

Summary Report of the Gulf Coast Relief Funding Panel

Conference Call

February 21, 2006

Present: Rev Meg Riley, Eunice Benton, Rev. Steve Crump, Rebecca Cureau, Rev. Jacqueline Luck, Joe Sullivan, Martha Thompson

1. The Panel reviewed the updated GCRF website and requested updates to GCRF webpage.
2. The Panel received a report from Eunice Benton here summarized:

The Mississippi Working Group is gathering via introductions over email. They will be together Sunday afternoon.

Eunice shared her deep concern for the Gulfport, MS congregation. They have lost a compellingly substantial portion of their membership. Their current meeting space is not acceptable. With so many challenges, it is hard to prioritize needs. They are working to partner with a partner church.

3. The Panel received a report from Becky Cureau here summarized:

The New Orleans Group was unable to have their conference call last week due to scheduling conflicts. They will have a call this coming Monday, February 27th. They have requested \$1,500 for publicity advertisements that 1st Church and Community Church are hoping to employ.

Panel discussed again the process for Working Groups to submit grant proposals to the Panel. It was affirmed that working groups do not need to send trial balloons for each grant. The Panel in general wishes to approve the aforementioned proposal, but wants to hold to the process of Working Group Advisory Boards making official proposals. The Panel agreed to hold off on approving this funding until they receive a formal request from the New Orleans Strategic Planning Group.

4. The Panel received a report from Martha Thompson here summarized

Excerpt from a pre-distributed written report from Martha Thompson:

"Our analysis of the current situation in New Orleans is that it's necessary for people to return to move forward in defending their neighborhood. When I was in New Orleans last week someone quoted one of the people that our partner VIET is working with; when a person was asked whey they were moving back into their homes before there was a decision on whether or not those lots would be bulldozed, they said 'Its easy to bulldoze an empty house, its not so easy to bulldoze a house full of people.'

"Most of the grants in this docket have to do with giving community organizations in New Orleans and Mississippi the capacity (mostly staff) to do the organizing work they are doing for

helping people return, establishing community centers in neighborhoods for returning evacuees, organizing evacuees around their needs, helping people hold on to their land, and bringing organizations and people together around the issues of return. Most funders have neglected this vital work."

Martha also reported that The MIT - Neighborhood Works Grant has begun to bear fruit.

Martha summarized and advocated for the following six grant proposals, which have been approved by the Community Funds Working Group:

- Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans, Inc. \$63,000
- New Orleans Network \$43,750
- PICO - Louisiana Interfaith Together/ All Congregations Together \$60,000
- Turkey Creek Community Initiatives \$28,500
- Neighborhood Math Place (Three Day Community Grief Project) \$10,000
- Advancement Project \$125,000

Martha reports that non-UU community members of New Orleans have a strong awareness and gratitude for the help and efforts being made by Unitarian Universalists and the Association.

Consensus The Panel came to consensus approving the above six grants.

5. Rev. Meg Riley proposed having a JUUST Change Consultant meet with the panel.

6. The Panel rescheduled its next meetings to:

1 PM Central Time on March 7, 2006
10 AM Central Time on March 21, 2006.

7. Meeting adjourned.