

Pastors and New Coalitions

The Front Lines Team makes contact with the pastors and other Christian leaders in the region. They communicate by email and phone. They meet in person as needed with individuals and groups. In many cases there will be brand new coalitions of churches and other Christian groups that are formed to cooperatively serve the many needs of the people in the impacted region. The Front Lines Team passes along their contact information to the Behind the Lines Team who is better able to maintain consistent contact.

Their general and specific prayer requests are passed along to the growing base of intercessors. The needs for volunteers are defined and described. That is promoted to those who have served in the wake of previous hurricanes and those who indicated an interest in serving in the future if it matches their schedule. The kinds of volunteers include medical, construction, counseling, ministers, helpers, encouragers and intercessors. In some cases Christian musicians and singers go there to minister to the people. They bring back photos and testimonies to their future concerts. And that will keep the on-going concern alive.

The pastors and Christian leaders communicate to the Behind the Lines Team the kinds of things that are needed. This might include water, ice, granola bars, soap, shampoo, flashlights, teddy bears, etc. (Here is a list made shortly after Hurricane Katrina hit to guide donations <http://ourresponse.org/Things.html>)The Wish List of things is passed along to businesses, mega churches and others that had indicated an interest to assist in this way when needed. There will also be the shipping address with contact person to receive and distribute these items.

Four Bridges has developed list for several kinds of compassion kits that are assembled before or immediately after a hurricane hits. One kind of kit goes to those while they are in the temporary shelter. Another kind when the evacuee enters the FEMA apartment. And a third kind is for those who have returned to rebuild. The items on these lists have been revised several times due to suggestions from the previous receivers. Three examples of how other agencies use this concept are here <http://www.bucketsoflove.org/> here <http://www.gainusa.org/Carepack.cfm> and <http://www.convoyofhope.org/boxes.asp>

These compassion kits can be assembled long ahead of time and kept in a warehouse. Or they can be made and shipped on short notice. Thanks to the generous assistance of trucking companies and independent truckers Four Bridges has worked out ways to get the items from all over the country to the impacted areas. Also there are food banks and businesses that would be ready to contribute. These are passed along to the pastors and coalition leaders so that they supplement the ministry they are doing in the name of Jesus. Four Bridges works with AidMatrix <http://aidmatrix.org> to coordinate these deliveries

The Behind the Lines Team uses their growing contact base to point prospective donors to the various options for contributing money. These options include the major organizations that are well known like the Red Cross and Salvation Army. There will be the other large organizations that are less known like World Vision, Samaritans Purse, Convoys of Hope and others. The new and previously existing coalitions will be listed. Plus the local churches that are going the second mile to help their community will be listed. This could be like looking at all the stocks listed in the Wall Street Journal. So Four Bridges offers guidelines to help the donor find the organizations that most move their heart and align with their values. The hope is that many will give generously one time and some will become monthly supporters.