



CITY OF PEEKSKILL
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa
Mayor

Peekskill NAACP Teaming Up With City of Peekskill To Create Katrina Relief Fund.

Leading Peekskill Non-Profit Working With City to Gather Funds To Support Hurricane Victims.

Two Organizations Will Announce Specifics of Relationship and Hold A Press Conference on Weds. Sept. 14th at 11:00 on Steps in Front of City Hall at 11:00 a.m. sharp.

For Immediate Release

Monday, Sept. 12, 2005

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PEEKSKILL, NY—A partnership is being created to support human and animal victims of Hurricane Katrina between the Peekskill National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the City of Peekskill, NY.

Together, they will create the City of Peekskill-NAACP Katrina Relief Fund, says Bob Spencer, president of the Peekskill NAACP. “We want to show that we in the Peekskill Cortland Area don’t just talk the talk, but that we walk the walk, just as we did for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks,” Spencer says.

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Partnering with the City has allowed the NAACP to make use of organizational and financial resources that have been honed in recent years, Spencer says. “You can look around the city of Peekskill and see the progress it has made,” he says. “We’ve taken on stuff and gotten it done,” he says.

To ensure that any money gathered is used effectively, the Fund will work with nationally recognized organizations such as the Salvation Army to help distribute the funds collected. On Monday, a crucial step was taken in creating the fund when the Peekskill Common Council fast-tracked the program and voted to fully approve and enact it.

In the first phase of the program, seed money will be collected from individuals and organizations. City Finance Department staffers will handle virtually all of the logistics tasks involved in managing the fund, says Comptroller Marcus Serrano. After these tasks are handled, the Fund will work with key non-profits to get the money where it is needed.

Checks or money orders can be made out to the City of Peekskill-NAACP Katrina Relief Fund, Finance Department, 840 Main Street, Peekskill, NY. Cash donations should be made in person at the Salvation Army Office at 117 Nelson Avenue just up the street from City Hall.

“Money coming into the City will be put into a special fund for victims, and then will be distributed as needed,” Spencer says. Besides the Salvation Army, the Fund will also work with the Red Cross and with groups that are helping deal with the pets and animals that have been placed in such peril by the disaster.

“I have a dog myself and I know there’s a lot of compassion for animals,” Spencer says. “We’ll work along side groups that deal with this area. They also need funds, too,” he says.

“Peekskill’s citizens have always been willing to give generously of their time, energy and finances,” says Mayor John Testa. “This is a wonderful opportunity for us to support our fellow Americans in their time of need.”

Spencer was inspired to create the program by his conversations with County Legislator George Oros. State Assemblywoman Sandy Galef has also enthusiastically endorsed the idea, Spencer says. “I got overwhelming support from Mayor Testa and from Legislator Oros and Assemblywoman Galef,” Spencer says.

Now is a crucial time to collect funds to support Katrina victims, even though the disaster happened two weeks ago, Spencer says. “This is a long term project,” he says. “It is not going to go away in a few days or a few weeks. These people are going to need our help for quite a while to come,” he says.

City staffers and elected officials worked very rapidly to come up with a structure for the program and then vote on it and approve it, Spencer says. He is very appreciative on how much was done on such a short notice.

Creating and making a success of the Partnership will also help accomplish another important goal, Spencer says. “We want to help create a positive instead of a negative image about Peekskill,” he says. “You can look around our City and see the progress it has made in recent years. One way of letting the world know about our own success is to be generous to others,” Spencer says.

“These people are not refugees. They are our neighbors, and we should treat them as such,” Spencer says.

For more information, call Mayor John Testa at 914-734-4105 or Bob Spencer at 914-382-1420.

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