

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Contributions by charitable organizations assisted many in need, but the American Red Cross and others faced challenges due to the size of the mission, inadequate logistics capacity, and a disorganized shelter process

Summary

Following Katrina's devastation, countless numbers of charities provided billions of dollars in relief to those in need. According to the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, as of January 9, 2006, private donations, including cash and in-kind gifts have reached \$3.13 billion.¹ According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the efforts of charitable organizations in the Gulf coast represent the largest disaster response effort in United States history.²

Under the National Response Plan (NRP), the American Red Cross (Red Cross) is the primary agency responsible for Emergency Support Function (ESF) #6, Mass Care, Housing and Human Services. As the only nongovernmental organization with lead agency responsibilities under the NRP, the Red Cross plays the crucial role of helping to provide food and shelter to disaster victims.

Katrina, however, was too much for the Red Cross. The Red Cross was challenged to meet its responsibilities under the NRP, as its \$2 billion relief operation was 20 times larger than any previous Red Cross mission. Like FEMA, the Red Cross did not have a logistics capacity sophisticated enough to deal with a catastrophe of Katrina's size. The Red Cross was dependent on FEMA and the Department of Defense (DOD) to provide critical commodities such as kitchen supplies, water, and food. The Red Cross was challenged by the sometimes disorganized manner in which shelters were established. Some shelters were unknown to the Red Cross until after they were already opened by local officials. The Red Cross was unable to staff some locally-operated shelters, including the Superdome, because charity officials were denied access.



Challenges aside, as of January 12, 2006, the Red Cross reported it had raised \$2 billion for Katrina relief, by far the largest amount of money raised by a charity.³ The Salvation Army had raised the second-highest amount, \$295 million.⁴ The Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund and Catholic Charities were the next-largest fund raisers, raising \$137 and \$100 million respectively.⁵ Other major U.S. charitable organizations, including the United Way, have also contributed meaningfully to the response and recovery effort. One feature of the United Way's response has been its focus on restoring the network of local social service agencies in the region.⁶

Many of the charities responding to Katrina worked with each other to coordinate the delivery of a multitude of services, including providing food, shelter, and medical assistance.⁷ Charities have shared information through daily conference calls and through electronic databases that allow multiple organizations to obtain information about services provided to hurricane victims.⁸

As much as any organization, public or private, the Red Cross played a substantial role in the immediate response to Hurricane Katrina. In what became a \$2 billion, 220,000-person enterprise, the relief efforts undertaken by the Red Cross include the provision of financial assistance to 1.2 million families, encompassing more than 3.7 million hurricane survivors.⁹ As of January 9, 2006, the Red Cross reported that since Katrina made landfall, it had provided hurricane survivors with nearly

3.42 million overnight stays in nearly 1,100 shelters across 27 states and the District of Columbia.¹⁰ In coordination with the Southern Baptist Convention,¹¹ the Red Cross has served more than 52 million meals or snacks to hurricane survivors.¹² The Katrina response is larger — 20 times so — than any other Red Cross mission in its 125-year history.¹³

Pre-landfall actions

The Red Cross' Gulf coast-area preparation was far along two days before Katrina made landfall. As of 2:00 p.m. on August 27, the Red Cross reported to the White House and the Department of Homeland Security, among other governmental organizations that it "has every resource at its disposal on alert/moving in anticipation of this event to include personnel, equipment, and materials."¹⁴ Key aspects of this preparation included:

- Chapters across the region are opening shelters in support of evacuations in all states.¹⁵
- 275,000 HeaterMeals staged in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
- 225,000 HeaterMeals staged in Montgomery, Alabama.
- 15 sites being identified to bring in big kitchens with support of Southern Baptists to provide 300,000 meals per day feeding capability.
- All 14 Disaster Field Supply Center warehouses loading supplies including 50,000 cots, 100,000 blankets, comfort and clean-up kits.
- All vehicles in the Red Cross fleet across the country are on alert for possible deployment and are being dispatched to staging areas.
- All 8 Emergency Communications Response Vehicles (ECRVs) deployed to staging areas.
- Red Cross staff deployed to NRCC, Region VI RRCC, Region IV RRCC, ERT-As and other ESF #6 posts.¹⁶

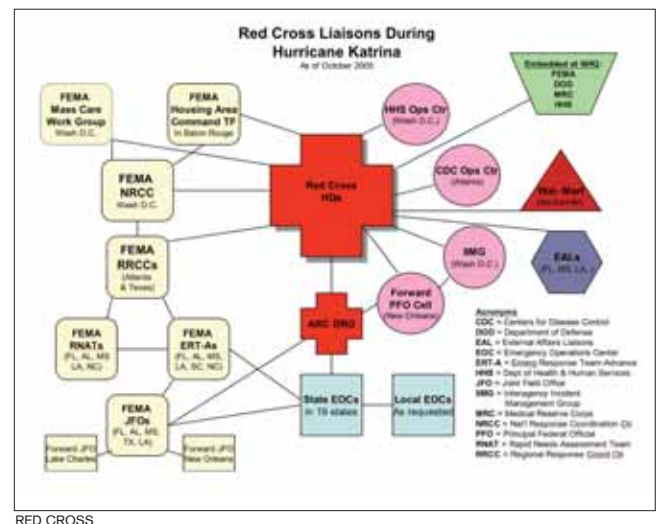
By August 28, the Red Cross started to understand the potential magnitude of Katrina. One of its Disaster Operations Reports noted, if Katrina makes landfall at its current pressure, "it will be the most intense storm to hit the U.S. mainland."¹⁷ Also on the same day it was reported, "For the first time ever, an ESF6 coordination center will be set up tomorrow at American Red Cross national headquarters to coordinate the deliver [sic] mass care services with our governmental and non-governmental organization partners."¹⁸

Sites for 25 kitchens for a total daily capacity of 500,000 people were identified and pre-staged.

Post-landfall actions

As Katrina made landfall on August 29, the Red Cross was fully staffing all of the relevant state and federal Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), including Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regions IV and VI's Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC), FEMA's National Response Coordination Center (NRCC), as well as Emergency Response Advance Element Teams (ERT-A) teams in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.¹⁹ Sites for 25 kitchens for a total daily capacity of 500,000 people were identified and pre-staged.²⁰ The Red Cross was also aware of the increasing population at the Superdome, a shelter of last resort it did not support.²¹ Figure 1 shows Red Cross interactions with these various operations centers.

Figure 1:
Red Cross Involvement at Emergency Operations Centers



Montgomery, Alabama Regional Headquarters

The day-to-day paid operations staff of the service area coordinates the fundraising and communications and provides the institutional knowledge of the affected area.²² Armed with the right data, and knowledge of the area, the information and resources management cell can provide essential services to those in need.²³

The Red Cross' temporary, regional disaster headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama serves Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and the Florida panhandle.²⁴ The facility serves, "triple functions:" (1) a volunteer and staff shelter; (2) a warehouse for food and supplies; and (3) a temporary regional corporate headquarters – basically a hub for all relief operations in the Gulf coast region.²⁵

The facility has been under lease for over a year, and was used during the 2004 hurricane season as a base of response operations for Hurricanes Dennis and Ivan.²⁶ Following Hurricane Katrina, the facility was re-opened Thursday, September 1, and was mostly operational within 24 hours and completely operational within 72 hours.²⁷ Skip Batchelor, a 20-year Red Cross veteran, said the facility would remain operational through October 2005.²⁸ The lifecycle of the emergency facility was, therefore, about two months.²⁹

Located in an old K-Mart building, the facility houses all of the functions of a major corporation.³⁰ Having the appearance of large political campaign, there are hundreds of folding tables and chairs divided into work areas by function.³¹ Some functional areas included:³²

Warehousing. Approximately 30 percent of the facility served as storage location for food stuffs and supplies, including, cots, blankets, coolers, comfort kits, and meals ready to eat (MREs).

Staff Shelter. At its peak the facility housed 450 Red Cross personnel (staff and volunteers).

Transportation. The facility's parking lot was approximately 30 percent populated with large rental trucks, most supplied by Budget, which donated approximately 50 percent of the rental trucks free of charge. Numerous truck drivers reported each morning ready to drive goods to various points of service in the region. The Red



Cross contracted with Shell to install an on site gasoline supply for its vehicles. The Red Cross was able to take advantage of wholesale pricing on this gasoline.

Information Technology (IT). Work stations had computer, internet and telephony capability. There was a central IT department that supported the entire facility.

Real Estate. The Red Cross leased other facilities to serve as points of contact for client interaction. Their real estate team located and secured these properties.

Chapter Outreach. Personnel attempted to coordinate the field needs with the resources available at headquarters.

Jobs and Training. Served as a clearinghouse for job opportunities and training for the displaced.

Financial Assistance. Analysis of client needs and eligibility for financial assistance.

FEMA interface. Provided assistance in connecting victims to FEMA.

Other NGO Coordination. Personnel worked to coordinate with the other key charities and non-government organizations (NGOs) to ensure that the clients are directed to and made aware of all of the potential relief resources. The key charities that clients are referred to include: Baptist Kitchens

(food), Mennonites (home rebuilding), VOAD – Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (various local volunteers and other smaller relief entities, many of which are faith-based), Catholic Charities, and Habitat for Humanity (new homes).

Government Liaison. Government outreach to coordinate shelter operations, rescue and client outreach.

Volunteer Coordination. At its peak, the facility processed 45,000 volunteers.

Data Entry. There appeared to be 60 to 100 work stations for data entry, half of which are paid temporary workers and half are volunteers.

The ability of the Red Cross to rapidly open and operate such a sophisticated facility in a short amount time reflects the sophisticated planning regime the Red Cross has long had in place. The rapid standing up of the facility was described by Laura Howe a Birmingham-based Red Cross official as the equivalent of opening a Fortune 500 company in a couple days time.³³

The Red Cross, much like FEMA, did not have a logistics capacity sophisticated enough to deal with a truly catastrophic disaster the size of Katrina

The Red Cross was dependent on FEMA and DOD to provide certain supplies—particularly food in the form of MREs—so it suffered from all the weaknesses in the FEMA and DOD supply chain discussed earlier.

The flooding of New Orleans became a reality on August 30 and the Mayor declared that “80 percent of the city is under water and media sources report the water level is still rising, due in part to broken levees and failed water pumps in the city.”³⁴ By 8:00 a.m. on August 30, the Red Cross was operating 254 shelters for 41,013 people and serving more than 63,000 meals a day.³⁵ According to the Red Cross’ periodic reporting documentation, these numbers continued to grow. The largest number of meals served in a day occurred on September 4, when nearly 946,000 meals were provided.³⁶ Figure 2 shows the Red Cross daily statistics for the number of shelters in operation, their population, and the number of meals served per day.

Figure 2:

Red Cross Service Levels By Day

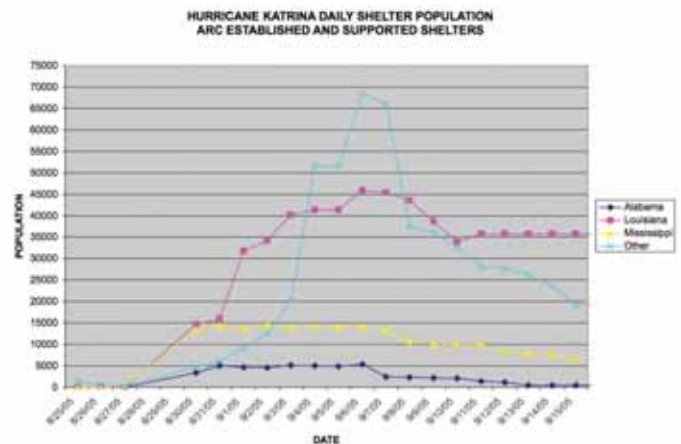
Date	Number of Shelters	Population	Number of Meals	Source
August 26	6	584	1,209	DOSR #2
August 27	3	252	3,884	DOSR #4
August 28	3	244	4,454	DOSR #6
August 29	239	37,091	N/A	DOSR #9
August 30	254	41,013	63,175	DOSR #11
August 31	259	52,719	114,413	DOSR #12
September 1	275	76,453	170,465	DOSR #14
September 2	308	94,308	N/A	DOSR #17
September 3	361	96,178	137,588	DOSR #18
September 4	397	106,970	945,886	DOSR #20
September 5	413	124,617	618,938	DOSR #22
September 6	490	125,941	485,983	DOSR #24
September 7	504	143,712	669,271	DOSR #26
September 8	527	138,294	683,826	DOSR #28
September 9	510	101,381	534,864	DOSR #30
September 10	468	97,892	501,318	DOSR #32
September 11	443	88,883	491,751	DOSR #34
September 12	445	74,890	444,793	DOSR #36
September 13	348	62,931	359,816	DOSR #38

Red Cross

Figure 3 shows the daily shelter population for Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and a fourth category with the shelter population in all other states.

Figure 3:

Daily Shelter Population By State



RED CROSS

The Red Cross was encouraged by its pre-landfall staging operation, deeming it largely a success.³⁷ That being said, the unprecedented devastation of Katrina, both in terms of property damage and number of

individuals affected, was much larger than the Red Cross was equipped to handle. Its logistics system was not sophisticated enough – especially with regard to food service. Many problems were experienced in obtaining enough food to satisfy client needs. Many of the food orders processed through FEMA were either inexplicably canceled or never satisfied. On follow-up, it was discovered that many of the orders placed by the Red Cross with FEMA were not reflected in FEMA’s systems.³⁸ FEMA’s logistics system was not sophisticated enough to handle the volume Katrina triggered.

The Red Cross experienced substantial communication issues with FEMA.³⁹ The Red Cross relied on FEMA to provide food, fuel, mobile refrigeration equipment, portable toilets, and many other primary necessities to operate its shelters.⁴⁰ Ordinarily these needs are requested by the Red Cross through the respective states.⁴¹ As Katrina gathered force the Red Cross compiled requests for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama among other states.⁴² These requests reflected predicted need levels for food, MREs, water, fuel, and other indispensable commodities.⁴³ In Mississippi, the Red Cross requests were cut substantially by FEMA middle management.⁴⁴ Joseph C. Becker, Senior Vice President of Preparedness and Response told Select Committee staff that the upper management of FEMA, including Dan Craig, the Director of the Recovery Division was responsive to Red Cross needs, but the middle level personnel, who were described as “FEMA’s mushy middle” proved to be unnecessarily meddling.⁴⁵ FEMA’s middle ranks, according to Becker, canceled orders, lost orders and were the root cause of many of the problems experienced in the field.⁴⁶ MREs were ordered and were to be used to feed people during the period before the feeding kitchens were up and running.⁴⁷ These MREs were canceled by FEMA under the logic that the Red Cross had also ordered food for the kitchens.⁴⁸

The master log of official requests made by the Red Cross to FEMA under ESF #6 further reveals the ineffective logistics system.⁴⁹ The official requests, called Action Request Forms (ARFs), are processed through the FEMA logistics system.⁵⁰ A total of 99 ARFs were submitted to FEMA by the Red Cross. Red Cross resource requests are processed through the five emergency coordination centers – the NRCC at FEMA headquarters (18 ARFs), the Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) for FEMA Region IV in Atlanta, Georgia (22 ARFs), the RRCC

for FEMA Region VI in Denton, Texas (9 ARFs), the Joint Field Office (JFO) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (30 ARFs), the JFO in Jackson, Mississippi (13 ARFs), and the JFO in Austin, Texas (7 ARFs).

Given the enormous nature of the Katrina relief effort, and the important role the Red Cross plays in the NRP, 99 requests is not an extraordinarily large number. FEMA, however, could not handle these requests. Only 22 of the 99 ARFs were deemed “Received” by the Red Cross, and 8 were canceled or withdrawn.

A careful review of the master log suggests that the logistics system did not work. Figure 4 is a table identifying logistics problems.

Figure 4:
Official Requests By The Red Cross to FEMA (selected).

Center	Date Requested	Resources Ordered	What Occurred
NRCC	August 30	700,000 MREs for AL and MS	Received only 400,000 and not until September 8 did 600,000 additional MREs arrive for MS.
NRCC	September 1	300,000 MREs for LA	Order canceled, then un-canceled. Product delivered on October 8.
NRCC	September 10	126 5-person security teams needed (630 total) for sites in MS	No security received.
Reg. IV	September 1-3	13 orders for “Kitchen Support,” which includes refrigerator, propane, diesel, hand washing stations, porta potties, water buffalo, among other kitchen items.	Received, 10-14 days after request was approved. RC forced to purchase items independently to ensure continuous feeding.
Reg. VI	September 1	9 orders for “Kitchen Support” for Louisiana. Kitchens were for use in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bogor, Covington, Hammond, Kenner, and Prairieville.	Not received. Items purchased independently by Red Cross.

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Chapter resources and self-reliance could be buttressed by extending chapter self-reliance to 72 hours. Each chapter is generally equipped to survive on its own for

the first 48 hours. If expanded to 72 hours, FEMA should be able to assist the Red Cross at the national level in restocking the pipeline.⁵¹

The Red Cross was challenged by the sometimes disorganized manner in which shelters were established

While the Red Cross has an established role in operating shelters, many of the local governments set up ad hoc shelters without notifying the Red Cross. In other cases, the Red Cross was denied access to shelters.

The Red Cross has been criticized in both Mississippi and Louisiana for a variety of reasons, from excessive levels of bureaucracy to lack of sufficient shelters and food.⁵² Becker said the root cause of many problems centered on substantial incongruities between the state and local political leadership on one hand and state emergency management personnel on the other.⁵³ Far too often state emergency management personnel and local political leadership were not aligned.⁵⁴ The Red Cross would receive one set of directions from the state and another from the locals.⁵⁵ Becker said, however, with independently elected sheriffs, mayors, and county and parish commissioners, this is not an easily avoidable problem.⁵⁶ Many complaints lodged at the Red Cross reflected their policy of not operating shelters in danger zones.⁵⁷ Local political leadership often feels compelled to open shelters in their locales even when the entire county or parish is subject to a mandatory evacuation order.⁵⁸ The Red Cross has trouble servicing these shelters, both from an access perspective (the roads are sometimes inaccessible) and from an identification perspective (sometimes nobody tells the Red Cross where the shelters are).⁵⁹

The Mississippi National Guard had numerous issues with the Red Cross. The primary complaint was the Red Cross' failure to establish a formal operations section in accordance with the National Incident Management System combined with the fact that the Red Cross is staffed almost exclusively by volunteers. According to Major General Harold Cross, the Mississippi Adjutant General:

While well intentioned, the volunteers never had a good grasp on security requirements for financial assistance distribution operations. On numerous instances, the ARC volunteers would

simply find a vacant parking area and commence voucher distribution operations. Immediately, crowds would gather and would overwhelm the distribution site. The ARC would then call on the Guard for assistance. Repeated attempts were made to reinforce the need for prior coordination for site security. It was not until mid-September that the ARC started coordinating these operations. Also, the ARC had volunteers who attempted to coordinate directly with subordinate Guard units for shelter and distribution site security. The Forward EOC operations officer met with ARC representatives on numerous occasions to define the requirements for security taskings. The ARC rarely adhered to these requirements. Consequently, the National Guard stayed in a reactive mode concerning security of distribution sites and shelters and hundreds of man hours were wasted. For future events, if the ARC would position a senior operations representative in the Forward Emergency Operations Center, many of the security issues would be resolved. This senior person should not rotate every few days.⁶⁰

Cross also recommended the integration of NGO's like the Red Cross, into the Incident Command System.

GAO has testified the Red Cross did not provide relief in certain hard-to-reach areas because of safety policies.⁶¹ Similarly, media reports indicate the Red Cross was slow to arrive in some small rural towns.⁶² The Mississippi town of Pearlington, population 1,684, received no Red Cross support for weeks.⁶³ A Florida state disaster team set up a shelter, but the Red Cross said it was unsafe and declined to run it.⁶⁴ In Pearlington, the Red Cross declined to operate one shelter because it lacked a dehumidifier.⁶⁵

Far too many shelters were unknown to the Red Cross, making it difficult for it to deploy resources.⁶⁶ Many of these shelters were within the danger or surge zones, including the Superdome. The Red Cross does not service these "shelters of last resort," as it would put its volunteers in harm's way.⁶⁷ After Katrina passed, the Red Cross did attempt to deliver provisions to the Superdome, but was denied access.⁶⁸ "The Homeland Security Department has requested and continues to request that the American Red Cross not come back into New Orleans. Right now access

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is controlled by the National Guard and local authorities. . . . We cannot get into New Orleans against their orders,” Renita Hosler, a Red Cross spokesperson, told *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.⁶⁹

The Red Cross encountered many access problems where local law enforcement would not permit entry to establish a shelter.⁷⁰ The Select Committee asked the Red Cross for an accounting of the shelters utilized as compared to the pre-approved shelter list,⁷¹ and for the reasons behind any differences. The Red Cross provided the Select Committee with a complete list of every shelter in operation between the dates of August 25 and September 30,⁷² but will not provide a specific listing explaining why certain pre-approved shelters were not used. Lori Polacheck, of the Red Cross general counsel’s office said this was too difficult an undertaking.⁷³

The Red Cross was challenged by the magnitude and chaos of the evacuation of people before landfall and after the flooding in New Orleans. People were moved, either by government agencies or on their own initiatives, all over the country in a haphazard way, making it difficult for the Red Cross to track and care for the needs of evacuees.

From the Red Cross’ perspective, the transportation of evacuees by FEMA was disorganized and uncoordinated. As a primary provider in the feeding and sheltering of the displaced, the Red Cross needed advance notice of how many people it would be asked to serve. Many problems were reported in this area. The information communicated to the Red Cross by FEMA was unreliable. There appeared to be no correlation between the information communicated by FEMA and what actually happened.⁷⁴ Howe noted that often airplanes of evacuees would arrive without any warning. Conversely, it seemed to Howe, whenever warnings of arrivals were communicated, the arrivals often failed to materialize.⁷⁵

This has been chronicled in the press. *The San Jose Mercury News* reported on September 8 that a plan to send 1,000 evacuees to California had been put on hold.⁷⁶ The Red Cross, Catholic Charities, and the city of San Francisco had spent days readying a shelter at St. Mary’s Cathedral.⁷⁷ On September 11 *The Columbus*

Dispatch reported a similar story; Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati were set to take 1,000 evacuees on September 8, but the in-bound flights were canceled by FEMA.⁷⁸ Evacuees were scheduled by FEMA to be transported to Ohio. Fred Strathman, a spokesman for the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, indicated to the newspaper that the plan to send evacuees to Ohio was delayed twice by FEMA and then apparently canceled.⁷⁹ A spokesman for the Red Cross of Greater Columbus, Lynn Cook said, “Are we a little tired of pumping things up and taking them back down? Yeah.”⁸⁰ Similarly, *The Courier-Journal* of Louisville, Kentucky reported that on September 13, FEMA suspended evacuation flights due to the unwillingness of evacuees to relocate so far from the Gulf coast.⁸¹ According to the newspaper, on September 5, federal officials told Louisville that 500 evacuees would be arriving at any time.⁸² The Red Cross had worked to prepare a shelter and had stockpiled food and clothing.⁸³ All for nothing.

More than any other hurricane, Katrina has produced a large volume of seemingly permanent evacuees. The Red Cross is now finding that a large number of evacuees are not going home.⁸⁴

The Red Cross has not escaped substantial public criticism

The Red Cross has not escaped substantial criticism.⁸⁵ The most obvious casualty of this criticism came on December 13, when its president, Marsha Evans, announced her resignation.⁸⁶ According to press accounts, even Evans acknowledged the organization’s response to Katrina and Rita had been uneven, “eclips[ing] even our direst, worst-case scenarios.”⁸⁷

At a December 13 hearing conducted by the House Committee on Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee to review the response by charities to Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana Representative Jim McCrery was extremely critical of the Red Cross:⁸⁸

Hurricane Katrina, and the subsequent flooding of New Orleans, displaced roughly one million

people from their homes in Southeast Louisiana. Tens of thousands of evacuees sought shelter in my district. It was clear from the beginning that the Red Cross simply did not have the sheltering capacity to meet immediate needs. Small independent shelters began popping up by the dozens across Northwest Louisiana. At the peak, there were over forty shelters in my district, while fewer than ten of those were operated by the Red Cross. Red Cross had serious trouble operating at least three of the larger shelters in my district: Hirsch Coliseum in Shreveport, LA, CenturyTel Center in Bossier City, LA, and the Health and Physical Educational Building at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, LA.

Several days after Katrina's landfall, the American Red Cross asked a network of local churches, led by the First Assembly of God, to take over the Red Cross Shelter at Hirsch Coliseum in Shreveport, LA. Steve Beyer, an Associate Pastor with one of the churches, agreed to manage the shelter until a replacement Red Cross manager could be found. No one replaced him. Mr. Beyer operated the Hirsch Coliseum shelter, where 6,200 people came through its doors, with only two Red Cross volunteers for the first two weeks. The Red Cross asked church volunteers to wear Red Cross shirts, I suppose to give the appearance that Red Cross was operating the shelter.

The CenturyTel Center in Bossier City, LA, opened as an independent shelter one week after the storm in response to overwhelming need for additional sheltering capacity. CenturyTel operated on the backs of local government and community organizations while it waited for certification from the American Red Cross. Even after the American Red Cross moved in, local charities provided all of the food for seven days until Red Cross could secure food...

The American Red Cross shelter at Northwestern State University was managed by the City of Natchitoches and the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Department in conjunction with the University. Dr. Bill Dickens, the shelter's manager, had one Red Cross volunteer to help service the 1,000 evacuees housed each night at the site for the first 10 days following the storm. I should note that it took

seven days for this shelter to receive any of the \$60,000 in new bedding that was donated to the local Red Cross chapter by General Motors. The bedding sat unused in a Red Cross facility seventy miles away in Shreveport, LA, despite the fact that some evacuees in Natchitoches were sleeping on the floor. The failure to get these resources to the shelter in a timely fashion represents an inexcusable breakdown in communication and coordination within the Red Cross.

While the Red Cross could barely manage its own network of shelters, the organization offered little assistance to struggling independent shelters. Dennis Butcher, the Office of Emergency Preparedness Director for Claiborne Parish, was instructed by the Red Cross to fend for himself. Mr. Butcher operated an independent shelter of 1,200 evacuees for over a month without any assistance from the Red Cross. I wish Mr. Butcher's experience was unique, but the Red Cross also refused requests for assistance from the Office of Emergency Preparedness Directors for Claiborne, Sabine, Vernon and Webster Parishes. I also spoke with OEP and other officials on the Mississippi Gulf Coast who experienced similar treatment from the Red Cross.⁸⁹

But Katrina was bigger than the Red Cross

The response to Hurricane Katrina has been more complex than any previous Red Cross-involved disaster. The string of 2004 hurricanes in Florida was the previous benchmark, when the Red Cross provided financial assistance to 73,000 families. During Katrina, the number is up to 1.2 million families. In 2004 it provided 519,000 nights of shelter. During Katrina the figure currently stands at 3.42 million. The 2004 hurricanes were attended to by 35,000 volunteers; Katrina required 220,000 volunteers.⁹⁰ The total estimated expenditures by the Red Cross for Katrina-related aid is in excess of \$2 billion.

Figure 5 compares Katrina and Rita to Hurricane Season 2004.⁹¹

Figure 5:

Hurricane Season 2004 v. Katrina and Rita

Category	Hurricane Season 2004	Katrina and Rita
Shelter Nights	519,000	3.42 million
No. of Families Provided With Financial Support	73,000	1.2 million
Meals and Snacks Provided	Close to 16.5 million	More than 52.6 million
Total Spent	\$130 million	\$2 billion

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This \$2 billion operation must be contrasted with the Red Cross’ overall financial model. According to its 2004 Annual Report, its operating revenues were just over \$3 billion.⁹² In 2004, its stated operating expenses for domestic disaster services was \$261 million. It is unrealistic to expect any charitable relief organization to instantaneously pivot in response to the might inflicted by Katrina. As Katrina was too large for the emergency management professionals in the state of Louisiana, the city of New Orleans, and FEMA, it was as well for the Red Cross.

The Red Cross readily agrees it did not have a presence everywhere throughout the affected region.⁹³ The primary mission of the Red Cross is to provide food, clothing, and shelter to victims of disasters.⁹⁴ Given its size, there are misconceptions about its capabilities.⁹⁵ The Red Cross does not provide transportation, does not get involved with search and rescue operations, does not participate in evacuations, and does not provide medical care (other than providing assistance with minor medical issues).⁹⁶

In testimony before the House Committee on Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee, the Red Cross’

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Becker said, “we fell short of being universally present everywhere there was a need.”⁹⁷ He continued, “Given the number of people in need, our response was geared toward places that we knew we could get to immediately and places where we knew people were congregated. It was our goal to reach the greatest number of people with the most possible speed.”⁹⁸

As a leading provider of food and shelter to those affected by Katrina, the Red Cross is often asked why it was not active within New Orleans, whether it be on the ground, co-located with the search and rescue teams, or in the shelters of last resort such as the Convention Center and the Superdome. Becker addressed this in his testimony:⁹⁹

There were a number of questions regarding why we did not re-enter the City of New Orleans. The American Red Cross of Southeast Louisiana, located in the City of New Orleans, heeded the evacuation order called for by local authorities. The chapter relocated to the town of Covington, located on the north side of Lake Pontchartrain. Our service delivery in New Orleans differed from that provided to other affected areas in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Under the Louisiana State Plan, if a Category 3 or higher storm is headed for Louisiana, 23 parishes, including Orleans Parish, are to begin an evacuation inland. The inland parishes, in cooperation with state agencies and the American Red Cross, are to shelter evacuees from “Risk Area Parishes,” as there are no shelter sites that meet hurricane safety criteria within Orleans Parish. In fact, it has been the policy of the Red Cross that there are no safe areas south of the I-10/I-12 corridor for a large scale hurricane. The Louisiana Plan, which makes no reference to the Red Cross operating shelters within the city, enumerates eight distinct shelter types, plus what is described as the “Refuge of Last Resort.” The Convention Center and the Superdome served as refuges of last resort. Under state plans, these facilities are to open when local authorities terminate an evacuation due to unsafe driving conditions. These facilities are not operated by the Red Cross. In practice, after the threat has passed, the Red Cross at times staffs shelters of last resort, providing services to people. We do not establish

shelters in facilities that do not meet our criteria for safety during landfall.

Consistent with State and local plans, and our practice in previous disasters, we were asked by state and federal officials not to enter New Orleans. While we were in constant communication with local and state authorities, it was not deemed safe for Red Cross personnel to re-enter the city of New Orleans. The Red Cross does not place our client evacuees, staff, volunteers, or resources in harm's way. It is our practice to heed evacuation orders and assist those in need of shelter outside of high-risk areas.

Additionally, it was the goal of local and state officials to fully evacuate the city of New Orleans after the storm passed. We were instructed by authorities that, in addition to issues of safety, if the Red Cross provided services to survivors within New Orleans, it would discourage people from heeding evacuation orders. At the direction of public officials, we entered New Orleans in a coordinated fashion to provide services at the earliest possible time.

This was a difficult scenario for the Red Cross. Eighty percent of our local Red Cross staff in the Southeast Louisiana Chapter lost their homes to Katrina, yet while they themselves were victims, they desperately wanted to provide support to their neighbors in need, and to this day they continue to do so. We are still engaged in active operations in the city.

Important assistance was provided by the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, the United Way, and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

As the only charitable organization with primary responsibility under the NRP, the Red Cross received a lot of Select Committee attention. Beyond the Red Cross, however, there was a vast network of charities that contributed meaningfully to the response efforts in the Gulf coast area. The important contributions of organizations such as the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities USA, the United Way, and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) merit attention.



Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has been at the site of most major natural disasters in America for more than a century.¹⁰⁰ It has developed areas of expertise in disaster response: mass feeding to survivors and emergency responders immediately after a disaster has occurred; sheltering those affected while tending to their spiritual and emotional needs; and then, the continuation of social service assistance to ensure the survivors have the means to move back into some semblance of the routine known before the disaster struck.¹⁰¹

In responding to those affected by Hurricane Katrina, the Salvation Army staged personnel and equipment in the states adjacent to the primary strike zone. Major Todd Hawks of the Salvation Army, summarized some of the key contributions the Salvation Army made to immediate response efforts:

- Loaded meals on 72 mobile canteens, each capable of providing 5,000 hot meals per day, and two 54-foot mobile kitchens, each capable of providing 20,000 hot meals per day. We intended to dispatch these mobile feeding units into those geographic areas determined by FEMA to be the hardest hit, and to dispatch additional units as needed.
- Mobilized 200 officers, employees, and volunteers to man these mobile kitchens.
- Prepared to dispatch portable shower units, trucks transformed into 1-stop shops called comfort stations, and emergency response command stations for officers to direct the response efforts.¹⁰²

In the immediate aftermath of Katrina, the Salvation Army facilitated mass feeding, moving mobile feeding units into New Orleans, Biloxi, Gulfport, Mobile and numerous other affected communities within hours after the storm had passed.¹⁰³ In total the number of mobile canteens deployed numbered 178 and the number of field kitchens reached 11.¹⁰⁴ Since Katrina struck, the Salvation Army has served more than 5 million hot meals and more than 7 million sandwiches and snacks to survivors and first responders.¹⁰⁵ Although not a primary activity for the Salvation Army, at its highest point, it operated 225 shelters for more than 31,000 people.¹⁰⁶

Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities USA is the membership association of one of the nation's largest social service networks. Catholic Charities agencies provide vital social services to people in need, regardless of their religious, social, or economic backgrounds.¹⁰⁷ As of January 6, 2006, Catholic Charities had allocated more than \$56 million to over 60 local Catholic Charities and other Catholic organizations responding to the needs of families affected by the Gulf coast hurricanes.¹⁰⁸ In total, Catholic Charities USA has raised \$137 million to assist the network's largest disaster response effort in its history.¹⁰⁹ Dozens of Catholic Charities agencies and Catholic organizations have each received disaster relief grants from Catholic Charities USA, ranging from \$6,000 to \$25 million.¹¹⁰ Across the nation, more than 80 local Catholic Charities are working to meet the needs of hurricane victims.¹¹¹ Relief efforts have included: providing victims with food, financial aid, clothing, shelter, gas and retail store cards, and household

goods; helping with medical and prescription needs; offering clean up assistance; helping victims work with FEMA and other groups; and providing crisis counseling, case management, transportation, job placement, and temporary and long-term housing.¹¹²

United Way

United Way of America is the national organization that provides leadership to approximately 1,350 community-based United Way organizations. Each is independent, separately incorporated, and governed by local volunteers.¹¹³ As of December 15, 2005, the United Way of America has raised \$45 million to support hurricane response and recovery efforts.¹¹⁴ Through its Hurricane Response and Recovery Fund, the United Way has focused its efforts on restoring the abilities of social service agencies in the Gulf coast region.¹¹⁵ Many human services organizations in the Gulf coast states suffered tremendous damage to their facilities, which severely limited their ability to provide services to those in need.¹¹⁶ United Ways throughout the affected areas have worked with partner agencies to ensure services such as emergency assistance, food, clothing, housing and transportation are available to those in need.¹¹⁷

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD)

NVOAD is a national charity umbrella organization composed of approximately 40 charities that provide services following disasters.¹¹⁸ As a designated support agency under ESF #6, NVOAD is responsible for sharing information with its member organizations regarding the severity of the disaster, needs identified, and actions taken to address these needs.¹¹⁹ NVOAD coordinates planning efforts by many voluntary organizations responding to disaster.¹²⁰ Member organizations provide a more effective and efficient service to the community in need by agreeing to share information and combine resources.¹²¹ This cooperation has proven to be an effective way for a multitude of organizations to work together in during an emergency.¹²²

During the immediate response to Katrina, NVOAD organized daily conference calls with FEMA and other federal government representatives and its member



FEMA



organizations operating in the Gulf coast region.¹²³ NVOAD also invited nonmember charitable organizations that were providing relief to hurricane victims to participate in these calls, which sometimes included more than 40 organizations at once. During these calls, both the federal government and charities were able to provide information and answer questions about services provided, needs identified, and the organizations' abilities to meet these needs.¹²⁴

Conclusion

Since August 29, charitable donations to Katrina relief have exceeded \$3 billion. Two-thirds of this amount has been raised by the Red Cross. With its \$2 billion relief effort, the Red Cross has been able to fulfill many of its

obligations under the National Response Plan. Katrina, however, overwhelmed the Red Cross. The Red Cross, like FEMA, did not have a logistics capacity sophisticated enough to fully support the massive number of Gulf coast victims. Among other challenges, the Red Cross was required to grapple with the sometimes disorganized manner in which shelters were established. While it has a well-defined role in operating shelters, many of the local governments set up ad hoc shelters without notifying Red Cross officials. In some cases, the Red Cross was denied access to shelters. Despite falling short of being universally present everywhere there was a need, the Red Cross and numerous other charitable organizations performed admirably and heroically in reaching the greatest number of people with impressive speed. ■

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 - ² *Hearing to Review the Response by Charities to Hurricane Katrina Before Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Committee on Ways and Means*, 109th Cong. (Dec. 13, 2005) (written statement of Cynthia M. Fagnoni, Managing Dir., Educ., Workforce and Income Sec., U.S. Gov. Accountability Office) [hereinafter *Dec. 13, 2005 Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (written statement of Cynthia Fagnoni)].
 - ³ American Red Cross, *Facts at a Glance*, <http://www.redcross.org/news/ds/hurricanes/2005/facts.html> (Jan. 12, 2006) [hereinafter Jan. 12, 2006 Red Cross Facts at a Glance].
 - ⁴ Center on Philanthropy – Donations; Center on Philanthropy – Spreadsheet.
 - ⁵ Center on Philanthropy – Donations; Center on Philanthropy – Spreadsheet; *Dec. 13, 2005 Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (written statement of Cynthia Fagnoni); Press Release, Catholic Charities USA, *Catholic Charities USA, 13 Other Major Nonprofits Reaffirm Commitment to Human Needs Aspect of Gulf Coast Recovery*, Jan. 6, 2005, http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/news/content_displays.cfm?fuseaction=display_documento&id=743&location=3.
 - ⁶ Press Release, United Way, *United Way Receives \$10 Million Grant From Lilly Endowment For Hurricane Recovery and Rebuilding*, Nov. 3, 2005 at http://national.unitedway.org/files/pdf/press_releases/Lilly_Endowment_Grant_FINAL_Nov_2005.PDF [hereinafter Nov. 3, 2005 United Way Press Release].
 - ⁷ *Dec. 13, 2005 Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (written statement of Cynthia Fagnoni).
 - ⁸ *Id.*
 - ⁹ Jan. 12, 2006 Red Cross Facts at a Glance.
 - ¹⁰ American Red Cross, *Facts at a Glance*, <http://www.redcross.org/news/ds/hurricanes/2005/facts.html> (Jan. 9, 2006) [hereinafter Jan. 9, 2006 Red Cross Facts at a Glance].
 - ¹¹ The Southern Baptist Convention provides the manpower and the kitchens, and the Red Cross provides supplies and logistics. Gabrielle DeFord and Maryann Sinkler, *Southern Baptists Help Feed Millions After Katrina*, Sept. 14, 2005, <http://www.redcross.org>.
 - ¹² Jan. 9, 2006 Red Cross Facts at a Glance.
 - ¹³ *Hearing to Review the Response by Charities to Hurricane Katrina Before Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Committee on Ways and Means*, 109th Cong. (Dec. 13, 2005) (written statement of Joseph C. Becker, Senior Vice President Preparedness and Response, American Red Cross) [hereinafter *Dec. 13, 2005 Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Joseph C. Becker)].
 - ¹⁴ E-mail correspondence from Carol Hall, American Red Cross, to Kirstjen M. Nielsen, et al. (Aug. 27, 2005) (2:48 p.m.) [hereinafter Aug. 27, 2005 Hall E-mail].
 - ¹⁵ A complete list of all pre-approved shelters for Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama was supplied to the Select Comm. The establishment of shelters is carefully planned for and part of the chapter disaster planning regime. See ARC 4496, Standards for Hurricane Evacuation Shelter Selection (Jan. 2002); ARC Shelter Operations Management Toolkit (Sept. 2005); Complete Shelter Listings for Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.
 - ¹⁶ Aug. 27, 2005 Hall E-mail.
 - ¹⁷ American Red Cross, *Disaster Operations Summary Report (DOSR) #7* at 2 (Aug. 28, 2005).
 - ¹⁸ American Red Cross, DOSR#7 at 3 (Aug. 28, 2005).
 - ¹⁹ American Red Cross, DOSR#9 at 3 (Aug. 29, 2005).
 - ²⁰ *Id.* at 2.
 - ²¹ *Id.* at 1.
 - ²² Interview by Select Comm. Staff with Laura Howe and Skip Batchelor, American Red Cross, in Montgomery, AL (Oct. 11, 2005) [hereinafter Oct. 11, 2005 Red Cross Interview].
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 - ²⁴ *Id.*
 - ²⁵ *Id.*
 - ²⁶ *Id.*
 - ²⁷ *Id.*
 - ²⁸ *Id.*
 - ²⁹ *Id.*
 - ³⁰ *Id.*
 - ³¹ *Id.*
 - ³² *Id.*
 - ³³ *Id.*
 - ³⁴ American Red Cross, DOSR#11 at 2 (Aug. 30, 2005).
 - ³⁵ *Id.* at 1.
 - ³⁶ American Red Cross, DOSR#20 at 3 (Sept. 4, 2005).
 - ³⁷ Oct. 11, 2005 Red Cross Interview; Interview by Select Comm. Staff with Joseph C. Becker, Sr. Vice Pres., Preparedness and Response, American Red Cross, in Wash., DC (Oct. 14, 2005) [hereinafter Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview].
 - ³⁸ Oct. 11, 2005 Red Cross Interview; Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview.
 - ³⁹ Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview.
 - ⁴⁰ *Id.*
 - ⁴¹ *Id.*
 - ⁴² *Id.*
 - ⁴³ *Id.*
 - ⁴⁴ *Id.*

45 *Id.*
46 *Id.*
47 *Id.*
48 *Id.*
49 American Red Cross, ESF #6 Master Log at 2 (Dec. 22, 2005).
50 *Id.*
51 Oct. 11, 2005 Red Cross Interview; Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview.
52 Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview.
53 *Id.*
54 *Id.*
55 *Id.*
56 *Id.*
57 The Select Comm. reviewed planning documentation from individual Red Cross chapters. Disaster Response Plans were submitted from the following Red Cross chapters: Southeastern Louisiana (June 2005), St. Bernard Parish Chapter (undated), Northwest Louisiana Chapter (June 2005), Northeast Louisiana Chapter (June 2005), Central Louisiana Chapter (Apr. 2002), South Central Mississippi Chapter (Sept. 2004), Mississippi Gulf Coast Chapter (Sept. 2005), Southeast Mississippi Chapter (Feb. 2003), and Alabama Gulf Coast Chapter (Jan. 1997). Statewide plans were received from the Red Cross in Alabama and Mississippi. The Red Cross is now organized into eight Service Areas, rather than by state. The state plans obtained by the Select Comm. from Alabama and Mississippi are now technically obsolete.
58 Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview.
59 *Id.*
60 *Hearing on Hurricane Katrina: Preparedness and Response by the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard, and the National Guard of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Before the Select Comm.*, 109th Cong. (Oct. 27, 2005) (written response to questions for the record of Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the Adjutant General, State of Mississippi.); Mississippi National Guard, Hurricane Katrina Narrative, Daily Logs (Aug. 2005 – Nov. 2005).
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62 Martha T. Moore, *Red Cross in Critics' Cross Hairs*, USA TODAY, Oct. 17, 2005 [hereinafter Oct. 17 Moore Article].
63 *Id.*
64 *Id.*
65 *Id.*
66 Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview.
67 *Id.*
68 Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview; *Dec. 13, 2005 Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Joseph C. Becker).
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- ⁸⁹ Dec. 13, 2005 *Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Rep. McCrery).
- ⁹⁰ Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview; Facts at a Glance, American Red Cross website (Jan. 9, 2006), <http://www.redcross.org/news/ds/hurricanes/2005/facts.html>.
- ⁹¹ Dec. 13, 2005 *Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Joseph C. Becker).
- ⁹² American Red Cross, 2004 *Annual Report* at 8. For a third party view of the Red Cross' finances, see Charity Navigator, <http://www.charitynavigator.org>.
- ⁹³ Dec. 13, 2005 *Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Joseph C. Becker).
- ⁹⁴ Oct. 14, 2005 Red Cross Interview.
- ⁹⁵ *Id.*
- ⁹⁶ *Id.*
- ⁹⁷ Dec. 13, 2005 *Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Joseph C. Becker).
- ⁹⁸ *Id.*
- ⁹⁹ *Id.*
- ¹⁰⁰ *Hearing to Review the Response by Charities to Hurricane Katrina Before Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Committee on Ways and Means*, 109th Cong. (Dec. 13, 2005) (statement of Major Todd Hawks, Public Affairs Secretary and Associate National Community Relations and Development Secretary, Salvation Army of America) [hereinafter *Dec. 13, 2005 Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Todd Hawks)].
- ¹⁰¹ Dec. 13, 2005 *Ways and Means Oversight Hearing* (statement of Todd Hawks).
- ¹⁰² *Id.*
- ¹⁰³ *Id.*
- ¹⁰⁴ *Id.*
- ¹⁰⁵ *Id.*
- ¹⁰⁶ Nov. 3, 2005 United Way Press Release.
- ¹⁰⁷ Catholic Charities, About, <http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/about/index.cfm?cfid=6359238&cftoken=12248968>.
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- ¹¹⁴ Center on Philanthropy – Donations; Center on Philanthropy – Spreadsheet.
- ¹¹⁵ Nov. 3, 2005 United Way Press Release.
- ¹¹⁶ *Id.*
- ¹¹⁷ *Id.*
- ¹¹⁸ Members of NVOAD are: Adventist Community Services, America's Second Harvest, American Baptist Men USA, American Disaster Reserve, American Radio Relay League, Inc. (ARRL), American Red Cross, Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT), Catholic Charities USA, Center for International Disaster Information (formerly Volunteers in Technical Assistance), Christian Disaster Response, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), Church of the Brethren-Emergency Response, Church World Service, Convoy of Hope, Disaster Psychiatry Outreach, Episcopal Relief and Development, Friends Disaster Service, Inc., Humane Society of the United States International Aid, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, International Relief Friendship Foundation (IRFF), Lutheran Disaster Response, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mercy Medical Airlift (Angel Flight), National Emergency Response Team, National Organization for Victim Assistance, Nazarene Disaster Response, Northwest Medical Teams International, Presbyterian Church (USA), REACT International, Inc., Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Southern Baptist Convention, The Points of Light Foundation, The Salvation Army, United Church of Christ-Wider Church Ministries, United Jewish Communities, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Way of America, Volunteers of America, and World Vision. See NVOAD, Members, <http://www.nvoad.org/membersdb.php?members=National>.
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- ¹²⁰ *Id.*
- ¹²¹ *Id.*
- ¹²² *Id.*
- ¹²³ *Id.*
- ¹²⁴ *Id.*

“Order is indeed the dream of man,
but chaos, which is only another word for dumb, blind, witless chance,
is still the law of nature.”

WALLACE STEGNER
Crossing to Safety

“Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed.”

FRANCIS BACON