

Disaster Fatigue: Hurricanes Dolly and Ike

By Jennifer Carr-Allmon, Associate Director, Texas Catholic Conference

Reflecting on the many changes of this past year, it is important to remember our brothers and sisters affected by Hurricanes Dolly and Ike. These storms wreaked havoc along the Texas gulf coast and left hundreds of people homeless. In 2005, the entire United States rallied to aid those impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and Texas Catholic Charities agencies were among the first to provide practical assistance to those in need. It was exhausting and required millions of dollars in assistance. Now, our Catholic Charities agencies are once again providing disaster assistance here in Texas, but this time they are struggling to meet the needs of the community. In their own words, here are the appeals for assistance from the Catholic Charities Agencies of Texas:

“We have a long-term recovery plan to assist those who did not get assistance from FEMA or the state. There are at least 5,000 homes needing repair. Many families have lost everything. Although volunteer groups are prepared to repair the homes, available funds for building materials are limited. Catholic Charities, together with other faith communities, are working together to assist these families, but with current funds we will only help a small percentage of families in need. We need all the help that we can receive. Every effort makes a difference for someone still hurting and needing help. To contact Catholic Charities of Brownsville, call 956-702-4088.”-**Sister Norma Pimental, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Brownsville.**

“Hundreds of families in our service area experienced significant damage to their homes and many homes and businesses were completely destroyed by the storm surges resulting from the hurricane. Two small communities in our diocese (Smith Point and Oak Island) were completely destroyed— leaving hundreds of families without homes or jobs. Our community has moved past the emergency response phase and into the recovery phase of this disaster, which means providing case management services for the victims of the storm. We are in need of financial support as well as volunteer support to help provide services. Our location has received less coverage than the more highly populated areas affected by the storm, and we have had little response to our requests for assistance.

Persons interested in donating can do so by visiting www.catholiccharitiesbmt.org and selecting the “Network for Good” donation button. Personal or Corporate checks can also be mailed to P.O. 829, Beaumont, TX 77704-0829 for “Project Ike.” Individuals or groups who wish to volunteer their time and service can contact me at 409-924-4422.” -**Ginger Culver, Vice President of Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas.**

“Catholic Charities is providing emergency and case management services at island and Mainland locations. Volunteers are needed who can assist with case management and

counseling services, and to help clean residences. To volunteer, contact Beth Zarate with Catholic Charities at 713-874-6654.

Donations of gift cards are also requested as a means to provide assistance in a dignified manner to those needing small appliances, medicine, food, gasoline, and more. Gift cards can be mailed to 2900 Louisiana St., Houston, TX 77006. Please note that the donation is for hurricane recovery. Financial donations can also be made online at www.catholiccharities.org. And last but not least, we can always use prayers to support thousands of individuals who are struggling to regain a foothold in life.” **-Deacon Joe Rubio, Vice-President of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston:**

Families are fearful in light of the economic crisis and many people are suffering from “disaster fatigue.” The storms have passed from the immediate memory of those not directly affected and many have made donations already. But so much more is needed. Please pray for, and if possible, donate time or treasure to aid Catholic Charities around the state in ministering to those affected by Hurricanes Ike and Dolly.