



PICO National Network

Unlocking the Power of People™

Sorrow, outrage and ways to help

September 1, 2005

Our hearts are broken over the death and destruction we are watching unfold in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. We are filled with sadness, anger and many other emotions. So much of the relationships and history that connects us together as a network runs through New Orleans and Louisiana.

We are watching catastrophic failure by public officials to respond to those who are most vulnerable. Our brothers and sisters are dying. Everything we stand for says that each of us has dignity and that we are responsible for one another. Those who were able to flee tell us of overwhelming needs - to save the lives of those still in harms way, to shelter, feed and clothe those who have lost their homes, to rebuild homes, communities and congregations.

As a network we are responding with all the resources and love we have.

#1: As an immediate step we ask that you call your Congressperson and Senators and express your outrage at what is unfolding in New Orleans and ask that they use their power and influence to pressure FEMA and the Federal Government to do more to save lives now. Call the Congressional switchboard at 1-800-643-9557 and ask to speak with your member of Congress. The Whitehouse switchboard is (202) 456-1414.

#2: PICO organizations and congregations in Louisiana, Alabama and Florida are overwhelmed by the work they are doing to help those who have sought refuge in their communities. One way you can help is to send money or provide other resources to congregations and agencies that are providing refuge to people. Our organizations in Baton Rouge, Houma/Thibodaux, Baldwin County, and Pensacola can help you direct resources to those providing shelter. Call Alia Zaki, PICO Operations Manager, who is coordinating this effort. Her phone number: 619-501-1804 (azaki@piconetwork.org). We have also been told that the Red Cross (1-800-435-7669) is another good way to provide assistance.

#3: We are working to match up PICO federations and congregations with sister congregations from New Orleans to help make sure people get the help they need to rebuild their lives and communities. STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION.

#4: We have created an information board at: <http://www.piconetwork.org/messageboard> if you have information that you want to share or if you are looking for information.

Our deepest prayers go out to our brothers and sisters who have lost so much that they have the strength to go on. We pray that our public officials act always with the understanding that in God's eyes each of our lives is precious and that we must do everything in our being to save each other.