

HOA Hurricane Relief Efforts - Operation BuddyPack

Books From The Heart® for Hurricane Katrina's Youngest Victims

In response to urgent requests and obvious need, the Heart of America Foundation® has extended Operation BuddyPack and will provide Books From The Heart® for Hurricane Katrina's youngest victims. The Heart of America Foundation® has already donated over 40,000 books to children and schools in need in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina's devastation.

Through the Books From The Heart® program, the Heart of America will extend this effort by collecting donations of new and "looks like new" books for delivery to the children and schools affected by Hurricane Katrina. To support this ongoing effort, please make a donation or conduct a book drive, by downloading a book drive manual and returning the commitment form to the Heart of America. Information is available on www.heartofamerica.org on how you can help.



*"...Thank you for your generosity, in our time of need. We appreciated the many supplies/bookbags that you sent for our students.... We are on our way to recovery, due to your generosity."
-- Debra Sivori, Principal, Trent Lott Middle School, Pascagoula, Mississippi*

40 Tons of Books, Supplies and BuddyPacks Delivered!

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Heart of America Foundation®'s Books From The Heart® program responded to the immediate needs of children displaced by this catastrophic storm by sending 40 tons of backpacks, school supplies, toys and books to children in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

On September 11, Operation BuddyPack delivered 5,000 BuddyPacks to children displaced from their New Orleans and Gulf Coast homes due to Hurricane Katrina. Heart of America Ambassadors, volunteers and staff went to Houston area schools, the Reliant Center and the Houston Astrodome to share 5,000 backpacks and 7,200 books with the children there.

During the week of September 19, HOA Ambassadors, volunteers and staff delivered 4,500 backpacks to students evacuated to the Baton Rouge and Lafayette, Louisiana school districts. In addition to the backpacks, the Books From The Heart® program donated 3,500 books to elementary schools in the area. Students received school supplies in their BuddyPacks, as well as much-needed toiletries, toys and books of their own.

Heart of America Ambassadors, volunteers and staff returned October 13 from the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, where they delivered 5,000 BuddyPacks and nearly 15,000 books to students in six Mississippi counties affected by Hurricane Katrina.

On November 8, 5,300 books were delivered to students in Long Beach, Mississippi.

And on November 16, Operation BuddyPack most recent shipments delivered thousands of badly-needed backpacks and books to students still in need in Picayune, Mississippi and Dallas, Texas.



"...We would like to sincerely express our heartfelt gratitude for the books and school supplies that your organization has given to the students and staff in our district following the catastrophic devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.... Such charity is the heart and foundation of our great nation. It is this unfeigned love that continues to sustain us, and we are gratefully indebted to you." -- Penny Wallin, Ed.D., Superintendent, Picayune School District, Picayune, Mississippi

About Operation BuddyPack

Operation BuddyPack was launched as a project of the Books From The Heart® program to help the youngest victims of Hurricane Katrina. Tens of thousands of the victims of Hurricane Katrina are school-aged children, displaced from their homes and starting school in a new community or a different school with only a few belongings. Children all over the nation looked for ways to help children affected by this disaster. Over 16,000 students from DC, Maryland, Virginia and around the country were engaged in service through the Operation BuddyPack project!

To show these kids that we care, and to help them start school with the supplies they need to read, succeed, and make a difference, the Heart of America's Books From The Heart® program created Operation BuddyPack. Operation BuddyPack is an outreach effort to supply kids whose lives have been shattered with the things they need to start their new school year with hope for the future. Heart of America Ambassador and founder of Kid Packs America, David Adamiec - working with his family and community in Connecticut - collected over 1,500 backpacks filled with supplies for Operation BuddyPack!



Special Thanks

The Heart of America Foundation® is deeply grateful for the support of individuals, schools, clubs, groups and corporations that gathered to support Katrina's Kids in their time of need. Special thanks are also due to Freeman Decorating Company, for providing warehouse space and coordinating the donation of shipping services, and to the many schools and retail locations that served as dropoff locations!

We're delighted to report the tremendous success of the school supply drive that was conducted in conjunction with Washington's NBC-4, WASH-FM, Borders Bookstores and the National Education Association. Thousands of pounds of school supplies were collected, along with hundreds of BuddyPacks. Shipments prepared with these donations have already been sent to six county school districts throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast region.