



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
130 Prospect Street Cambridge, MA 02139
617-868-6600 (phone) 617-868-7102 (fax) www.uusc.org

April 30, 2006

To whom it may concern:

The Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee formed the Gulf Coast Relief Fund to respond to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In November 2005, we participated in a meeting of several organizations doing community work in New Orleans. They all emphasized the difficulty of working in New Orleans, the complexities of working with evacuees and returnees, the losses their own organizations had suffered, and the overall lack of funding for community organization in the wake of the hurricanes.

In December 2005, The Gulf Coast Relief Fund supported a team that spent several weeks in New Orleans mapping community organizations' work there. The team spoke with organizations about the work they were doing, the challenges they faced, and their needs for capacity building.

The organizational mapping done by the team shows there is very little funding going into these organizations, which have lost personnel, equipment, and records. We found the team's work very useful for our own programmatic funding framework in New Orleans. By mid-January, we decided to continue to support a two-person team, Jainey Bavishi and Rachel Wilch, for several months. They continue to work with groups in the area, charting out which organizations need new support and working on a series of three reports to share with other funders and agencies working in New Orleans. As of late of April, our conclusion was that there is still far too little funding and support for these groups, particularly in view of widespread institutional failure to respond to the needs of the city's most disadvantaged populations.

We would like to share with you the two reports that have been completed: the March report *New Orleans' Post-Katrina Community Organizing Landscape: Current Efforts, Unmet Needs*; and the April report *New Orleans' Post-Katrina Community Organizing Landscape: From Action to Policy*. Both can also be found on the UUSC website www.uusc.org under *Katrina Relief* and on the Unitarian Universalist website www.uua.org under Gulf Coast Relief Fund. We hope you will find this useful in your work; please let us know if you would like to receive the third and final report.

Sincerely,

Martha Thompson
Program Manager for Rights in Humanitarian Crises

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
130 Prospect Street Cambridge, MA 02139
617-868-6600 (phone) 617-868-7102 (fax) www.uusc.org
UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world