

# Summary Report of the Gulf Coast Relief Funding Panel

## Conference Call

March 7, 2006

**Present:** Rev Meg Riley, Eunice Benton, Rev. Steve Crump, Rebecca Cureau, Hillary Goodridge (1:45 PM – 2:15 PM)

### **1. New Administrative Assistant**

- a. Meg Riley introduced Megan Joiner as the new administrative assistant for the Gulf Coast Relief Funding Panel and thanked Erik Kesting for his work in this position.

### **2. Report from Eunice Benton**

- a. Eunice reported that the Mississippi Strategic Planning Group believes that ideally, we ought to be guided in what we agree to fund by the way things were before the storm. However, the reality is that this is rarely possible. This is a challenging dynamic. People cannot go back to the way things were before the storm.
- b. Becky suggested the Panel consider funding religious professionals in Gulfport as a method of sustaining the congregation.
- c. The Mississippi Strategic Planning Group will meet next on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The group will have phone calls and emails in between face to face meetings.

### **3. Report from Becky Cureau**

- a. Recent New Orleans Strategic Planning Group meeting went well. They are awaiting a grant request form for funding for radio outreach spots to be played on primetime National Public Radio in the New Orleans area.
- b. The group discussed the proposal and shared experiences from similar outreach campaigns.
- c. **Vote →** The Panel voted unanimously to approve \$1,500 to the three New Orleans Congregations for advertising outreach pending the receipt of the official application form for the grant.

### **4. Report from Hillary Goodridge**

- a. Grant request for the Jeremiah Group, a multi-racial, multi-issue organization in metropolitan New Orleans, bringing about positive change through broad-based community organizing. Our purpose is to build a power base of relationships within our communities where people have political and social power, capable of representing the interest of both family and community during neighborhood discussions, public actions, and political decisions. The Jeremiah Group trains and develops community leaders to decide their own direction, instead of leaving decisions in the hands of a select few.
  - i. **Vote→** The Panel voted unanimously to approve \$55,000 for this grant as submitted and approved by the Community Funds Working Group
- b. The Gulf Coast Missionary Baptist District Association, GCMBDA, has appealed through the Baptist Laymen's Association for men and women of different faith communities all over the country to organize work teams to come down to the Mississippi Gulf Coast to work on homes devastated by Hurricane Katrina for families who are not covered by insurance, whose insurance will not pay for flood

damage or whose FEMA grant will not cover repairs. This grant will create:

- an opportunity for UU congregations across the country to volunteer with organizations in the region that are rebuilding houses for low income groups.
  - support for building materials for these groups for house repair
  - technical support in incorporating low cost hurricane and flood mitigation measures into repair processes.
- i. **Vote→** The Panel voted unanimously to approve this grant in the amount of \$40,000 as submitted and approved by the Community Funds Working Group.
- c. Request for a \$10,000 discretionary fund to be managed by Martha Thompson of the UUSC with potential for renewal up to 4 times to reach \$50,000.
- i. Panel suggested giving a \$15,000 grant to start.
  - ii. **Vote→** Panel voted unanimously to approve \$15,000 of funding for such a discretionary fund to UUSC in the care of Martha Thompson.

**5. Meeting adjourned** at 2:15 PM Eastern Time