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For immediate release

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"Katrina Free Store" on Back Beach Road to Open Soon

Organizers need volunteers to sort donations, set up shopping environment for victims

One of the many families that evacuated to Panama City has been extremely blessed. They were given a free home near Lagoon Drive to stay in while they prepare to possibly relocate to this area.

"I believe the middle and working class were affected most by this disaster," said evacuee Dawn Kleindienst. "We were like most other American families, living paycheck to paycheck."

She had been working as a secretary for a lawyer's office in New Orleans, which is now underwater.

The home the family temporarily lives in had been empty, the owner handing over the keys to this displaced extended family of six.

A few days ago, Kleindienst's husband drove back to New Orleans to assess the damage.

"He said he didn't even want to talk about it over the phone," Kleindienst said. "He had lost his job a few months ago, and now we've lost everything else."

Now, because of the outpouring of support from our community, they already have all the furniture they need, except for a couple beds and washer and dryer, which the Rescue Mission is providing through its generous donors.

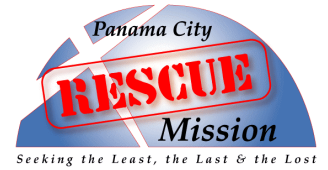
"We are just warehousemen for the Lord," Executive Director Rev. Billy E Fox said, as he led the effort to sort donations at the Katrina Free Store on Back Beach Road.

To help continue providing for the victims planning to relocate to this area or making plans to resettle elsewhere, please drop your household items, cleaning supplies (mops, brooms, bleach, etc) at IBIS Realty at 17775 Back Beach Road.

Volunteers are needed to help sort the donations and set up the free store. Please call 234-2502. Cash donations to help undercut the cost of the operation can be mailed to Panama City Rescue Mission C/O Katrina Relief at PO Box 2359, Panama City, FL 32402.

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The Rescue Mission offers unlimited shelter to hurricane victims

At the downtown shelter, the Panama City Rescue Mission is able to take in single men and single women.

At Bethel Village we are able to take in up to 3 single mothers with their children and 4 single women.

At both locations, transitional housing will be offered until they are able to relocate, however long this takes. We provide showers, food, clothing, case management and more. The trolley stops by the Mission for those without transportation.

We are equipped to help them in their transition to this area or back home (finding jobs, resources and permanent housing). We welcome all victims registered with the Red Cross.

Please call the client advocate at 769-0783 to coordinate this effort.

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