



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Jane Doe Inc. Establishes Domestic and Sexual Violence Victims' Hurricane Relief Fund

Jane Doe Inc., a private 501c3, not-for-profit organization, is **establishing a Domestic and Sexual Violence Victims' Hurricane Relief Fund** to assist victims and their families and local programs and their staff displaced and affected by Hurricane Katrina.

The reports of widespread devastation in the region have spurred Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence to lend a helping hand to their counterparts in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. JDI's Executive Director Mary R. Lauby offers these words of concern and hope, "We have received limited reports from our colleagues in the Gulf states region who tell us that shelter residents were evacuated and relocated. However, shelters and rape crisis centers have been destroyed as have the homes of victims and the staff of local programs. Due to communication difficulties, coalition directors have not yet been able to confirm that their staff or local program staffers are safe."

All the funds raised will be distributed among the three state coalitions to use as they see fit to assist victims and programs directly affected and displaced by the hurricane.

In Louisiana, four shelters and two nonresidential programs are completely closed at this time and two or three may be completely destroyed. Six rape crisis centers were in the area that has been most devastated. The status is similar in Alabama, and in Mississippi, they have not been able to conduct a full assessment of the damage.

Through its national network, JDI is engaged with allies across the country to determine how best to help address the immediate needs as well as plan for ways to help these programs rebuild to meet the needs of their communities. Advocates in the Gulf region have raised concerns about the incidence of sexual assault and domestic violence in the

aftermath of this disaster and are working to re-establish services and supports as quickly as possible, particularly in light of the reports of looting of guns and alcohol.

Lauby says, "We know the toll that hurricanes have taken on Florida victims, programs and staff in prior years. We are explicitly including staff of local programs in our relief fund because the ability to continue to provide services and to rebuild services depends on their well-being and recovery as well."

Donations using MasterCard, Visa or American Express can be made through a secure server on the Jane Doe Inc. website at www.JaneDoe.org/hurricanerelief.htm. Checks can be mailed to JDI Hurricane Relief Fund, 14 Beacon Street Suite 507, Boston MA 02108.

For more information, please contact Jane Doe Inc. at 617-248-0922.

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