

Cat. 5

CARING
RESPONSE
& RESOLVE

“You can take the roof,”
one plywood billboard read,
“but you can’t take my heart!”



United Way of Tampa Bay - Caring, Response and Resolve

Fury of the Four

Charley: With projections of landfall at or near the Tampa Bay area, Hurricane Charley wobbled to the east at the 11th hour and made landfall ironically on Friday the 13th of August with 145-mph winds at Charlotte Harbor. The result was severe damage in southwest and central Florida.

Frances: Hurricane Frances hit Labor Day weekend with 105-mph winds on the Atlantic coast near Stuart, stripping roofs, smashing boats and damaging Kennedy Space Center before making its painfully slow two-day movement westward bringing with it tropical force winds and heavy rain across much of Florida.

Ivan: With Tampa Bay in its crosshairs, Hurricane Ivan instead stayed well off the western coastline with its powerful Category 4/5 winds, but raked the western Florida Panhandle on September 16th after landing on the Alabama coast with 130-mph winds.

Jeanne: Hurricane Jeanne made landfall late Saturday, September 25th, again near Stuart, at Hutchinson Island, with sustained winds of 120-mph. As with Frances, Jeanne lumbered west across the state, affecting central and western Florida with tropical force winds and heavy rains, compounding the havoc left behind by Frances.

Hurricane Relief Fund

- Two days after Charley hit, United Way of Tampa Bay partnered with SunTrust Bank, along with News Channel 8, The Tampa Tribune and TBO.com to help the storm's victims by administering a special fund for donations.
- United Way of Tampa Bay established an online donation page on its web site. The Hurricane Charley Recovery Donation Fund (later to be renamed Hurricane Relief Fund) was promoted nationally.
- On August 16th, United Way of Tampa Bay's Board of Directors unanimously agreed to allocate up to \$100,000 in reserve funds for hurricane relief.
- The Tampa Bay Devil Rays partnered with United Way to set up monetary collection areas at Tropicana Field for two home stands in August and September. United Way staff and volunteers collected donations from fans and Devil Rays staff at the 15 games, netting \$58,505 for hurricane relief.
- The St. Pete Times Forum offered a similar arrangement for six events during the month of September, highlighted by a \$4,000 contribution from the band Incubus, who performed at the Forum on September 3rd.

As of October, 18, 2004, contributions to the Hurricane Relief Fund exceeded \$700,000. One hundred percent of all contributions are being directed to front-line disaster relief and long-term recovery needs, with no administrative costs being taken by United Way on a local, regional or national basis.



Florida is the first state to get pounded by four hurricanes in one season since Texas in 1886. Back in 1886 there were approximately 1.5 million residents of Texas. The peninsula of Florida is a state of 17 million. Combined, the four storms damaged more than one of every five Florida homes, with over half of the state's 67 counties reporting hurricane-force winds at least once during the frightening span of 44 days.



Regional Recovery Center

After Charley's landfall, the Regional Recovery Center was established at the Florida State Fairgrounds on August 19th. A call went out to the immediate area for volunteers to run forklifts, unload trucks and sort donated items to be prepared for delivery. Light duty work was also offered including a phone bank where people could get information on how to volunteer or to donate items for the victims. A special interactive page was added to the United Way of Tampa Bay web site where volunteers could sign-up online, and get information as to the greatest needs on any particular shift.

The initial response was overwhelming, with up to 300 volunteers arriving daily, some from as far as Texas. United Way staff and volunteers accounted for many of the hours invested. The Regional Recovery Center was originally scheduled to be open for several weeks. That was to change as three more storms would follow, requiring the Center to extend its operations. It continues to operate at a warehouse location on Harney Road in Tampa.

As of October 18th, a total of 1,815 volunteers invested more than 9,256 hours of selfless service to help those in need of life's essentials. They have helped unload 155 tractor-trailers of donated items as well as individual drop off donations, which translates into nearly 140,000 cases of goods that continue to be delivered to affected areas.



Hillsborough Comfort Stations

After Hurricane Jeanne slammed into eastern Florida, it made a tediously slow trek westward. Although downgraded to a tropical storm, Jeanne still packed enough dangerously high winds and heavy rains to leave in its path flooding, structural damage and downed power lines. In eastern and southern Hillsborough County, many families who depend on electricity to power their wells for water were suddenly in desperate need. Hillsborough County Emergency Operations Center asked United Way of Tampa Bay to assist in the delivery of water, ice and "Meals Ready to Eat" packages to those in our service area. In conjunction with Hillsborough County Social Services, United Way staffed six comfort stations from September 29th to October 3rd.

The vast majority of the manpower came from United Way staff and volunteers who distributed 90,720 one-liter bottles of water, 19,240 bags of ice and 25,650 meals during the successful five-day effort.

Rebuilding Lives

The efforts described were major activities of United Way staff and volunteers. There are countless others including:

- Deployed staff to Polk County Relief Center to work alongside staff from the Salvation Army
- Provided staff support to the American Red Cross in Arcadia
- Coordinated the delivery of 33 pallets of used clothing for hurricane victims that could not be distributed through the Regional Recovery Center

The hard work continues. As homes and structures are being rebuilt, United Way will continue to concentrate on rebuilding lives. Health and human service needs increase exponentially after natural disasters, but with the help of the community, our partners and friends we can make a measurable difference in the lives of so many.



United Way of Tampa Bay

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