

DRAFT
NATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY
Tuesday - February 28, 2006

On Tuesday, February 28th, 2006, members of the Student Hurricane Network will take part in a National Day of Solidarity with the People of the Gulf Coast. February 28th is the day of Mardi Gras, which has historically been a major part of New Orleans and Gulf Coast culture, and is also the approximate six-month anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. That week will also mark the kick-off of SHN's spring break trips, where over a seven week period nearly 500 students will descend upon the region affected by the Hurricane to volunteer their time. On this day, students at law schools around the country will put on events, hold rallies, and sponsor fundraisers, all with the goal of showing their communities that the crisis is not over, and that much remains to be done. As long as victims of Hurricane Katrina struggle, both in the Gulf Coast and scattered around the country, they must not be forgotten.

We invite you to join us in a National Day of Solidarity to highlight the impact of Hurricane Katrina and the challenges posed by the rebuilding process. We will use this day to ensure that the public and media continue to pay attention to the problems faced by those in New Orleans and throughout the Gulf Coast. We also want to highlight the national impact that Katrina has had as communities throughout the country have worked to assist and absorb hurricane victims. We encourage you to use this day, not as an opportunity to celebrate, but to raise the levels of consciousness and awareness of post-Katrina's complexity among your friends, coworkers, colleagues and fellow citizens.

We encourage you to endorse this call for a National Day of Solidarity and distribute, post and publish this document. For more information or to let us know what events you are planning, please e-mail the SHN Solidarity Day sub-committee at solidarityday@gmail.com. Also, visit both SHN's and From the Lake to the River's websites to post information and publicize events in your community: www.studenthurricanetwork.org and www.fromthelaketotheriver.org.

TEN WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY

1. Organize a Teach-In

Use this as an opportunity to bring students together to discuss some of the challenging problems associated with the rebuilding and reconstruction of the hurricane-affected region. Strategize about ways to mobilize the resources of your institution or of other organizations to provide meaningful assistance to Katrina victims, including starting an SHN chapter at your school.

2. Sponsor a Rally

Organize and hold a rally in your community. Encourage attendees to wear a string of traditional Mardi Gras beads as a sign of solidarity. Discuss the problems that frustrate and complicate post-Katrina rebuilding efforts. Use this as an opportunity to energize and mobilize students in your area to donate time and resources to rebuilding efforts.

3. Organize a Lecture Series

Draw upon the resources of your institution and invite area scholars and experts to lend their perspective on some of the many issues surrounding relief and reconstruction. Develop a policy paper, law review article or editorial from the lecture and distribute this to local and national publications. Let SHN know what speakers you find in your community, as we hope to put together a national database.

4. Adopt-a-Family

Katrina evacuees have created temporary homes in cities throughout the country. Consider having your organization or school adopt-a-family. Think about how you can provide meaningful assistance over both the short- and long-term.

5. Hold a Fundraiser and Donate to a Charity of your Choice

Consider holding a fundraiser for a charity of your choice. Particularly, think about supporting smaller community-based organizations, including local churches, that are providing direct assistance in regions devastated by the storm. Research the history of smaller organizations through resources such as guidestar.com before making your donation. You may also want to hold a fundraiser to help defray the cost of your school's SHN spring break trips. Donations to support the efforts of From the Lake to the River can be sent to Foundation for the MidSouth at 134 E. Amite Street, Jackson, MS 39201. 601-863-0488.

6. Organize a Clothing Drive

Many evacuees lost everything that they own. One way that everyone can help these families is to donate clothing through a clothing drive. Research what organizations might be accepting clothing for evacuees, both in the hurricane-affected area and in your own community.

7. Organize a Press Conference

The media has played an important role in keeping the public's attention focused on the plight of Katrina victims. Organize a press conference in your community to discuss your particular perspective on and role in the efforts surrounding the aftermath of Katrina. Consider inviting a local scholar, entertainer or other individual to make statements as a way to help attract media. Email media@studenthurricane.org, and SHN will help you organize a press event.

8. Write your Representatives

Write your representatives in Congress, as well as leadership of federal agencies, to focus their attention on the need for federal spending in the Gulf region. Ensure that the federal government lives up to its promises to help with the rebuilding and reconstruction process.

9. Organize a Jazz Concert

In the true spirit of Mardi Gras, organize a jazz concert celebrating this rich cultural tradition. Use this event as a way to raise money to support a charity in the hurricane-affected region. Incorporate policy themes and messages into this event by featuring a speaker in the middle of the event.

10. Organize a Spring Break Caravan

The Student Hurricane Network is an association of law students dedicated to providing assistance to communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This winter break, over 240 law students from over fifty-seven law schools across the country converged on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and across Louisiana: New Orleans, Lafayette, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Alexandria, and Covington. Volunteers worked with over eighteen public interest organizations to conduct massive intake, interviews, and research. Students assisted with projects involving criminal justice, housing, immigrant labor, FEMA claims, and more. The Network intends to expand its scope even further this spring via spring break caravans, long distance research opportunities, and externships. You can use Solidarity Day to publicize this efforts or do some last-minute recruitment and fundraising for your school's trip.