

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Don Chauvin

Governor, District 6200
2005 – 2006



SERVICE Above Self

To all Rotarians:

I want to thank all of you for the outpouring of well wishes, prayers, and contributions which have come in every day since Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana/Mississippi Gulf Coast on August 29.

One evening this week, after I had finished answering that day's email, I leaned back and tried to reflect on the magnitude of Rotary's participation in the relief effort. So many wonderful Rotarians had offered to open their homes to house evacuees. Many offered jobs. Others offered volunteers to come in and provide hands on help. And many of you sent in their monetary contributions – some contributed \$10, some \$20 and others more. Some club members pooled their donations and submitted their contributions as a Rotary Club. I then realized the true power and compassion of Rotary.

It is one thing to talk about Rotary's SERVICE Above Self, but to witness this motto in action leaves one with an humbling feeling. I can attest to all of you the FAMILY OF ROTARY is alive and doing quite well!



It has been one week since my last communiqué and I would like to bring you up to date on the efforts of Rotary District 6200 and tell you what I know about the condition of District 6840.

District Governor Neil Alford of District 6840 was one of the many victims of Hurricane Katrina. His daughter's home escaped the wrath of Katrina and I understand that DG Neil will be moving into her home. Governor Neil is working to reestablish communications with his club presidents to build a network capable of responding to the needs of family, friends and neighbors living in District 6840. Communications in and out of District 6840 is a hit or miss situation, generally with more misses than hits. Governor Neil has a new email address. It is:

rotary6840relief@yahoo.com.

The eastern edge of my District 6200 was also in the path of Katrina. Earlier I reported my concerns for Grand Isle, LA. and I feared for the island, its people and their Rotary Club. I am pleased to report that the people of Grand Isle are committed to rebuilding their community. I have been able to communicate with only two of the Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Grand Isle. The bridge which connects the island to the mainland has been damaged and it will be some time before authorities will be able to restore highway traffic. Access is limited to 4 wheelers traveling over the damaged bridge and boat. This is an area that will require some manpower hours sometime in the near future.

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Other cities in District 6200 suffering major hurricane damage are Golden Meadow, and Lockport and all communities in between this area and New Orleans. The hurricane extended to such areas as Baton Rouge, Morgan City and Houma but those areas saw only minor problems when compared to the area visited by the eye of Katrina.

The city of New Orleans is now nearly totally evacuated. There are some people still refusing to leave but time may wear them down and I suspect they will be asking for transport out of the quagmire in which they find themselves. It will be some time before you or I will want to visit this historic city. Some estimate 4-6 months before any degree of normalcy returns. Normalcy will soon be redefined for the Jazz capital of the world.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast area had total devastation. This area didn't receive the national attention that New Orleans did, but the majority of the storm's damage occurred in this area. They were impacted by high wind and water destroying homes and businesses. Unlike New Orleans, the water receded with the passing of the storm. Access to the area is slowly being restored.

I would like to chronicle the action plan District 6200 took within days of Hurricane Katrina.

1. One Thursday, September 1st an emergency meeting of the District 6200 Disaster Committee took place in Abbeville, Louisiana to begin the implementation of a disaster manual this district developed after Hurricane Andrew.
2. On Saturday, September 3rd an emergency meeting of the Trustees of The Rotary District 6200 Foundation was held in Lafayette, Louisiana and discussion was centered on the needs of Districts 6200 and 6840. A unanimous commitment was made to work in harmony with the leadership of District 6840 and invite District Governor Neil Alford to future Trustee meetings with the hope that he could help define projects needed in his devastated district.
3. On Thursday, September 8th an emergency meeting of the 50 club Presidents of District 6200 met in Lafayette, Louisiana to review the district's disaster manual and to receive instructions on securing necessary funding from the Foundation for needed relief efforts in both District 6200 and District 6840.

The relief engine was then in place and ready to take action. Clubs had already taken steps to providing Katrina relief prior to the September 8 meeting but now they had a complete grasp of a total master plan that all could work with.



A portion of the group of Club Presidents & disaster representatives assembled for an emergency meeting held in Lafayette, LA on Sept. 8, 2005

On September 10, The Rotary District 6200 Foundation Trustees met and awarded \$35, 934 in immediate relief grants. Of this total, 76% (\$27,310) was used to benefit the victims who lived within District 6840 and 24% was used to

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fund District 6200 relief. These are the first funds our district has been able to distribute to Hurricane Katrina victims and these are funds that Rotary Clubs and Rotarians around the world have contributed to the District 6200 Foundation and earmarked for Katrina Relief.

The Foundation Trustees will meet each Saturday and fund qualified future requests submitted by club Presidents in either District 6200 or District 6840 assuming contributed funds are available. Requests for relief forms are available at <http://rotary6200.org/katrina/pdf/katrinamanual.pdf>. A review of this document will reveal the simple accountability requirements expected of club Presidents who receive grant money.

District 6200 is partnering with other relief organizations to help with the distribution of goods contributed. The Katrina relief effort is not going to be a sprint to the finish, but instead will be a marathon. This District is prepared to stay the course.

What do we need today?

Our relief partners are rejecting clothing at this time. It requires too much of their manpower time and there are more pressing needs. This position is expected to change in another 4-6 weeks, but right now, **PLEASE NO MORE CLOTHES**. We intend to continue to accept all clothing donations currently in transit, but we are asking your cooperation in holding any unshipped clothing until we are prepared to accept them.

Please continue to provide the following items: blankets, diapers, baby formula, powdered milk, first aid kits, can openers, cleaning supplies, bottled water, canned/non perishable foods, sugar, artificial sweeteners, toilet paper & paper towels, toiletries, feminine hygiene supplies, trash bags, gloves, disposable razors, plastic knives, forks and spoons, batteries, flash lights, Ensure, towels, wash cloths, and insect repellent. Any help you can provide in sorting & labeling these supplies would be appreciated.

Your monetary contributions are by far the easiest of all means for us to render immediate relief. Needs are changing so fast, they will vary from week to week. We need to be able to move swiftly to satisfy those needs and money contributions gives us this advantage.

Where do you ship relief items?

We have set up seven different distribution centers in addition to our partners' distribution centers. In order to coordinate receipt of your shipment we are asking that you call **Janice Bradshaw** at **800-301-8560 BEFORE SHIPPING**. She will advise of the nearest delivery point in need, depending on the items you are shipping.

How do we contribute monetarily?

Please make your checks payable to:
Rotary District 6200 Foundation
Attn: Janice Bradshaw, General Secretary

P.O. Box 698
Abbeville, LA 70511-0698
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P.O. Box 44365
Lafayette, LA 70504

Wire Transfers:

Bank Name – JP Morgan Chase Bank
Routing Code - 065400137
Acct # 702166802

Shelter Boxes

We have received an adequate supply of Shelter Boxes and we do not anticipate a need for any more here in District 6200. District 6840 may have a need, but we do not have any information to share with you as to a shipping drop point. Jerry Palmer with Shelter Box attended our Thursday meeting with club Presidents and will be helping to coordinate delivery into District 6840.



Pictured above are Police Juror (County Commissioner) Don Manuel & District 6200 DGE Richard Churchman deploying shelter boxes in the Lake Charles, LA area for use by evacuees of Hurricane Katrina.

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Summary:

As a result of the high volume of telephone calls, we have had to relocate our command central to our District Office in Lafayette. Joe Hidalgo, who many of you have corresponded with, continues to serve as our Disaster Relief Coordinator and will manage our response team from command central. We have also created one central email address to handle the volume of emails he and I have been receiving. Hopefully we can get responses out quicker. We ask that you send any future email inquiries to:

relief@katrina6200.com

We invite all of you to visit our District 6200 website at www.rotary6200.org. There you will find contact information to our District office and an informational page with news on our continuing relief efforts.

Please do not lose sight of the fact that we are in the first year of Rotary's second century of service to mankind. Rotarians' actions during these extraordinary times will be recorded by Rotary historians for all to read during our bicentennial celebration. Let's get busy writing a chapter worthy of reading, a chapter that all will be proud of our **SERVICE Above Self** effort. The pen is in your hand.

Yours in Rotary

Don Chauvin
District Governor
Rotary International District 6200



My idol, and Rotarian Extraordinaire, Joe Hidalgo addressing District 6200 Presidents

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