

UU Congregation at Shelter Rock Offers Grant for Gulf Coast Relief

It is with gratitude and joy that we share some very special news. A generous challenge grant has been offered by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock (Manhasset NY) to benefit the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund. Beginning with contributions dated October 2, 2005, Shelter Rock will match each dollar given to the fund, up to a total of \$500,000.

This challenge grant represents a deep faith in the generosity of Unitarian Universalists, a faith that is well-founded. Thanks to your previous contributions, the Gulf Coast Relief Fund now provides a source of help and hope to people whose lives and ministries were tragically interrupted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Because of you, communities will be healed and lives will be transformed. We are deeply moved by the overwhelming response and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

As we begin to assess the scope of the damage in the Gulf Coast region, it is clear that the recovery process will need to continue for many years. If Shelter Rock's challenge is met, the combined gifts will increase the fund by an additional one million dollars. This is money that is sorely needed. The destruction left by the hurricanes is staggering, especially so in the most marginalized communities in the region. Additional contributions to the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund will allow us to provide ongoing assistance to those most in need. Furthermore, three UU churches in the New Orleans area have been badly damaged, and at least one is beyond repair. The Gulf Coast Relief Panel and UUSC's Department of Rights in Humanitarian Crises have committed to providing long-term and effective interventions and solutions, and they will be making intentional, judicious grants in order to make the best use of the funds.

This tragedy has tested us like no other, but it has also given us an opportunity to respond in a way that is truly transformative. We ask you now to rise to the challenge offered by our generous friends in the Shelter Rock congregation, to envision what can be when justice-loving people join hands and hearts, and to make this vision a reality. Please give generously so that together we may extend hope and healing to more of our brothers and sisters through a widening circle of care and compassion.

In faith,

The Rev. William G. Sinkford, President, Unitarian Universalist Association
Charlie Clements, M.D., President and CEO, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee