needs during natural disasters, translating literature for A.A. members in emerging countries and helping new A.A. groups in U.S. and Canada.