

Haiti Rescue Fund of Philadelphia

Contact Persons:

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PRESS RELEASE

Even before four storms, Haiti often has been reported as one of the most wretched and hopeless places on the planet. It is still considered as the most impoverished nation in the North American Continent. Out of the 8.5 millions of Haitians, more than 65% of Haitians live in rural areas and 82% of these live in poverty. Furthermore, about 60% of the national budget, one way or another, always depended on outside assistance. The damages caused by tropical storm Fay on Aug. 15 and 16; hurricane Gustav on Aug. 26; tropical storm Hanna on Sept. 1st and hurricane Ike on Sept. 6 and 7, has made life unbearable for people in Haiti. These recent tropical storms and hurricanes have left the already fragile Haitian economy in a perilous state

According to the Haitian government, more than 700 people have died, more than 50,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged, and more than 800,000 people which include 300,000 children have been displaced from their homes. Nearly a quarter of the displaced population is living in shelters throughout Haiti including Gonaives. The recent rash of storms has destroyed crops, swept away livestock, tore out irrigation and agricultural infrastructure, increasing the threat of water and airborne diseases to Haitians' health and well being. There are more than \$700 millions of damage in a country where many live with less than \$1.00 a day.

What are the people, especially children eating? Where are they sleeping? What medicine is available for first aid? Where is their hope?

More than 30 thousand Haitians and their descents have called Philadelphia their Home for over 50 years. Troubled and apprehensive by the fate of their countrymen, many Haitian organizations have united forces through the Haitian Coalition of Philadelphia to launch a campaign to rescue thousands of their countrymen in Haiti. On September 10, 2008, several Haitian community leaders appealed to the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs for assistance and support. The Mayor's Commission has offered its support on September 15, 2008 towards this effort and Chairman Stanley Straughter is a member of the Steering Committee of the Haiti Rescue Fund of Philadelphia to facilitate coordination efforts in the City of Philadelphia.

In this perspective we are seeking the generous support of the Haitian community and all Philadelphians to help us secure and transport non-perishable foods, cooking/eating utensils, bedding, clean clothes, shoes/sneakers, medicine school supplies, and financial donations to the most devastated areas in Haiti. Your contribution will help us feed the hungry, supply basic medicine to hospitals and health centers, provide schools with

supplies and materials, clothing, and help those affected rebuild in order to bring comfort to many. We have established drop off locations in many areas of the City (**see attached flyer**) and provided contact information for additional information. We are also recruiting volunteers and one of our members will gladly come to make a presentation or participate in any activity you want to organize in this effort. Please help us rescue thousands of families in Haiti who are in dire need of basic survival.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and your generous support. For more information contact: haitirescuefund@haitiancoalition.org.

Sincerely,

The Steering Committee of the *Haiti Rescue Fund of Philadelphia*:

Gilda Jean-Louis, Elise Joseph Foundation

Rev. Maurice Choizi, Haitian Clergy Association

Jean Lans, Haitian Coalition of Philadelphia

Dr. Frantz Latour, Haitian Community Center of Philadelphia

Vida Moise, Haitian Catholic Community

Chairman Stanley Straughter, Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs

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