

**Forward Edge
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Local relief/mission agency awarded million-dollar matching grant for Katrina efforts

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Earlier this week Vancouver-based Forward Edge International was awarded a matching grant of one million dollars, to be used exclusively for rebuilding efforts among survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

Forward Edge is required by the generous grantor (who wishes to remain anonymous) to use 100 percent of it for direct relief efforts. And because this same donor has agreed to cover all administrative costs separately, FEI can fulfill this requirement and use the million dollars—two million when matched—to purchase building materials and assist Katrina victims.

Forward Edge is “focusing in particular on assisting the elderly and the poor with no insurance to get back into their homes, and to repair damaged church facilities,” said FEI executive director Joseph Anfuso. “To this end we are coordinating the efforts of churches in Oregon and southwest Washington to bring volunteers, repairs, hope, and the love of Jesus to those in the Katrina disaster zone. We’re counting on the faith-based community to come together not only to match the million dollar grant, but also to participate directly in the reconstruction effort.”

Furthermore, the Katrina Response Initiative—a nationwide network of diverse organizations, warehouses, and aid-distribution points—has not only tapped Forward Edge to be the Initiative’s local organizer in the Greater Portland area, but also asked FEI to coordinate volunteers to the disaster area from around the country. Already teams from Oregon and Washington are being assembled.

Here’s how you can get involved right now in helping relieve the suffering of the destitute, distraught, and displaced along the Gulf Coast

- **Volunteer to staff local drop-off sites and warehouses, or host a drop-off site itself.** Apart from the rebuilding and repair projects covered by the matching grant, FEI is collecting food, clothing, personal necessities, etc., for displaced people in need along the Gulf Coast. You can volunteer at one of the drop-off sites or warehouses—or if your church, workplace, or home can be a drop-off site—complete the online application at katrinaportland.com or call 360-574-3343.
- **Travel to the disaster zone and serve as a short-term volunteer.** Forward Edge is identifying staging sites and situating field coordinators in the disaster zone, and already volunteer teams from across the country (including teams from the Oregon and southwest Washington) are being scheduled—hundreds in the next few weeks, thousands in the months to come. If you or your group are interested in sending a team to serve in the disaster zone, complete the online application at katrinaportland.com or call 360-574-343.
- **Donate money to the rebuilding and repair efforts.** Whatever you can give is tax-deductible and—thanks to the matching grant—doubled in its effectiveness. Checks may be sent to Forward Edge International, 15121-A NE 72nd Ave., Vancouver, WA 98686; please make checks payable to Forward Edge. Or go online to katrinaportland.com and click on the Donate icon.

About Forward Edge International...

Since 1983 Forward Edge International has mobilized young people and adults to express God's love in practical ways in the U.S. and around the world. FEI organizes and facilitates teams of shortterm volunteers (from churches, schools, and campuses) to complete service projects, distribute emergency aid, and—in the words of executive director Anfuso—“be the hands and feet of Jesus.” In its two decades this nonprofit has equipped and sent more than 700 shortterm mission teams and 8,000 volunteers to 33 nations.

FEI has a history of delivering aid and assisting in reconstruction projects following natural disasters—tasks that typically create ongoing relationships with a country's or community's people and long-term development projects in those communities. Teams and material were dispatched earlier this year to Sri Lanka's tsunami-ravaged coasts...to Manhattan's Ground Zero immediately following the 9/11 attacks (2001)... to earthquake-stricken El Salvador (2000)...to Nicaragua following Hurricane Mitch (1998).

For more information about the response of Forward Edge International to the Hurricane Katrina disaster relief efforts along the Gulf Coast, phone 360-574-3343. For information about volunteering in the disaster area along the Gulf Coast—whether just you, or a group from your church, school, or organization—contact Helen Little at katrina@forwardedge.org or call 360-574-3343.

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The Katrina Response Initiative

