

Gulf Coast Relief Panel Conference Call Report

September 12, 2006

Begin 1:00 PM CDT

1. Reports from Working Groups

a. New Orleans Strategic Planning Group

- The two N. Orleans churches (First and Community) are now holding separate meetings. First UU is meeting across the street from their property and starting programs beyond just worship; Community is meeting in a Catholic chapel and is excited about a new music program.
- The next meeting will probably take place in November.
- The Panel discussed coordinating volunteers in the region—energy is still high about volunteer efforts.

b. Mississippi Strategic Planning Group

- In Mississippi the congregations will be sending folks to a Service Leader Training in Jackson this Saturday (September 16), an event planned by the Mississippi Strategic Planning Group.
- The next meeting of the group will occur on Sunday afternoon, September 24th, immediately following the earlier events of the Centennial Celebration at Our Home Universalist Unitarian Church in Ellisville.

c. Community /UUSC Working Group

- The group has met by email. There have been good individual conversations, with leaders talking to each of the individual group members. They hope for a face-to-face meeting in October.
- The focus is increasing on Mississippi and group is looking at more projects there.

2. Grants Recommended by Community/UUSC Working Group

→ **VOTE APPROVED**—Neighborhood Housing Services of New Orleans -- An existing partner for UUSC and the Gulf Coast Panel. Grant is to hire staff for neighborhood outreach. Joe Sullivan moved and Becky Cureau seconded a motion to approve the grant proposal for \$45,000. Motion passed.

→ **VOTE APPROVED**—STEPS Coalition – This is a new organization and a new partner, an advocacy and support organization for a multiplicity of efforts to restore and rebuild along the Mississippi Gulf Coast that hopes, especially, to facilitate dialogue and provide technical assistance to various groups. Oxfam America and 21st Century Foundation are also supporting and underwriting this coalition of organizations and people on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Steve Crump moved and Eunice Benton seconded a motion to approve the grant request for this organization for \$29,828; motion passed.

→ **VOTE APPROVED**—Coastal Women for Change -- This organization is newly forming in response to the situation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and it is a member of the STEPS Coalition. Based in Biloxi, its mission is to address issues and needs for low-income women, especially women of color, with child care a major focus. Joe Sullivan moved and Eunice Benton seconded a motion to approved this grant request for \$30,652; motion passed.

Panel Face-to-Face Meeting

The Panel discussed again dates when they might have a face-to-face meeting before the end of 2006 and noted that the 11th-12th of December looked like the most plausible dates. The group is holding those dates and will plan to meet in New Orleans.

Report Respectfully Submitted by Megan Joiner with notes from Eunice Benton.