Help Center Launched for Katrina Evacuees

With the launch of the Katrina Evacuee Help Center at disastersearch.org, there is now, for the first time, a 'one stop shop' for evacuees, families looking to reunite, and the people working to assist them.

San Angelo, TX (PRWEB) September 8, 2005 -- An international consortium of web designers and developers has joined forces to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

With the launch of the Katrina Evacuee Help Center at disastersearch.org, there is now, for the first time, a 'one stop shop' for evacuees, families looking to reunite, and the people working to assist them.

A call for help was posted by Pastor Jay Dearman to an Open Source community forum five days ago.

'One are people posting desperate messages for help in different places all over the Internet, on news sites, and on missing persons' registers,' Pastor Dearman said. 'We need a centralized registry and we need it fast.'

As a result the international consortium was quickly formed under the leadership of Peter Koch of Switzerland.

'We've been working around the clock to combine missing persons' databases from organizations such as msnbc.com, CNN and others,' Peter says.

Even before the website was finished we were receiving messages from families who have been reunited as a result of what we've been able to do.

In the first 24 hours more than 500 people visited the site, even though it was still under development, and by the time it launched twelve families had made contact with each other for the first time since the hurricane struck.

Now into their sixth day the team is working up to 20 hours a day and is still going, all with no financial reward. A number have taken leave of their jobs for as long as it takes to provide the service.

On disastersearch.org people can register notifications that they are looking for others and displaced people can let friends and family know where they are. The database is searchable and can be accessed either via the Internet or by WAP over mobile phones.

There is a database for evacuee centers which enables people to locate shelters and which provides a means for shelters to announce their spare capacity and seek assistance as needed.

Other features of the web site include a private section designed for triage personnel.

'People have lost their medical records and we are seeing situations where triage doctors are prescribing medication with no way of alerting other medical personnel of the treatment,' says Peter.

'We saw a need for temporary records which could only be accessed by medical staff, so we created it.'
With downloadable government aid forms, a volunteer register, morgue listings, and a job placement registry, disastersearch.org is providing help to people who so desperately need it.

CONTACT:
Jonathan Cutrer
San Angelo TX
Phone: +1 325 374-1444

Peter Koch
Chur
Switzerland
Phone: +41 81 322-8300

Lynne Pope
Palmerston North
New Zealand
Phone: +64 6 356-7978

www.disastersearch.org

###
Contact Information
Lynne Pope
http://www.disastersearch.org
1 325 374-1444

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.