

Dear Partner,

I am writing to let you know about some terrific results from the February visit by NCL Advisory Council, inform you of some meaningful philanthropic investment opportunities here in the greater New Orleans area and ask your advice.

First, thank you for coming here last winter. Your vote of confidence in our city's ability to deliver a safe, congenial experience for the visitor is what we need to counter continuing negative national publicity.

Thank you, too, to the members of the group who volunteered at Just The Right Attitude and helped distribute groceries to area residents. We are all buoyed by Debra South-Jones' optimism in the face of so many challenges and her belief that "just the right attitude" -- with help from your neighbors -- can help people rebuild their homes and communities.

And many thanks to all of the companies that generously supported the UWA Hurricane Response and Recovery Fund. The support that we received helped us make a major investment in the recovery of the health and human services sector in our region.

Here is our news:

### **Afterschool programs**

In 2007, our United Way joined with the Emeril Lagasse Foundation, the Greater New Orleans After-School Partnership and Save the Children to coordinate summer grant decisions, with an emphasis on providing access to full-day programs for children from low-income families. Summer programs are critical for safety and crime prevention, especially since most storm-damaged recreational facilities have not yet reopened. As a result of these efforts, the local Meadows Foundation gave its first grant to United Way of \$100,000.

JCPenney also contributed more than \$100,000 to afterschool programs in the New Orleans area through both foundation and local store support. About a month after the NCL meeting, we requested support for summer programs from local JCPenney stores – one of our area stores followed through, adding \$7,500 to the funding collaborative. Shortly after, United Way became a beneficiary of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, with \$94,000 to provide financial assistance for low-income youth to attend after-school programs, which help keep neighborhoods safe, improve attendance and academic performance, and inspire students to be interested and engaged in their education. Plus, the Meadows Foundation gave its second grant within a scant six months to meet the matching requirement! As a result of the two grants, 94 youth will be able to attend quality after-school programs across our region.

### **GE Foundation**

Kathleen Maygothling from the GE Foundation had a very special experience on her trip to the New Orleans region prior to the NCL meeting. She met up with Liz McCartney, and her partner Zack Rosenberg, who had quit their day jobs in Washington DC – she as a teacher, he as a lawyer – to start the [St. Bernard Project](http://www.stbernardproject.org) (SBP) [www.stbernardproject.org](http://www.stbernardproject.org). They are rebuilding homes in one of the most devastated parishes in the region. With funding from our United Way, SBP has grown rapidly into a regional rebuilding leader.

When Kathleen returned to Connecticut, she discussed her trip with her Board, which then determined to invest funds in direct service to people trying to return to their homes. The GE Foundation Board voted to give \$425,000 over one year to support SBP's efforts. The result will be the rebuilding of 31 homes, of which six will be for first-time homeowners, and the development of a Rebuild Loan Fund that will "recycle" donated funds to create affordable senior housing. SBP was recently featured on [Anderson Cooper 360°](#).

### **Pfizer and United Parcel Service**

After the Day of Service at Just The Right Attitude, Pfizer sent much-needed blankets and coolers for distribution, and UPS sent a most welcome \$20,000 grant. For those of you who did not have a chance to participate in the NCL service project and hear her story, Debra started her agency with no building, no food storage, no electricity and no computers. Now an oasis in New Orleans East, JTRA hosts two mobile health clinics, child support workers and social workers and a licensed manicurist who performs diabetic foot care. The city hotline refers people in need to JTRA, but the city gives not one dime in support. Meanwhile, JTRA serves 17,000 hot meals a month (including two meals per day for seniors) and distributes groceries to over 26,000 families per month within the Greater New Orleans Area. We seek to open more doors to funding for Debra and her dedicated staff.

We are most grateful for these extraordinary gifts and want to acknowledge the help of UWA's NCL staff in making these possible.

We have several other programs for which we seek national support. These are special initiatives that we have implemented alongside our grants process, working with private and public partners to spur recovery of the region.

### **Resource Distribution Roundtables**

One of our primary objectives is helping people re-establish safe, secure, sanitary, and functional housing. At weekly Resource Distribution Roundtables, UWGNOA staff convenes with colleagues from disaster response agencies, social services agencies, faith-based organizations and FEMA to coordinate the necessary resources to fulfill a family's unmet needs. Case managers present a client's long-term recovery plan which identifies the challenges facing a family, documents that the family has exhausted (and has not duplicated) all insurance, government and other benefits, and details the steps to that family's disaster-related recovery. Agencies then collaborate to provide in-kind, volunteer and cash assistance to meet the need. The Roundtable is the resource of last resort to help bridge the gap to get the family *home*.

### **Greater New Orleans Rebuild Child Care Collaborative (GNORCCC)**

Hurricanes and flooding wiped out over 86% of the licensed child care facilities in Orleans Parish; most served low income families. As of July 31, 2007, only one-third have reopened. Employers have difficulty recruiting workers because of the dearth of child care options, slowing economic recovery. With UWGNOA as fiscal agent, our Success By 6 leadership coordinates the efforts of public and private stakeholders to rebuild build Class A Child Care Centers in Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard and bring facilities up to National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards. GNORCCC hired its own construction project manager to develop cost estimates for capital improvements or new construction that will meet stringent NAEYC standards and anticipates spending from \$50,000 to \$100,000 per center.

### **Individual Development Account (IDA) Project**

Through a five-year, \$5 million project designed to meet the needs of a community devastated by the Fall 2005 hurricanes, program participants receive a 4:1 match on their savings to purchase a new home, automobile, or to start or expand a child care business that meets quality standards. Grounded in best practice, the goal of this project is integrated community recovery with the purchase of the asset itself being the first stage of a family's climb from poverty to true financial self-sufficiency.

### **Faith-Based Initiative**

With a grant of \$250,000 from the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, UWGNOA is initiating a five-year partnership with the Faith Center For Community Development of New York to make strategic investments in faith-based organizations and to support them in generating affordable housing, critical community services such as quality child care centers and opportunities for low-income parishioners to achieve home and vehicle ownership, developing our community's houses of worship into centers of neighborhood rebirth.

### ***"I Can Be..."***

One of the greatest incidences of student dropouts occurs between eighth and ninth grades. In a Communities In Schools survey in the New Orleans area conducted in May, 2007, the need for career exploration programs was virtually tied with the need for violence prevention programs, according to about 90 percent of the 21 responding elementary schools. UWGNOA's School To Career Initiative commissioned a career awareness curriculum, "*I Can Be . . .*," designed to inspire students to stay in school and consider post-high school education and training. The curriculum aligns with national standards for a full range of academic subjects and features fundamental career knowledge, skills, and attitudes that cut across all career fields, plus specific career knowledge, skills, and attitudes

If you are interested in any of these initiatives or if you just want to ask us about them, please call. I also ask your advice in referring us to others who also may be interested. Please contact Annie LaRock, Director of National Philanthropy for the United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area at 504.827.6894 or [anniel@unitedwaynola.org](mailto:anniel@unitedwaynola.org).

Again, thank you for coming here, please come back, and bring your family and friends!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Gary Ostroske".

G. Gary Ostroske  
President  
United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area