



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Florida Hurricane Relief Fund, Governor's Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board Announce Hurricane Assistance to the Keys

-- More than \$600,000 Granted to Help Crab and Lobster Fishermen, Nonprofits in Keys --

KEY WEST -- The Florida Hurricane Relief Fund and the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board announced today hurricane recovery and preparedness assistance, and more than \$600,000 in grants from the Fund for fishermen and nonprofit organizations in the Florida Keys. The announcement took place at the Grotto to Our Lady of Lourdes for Hurricane Protection at the St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church.

"We are honored today to announce our support of our neighbors here in the Keys," said Liza McFadden, President of nonprofit Volunteer Florida Foundation and the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund. "The Florida Hurricane Relief Fund is committed to being a true partner in recovery with the Keys. We are focused on long-term recovery."

McFadden was joined by The Reverend Deacon Peter Batty of St. Mary's Church, Key West Mayor Morgan McPherson, Major Skip Russo of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and John Brabson, who serves as the chair of the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board.

"Faith-based and community-based organizations have proven instrumental in hurricane recovery since the devastating 2004 season," said Brabson. "And we know we can be just as effective in helping our communities prepare for other disasters. The Governor's Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board has formed a new subcommittee to work on disaster preparedness and ensure Florida is tapping into the tremendous compassion and eagerness to serve that faith-based and community groups provide."

McFadden presented a check from the Hurricane Fund in the amount of \$500,000 to Ralph Boragine, Executive Director of the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association. The grant will be used to help crab and lobster fishermen replace traps lost to last season's hurricanes. Traps are not insurable.

"This is a big check in two ways," said Boragine. "First, it represents a lot of money, and secondly it shows the size of a lot of people's hearts. Thank you. We are extraordinarily grateful to the folks from the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund and for the Governor's foresight in developing this Fund."

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All grants made through the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund are generated from private sector donations.

McFadden also announced nearly \$150,000 in recent grants to nonprofits in Monroe County to help these organizations recover from Wilma damage. They are: Florida Keys Outreach Coalition for the Homeless, the Monroe Association for Retarded Citizens, United States Fellowship of Florida, Aids Help and the Florida Keys SPCA. Other recent grants to nonprofits from the Fund, made through a competitive RFP process, totaled \$1 million statewide and was made possible through donor The Home Depot.

McFadden said the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund is fine-tuning its structure to help form more long-term recovery organizations across Florida to assist not only with hurricane recovery, but with hurricane preparedness. Work begins in the Florida Keys with the Paradise Interfaith Network, which will be trained on preparedness, fundraising and recovery work.

About the Grotto: the Grotto to Our Lady of Lourdes for Hurricane Protection at the St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church was built in 1922 after a series of devastating hurricanes in the Keys. Today it is an icon of hope and hurricane protection, and citizens often hold prayer vigils at the grotto when the threat of hurricane impact looms.

The Florida Hurricane Relief Fund was established by Governor Bush in 2004 to help with hurricane recovery needs not met by government and insurance and has proven instrumental in the 2005 recovery. The fund is fueled entirely by private sector donations. Since its inception, the fund has raised more than \$23 million in pledges, donations and in-kind services to aid Florida communities with hurricane recovery. It is managed by the nonprofit Volunteer Florida Foundation. All donations are tax deductible. To donate securely via the Internet, please visit www.FLAHurricaneFund.org, or call 1-800-825-3786.

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