



# *City of Slidell*

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department of Cultural and Public Affairs ♦ Slidell, LA 70458

October 3, 2005 Contact: Kim Bergeron, [kbergeron@cityofslidell.org](mailto:kbergeron@cityofslidell.org)

## **City of Slidell Grateful for Relief Organizations**

More than a month has passed since Hurricane Katrina hit the city of Slidell. After the eye of the storm passed over the city, it left approximately 10,000 of the city's 30,000 homeless, and damaged approximately 85 percent of the city. Throughout the relief efforts, a number of organizations have provided outstanding support to the citizens of the battered community.

Operation Blessing International was quick to arrive on the scene, offering hot meals, water and ice for residents, plus emergency medical assistance. Especially in the initial days following the storm, when there were virtually no stores open and no other resources available, Operation Blessing was, indeed, a blessing to the people who had not evacuated the city. In the weeks since the storm, Operation Blessing has redirected its efforts to include debris removal, post-hurricane cleanup and "blue roof" protective tarp services for damaged rooftops.

The organization has committed to remaining in Slidell for at least another six months. "We don't believe in drive-by benevolence," said Operation Blessing President Bill Horan. "We're going to be here as long as we can help."

Soon after the storm, Heart to Heart International arrived in Slidell and partnered with Operation Blessing, establishing a free medical clinic alongside the Operation Blessing food distribution center. The clinic remains in operation with volunteer doctors, nurses and EMT's from across the nation. The medical professionals have pledged to remain for as long as possible to help the community.

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To help the animal rescue and care efforts, Noah's Wish joined the City of Slidell, where they ultimately rescued hundreds of animals which had been left behind when families evacuated. When many families returned after the storm and realized their homes had been destroyed, they realized they would be unable to care for pets, and turned to Noah's Wish to provide foster care for the animals. To date, the operation is caring for over 800 pets, ranging from dogs and cats to parrots, tarantulas, snakes and water dragons.

“We're in this for the long haul,” says Noah's Wish Founder and Director Terri Crisp. “We want to reunite as many pets with their families as possible, to provide temporary care for those unable to return home yet, and to find homes for those whose owners will not be coming back to the area.” She credits Noah's Wish's fast response to the disaster to City of Slidell's Animal Control Supervisor Damian Anti, who had contacted the organization prior to Hurricane Katrina to have them on stand-by in case of emergency.

The Church of Latter Day Saints also dispatched 500 volunteers as part of its LDS Emergency Response Team. The organization has helped the city by providing food and water distribution, emergency supplies, debris removal, cleanup and “blue roof” tarp services. The group took the first responders under its wing, ensuring that fire fighters, the police force, emergency crews and city employees were well fed during their post-hurricane efforts. Most recently, they provided 5,000 school supply kits for children returning to school.

“I don't know how we would have made it through all of this without these organizations,” said Slidell Mayor Ben O. Morris. “Many of these people have given up their vacation time, brought tents and travel trailers and put aside their own needs and comfort levels to help our

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citizens. They've gone above and beyond the call of duty. The City of Slidell is indebted to them for all of their help in our recovery efforts. They will not be forgotten.”

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