



Peoples Hurricane Relief Fund
and Oversight Coalition (PHRF/OC)
Volunteer Packet

March 2006

PHRF COALITION

New Orleans

**1418 N. Claiborne
New Orleans LA
70116**

**504-301-0215
Spring Break 2006**

March Schedule

**Mondays- arrive NOLA,
orientation 7:30 PM**

Tuesdays- begin work

Friday Night- social

**Saturdays 2 PM - depart
NOLA**

Important Numbers

**PHRF OFFICE
504-301-0215**

**Coordination
Ishmael 404-664-3009**

**Reconstruction:
Salam 601-918-6453**

**Surveys/ Canvassing:
Saad 510-290-2150**

Legal: Jen Lai 858-776-9123

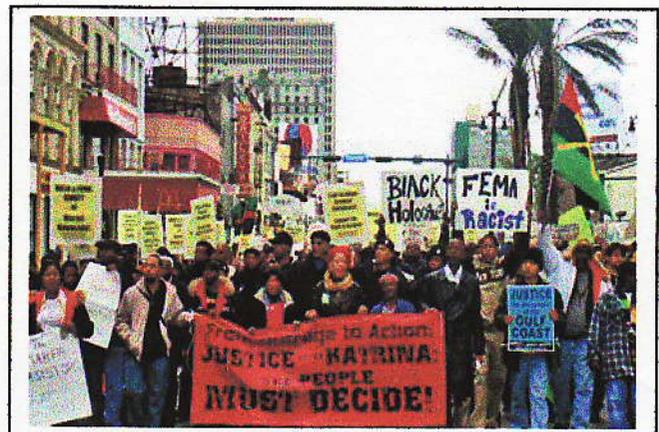
**Office administration:
Kanika 678-362-7752**

My advisor/ team leader

Contact:

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People's Hurricane Relief Fund & Oversight Coalition

New Volunteer Orientation Packet

1. Purpose:

- a. To orient you to the PHRF work to help build a movement led by the survivor's of this natural disaster turned man-made tragedy of Hurricane Katrina.
- b. To enable you to better communicate to the people of New Orleans the mission and history of PHRF.
- c. To help you understand the realities of race and class exposed by Katrina.

2. Process:

- a. Orientation session: 1. Brief discussion of packet, Description of past efforts and events. 2. Current struggles and programs. 3. Living Arrangements and Office upkeep.
- b. Breakdown of PHRF: Peoples' Assembly, Interim Coordinating Committee (ICC), Survivor Councils and solidarity committees, Workgroups, coalition members and supporters.
- c. Workshop/discussions: 1. Racism- this is to orientate an out of town volunteer, not sure of how to interact with the working and middle class black masses of the city and vice-versa. In addition, to discuss the impact of racism on our own psyche and life. 2. Sexism- an ongoing process to eliminate sexism from our internal surroundings and our interactions in the community. In addition, fighting off the sexism that is engrained in the movement itself. 3. Class- discussion to better understand the impact of the power structure/system in New Orleans and America as a whole. These issues will be a consistent struggle that must be discussed on a continuous basis.
- d. Assignments: On a weekly basis. Explanation and set-up of accountability/debrief process. Input is encouraged at all phases of this process.

This Orientation Process is to better acquaint you with the politics and social intricacies of New Orleans to maximize effective organizing on the ground. This is a movement to develop leaders from the most unsuspecting places. The ruins of the City have fostered a new level of rebellion in the hearts of the "survivors" of Katrina. Our mission is to build a political movement among survivors and their supporters to fight for a just relief and a just re construction by tapping into the natural leadership of the neighborhoods and merge them with the traditional organized leadership to build a United Front. The very presence of volunteers in our office speaks to the necessity of that ideology to materialize.

We encourage and challenge all new volunteers to read and study the PHRF website. All the information you will need and seek is there. We encourage involvement in all processes of PHRF especially the work group process.

WELCOME!!!

About PHRF

PHRF is working to build a People's movement – a movement of grassroots persons disproportionately impacted by Hurricane Katrina and the dehumanizing treatment they received from local, state, and federal officials.

By grassroots, we are referring to those members of our community who are: (1) surviving families of people who perished; (2) surviving families of those who are still missing family members; (3) survivors of the Superdome & Convention Center; (4) survivors of those left on the interstates & the Crescent City Connection; (5) survivors of sexual and law enforcement violence; (6) homeowners in the 9th ward (both upper & lower); (7) renters who are being evicted and; (8) low income displaced people/survivors of the New Orleans and Gulf Coast Region.

Primary Goals of PHRF:

- To build and maintain a coordinated network of community leaders, organizers and community based organizations with the capacity and organizational infrastructure that can help to meet the needs of people most impacted by Hurricane Katrina and government neglect
- To facilitate an organizing process that will demand local, grassroots leadership with national and international support. Foster people of color leadership, particularly black leadership, with the support of a multi-racial alliance. Place special emphasis on the involvement of women, people of color, poor, gay, lesbian, queer, and transgender populations, immigrants, indigenous, youth, and people with disabilities in the relief, return and reconstruction process in New Orleans.
- Create and maintain an ongoing space for networking and strategizing between organizers and volunteers
- Facilitate return/rebuild process and ensure local, grassroots leadership and participation in every phase. Ensure mechanisms by which those who want to return to home to New Orleans are able to, regardless of economic, geographical, or citizenship status prior to displacement.

Since Hurricane Katrina, PHRF has held two strategic planning sessions: one on September 8, Baton Rouge, LA, and the second on September 30 through October 2, at Penn Center, SC. Out of these sessions, goals and demands were identified and an Interim Coordinating Committee (ICC) was formed. The ICC consists of 10 members meeting weekly on budget, staff and activities planning and implementation.

Also from these meetings, **Work Groups** and **Caucuses** were formed that identified goals and are working to implement comprehensive strategies.

For Work Group and Caucus contacts or a list of coalition members and supporters please visit www.communitylaborunited.net

Background (CLU)

An Effort to Build Unity in a Grass Roots New Orleans Community: Background and Development of Community Labor United

At 9AM on the third Saturday in September in 1998. The multi-generational groups of about 165 people hustling toward the Student Center definitely weren't students. They represented many of the progressive community organizations in New Orleans gathered in the dining hall on the campus of Dillard University for the inaugural meeting an organization that would come to be called Community Labor United, (CLU). We didn't attract much attention because multi-generational, multi-racial groups of community people aren't unusual on the stately, Reconstruction era black campus.

After a non-sectarian "Spiritual Reflection," by one of the ministers from SCLC, famed New Orleans saxophonist, Donald Harrison Jr. opened the meeting with a moving solo rendition of Amazing Grace. Since that day, each time we convene we begin with spiritual reflections and a cultural presentation.

There were Welfare Mothers; a wide spectrum of unions active in New Orleans; Civil Rights, criminal justice and school reform organizations; women's rights, environmental justice and peace organizations; religious, arts and cultural organizations; academics, social and economic development researchers and activists of every type. It was the broadest assembly of progressive, grass roots organizations and activists in New Orleans in recent memory. It was frankly understood as an initiative of black, grass ROOTS community organizations with support from their multi ethnic allies.

The question that brought us together was: Can we work together to achieve common goals; do we need unity in our community? On both counts the answer was a resounding yes. Relying on the principle of grass roots, bottom up organizing and coalition building that the Mississippi Council of Federated Organizations, (COFO), was based on, CLU was born. This is a crucially important factor in the city which has been dominated by the presence of African people since it was founded in 1720. Until "Katrina," New Orleans was officially 67.5% black. But governance and policy have always been dominated by an arcane, largely corrupt, white, quasi-aristocracy, including the last 30 years during which black elected officials have held prominent posts.

CLU devoted its first three months to developing the following Principles of Unity:

We are community leaders, labor leaders, and cultural workers committed to ending the exploitation of oppressed peoples everywhere.

We believe that all people have the right and responsibility to determine their destiny.

Our organizations and unions are committed to building a society where the realities of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation are not barriers to human progress.

We are committed to building a society where the bottom line interests of corporations and the rich are not balanced on the backs of workers and the poor.

We are committed to building local, regional, national, and world economies that are democratic, just, ecological, and do not exploit labor, culture, and natural resources.

We are committed to building an organization of organizations and individuals, focused on educating, organizing, and mobilizing the masses within our organizations and communities from the bottom up.

We believe in the prospect of multiracial and trans-generational efforts to develop our communities.

"Start where you are with what you've got. Dig deep. Be radical."

(Paraphrased from the often quoted advice of Ms. Ella Baker)

The People's Declaration: Survivors Assembly Demands

Identified by

survivors on December 9, 2005

We demand the local, state and federal government make conditions possible for our immediate return. This includes the following:

1. The Nagin Administration must make temporary housing such as apartments, hotel rooms, trailers and public housing developments available for us while we rebuild our homes.
 2. The government must put an end to price gouging, stop all evictions and make rents affordable.
 3. Local residents must take the lead in rebuilding our communities and must be hired to do the rebuilding work.
 4. There must be immediate debt relief for debt associated with this disaster.
 5. Quality public education and childcare must be provided for our children.
 6. Quality affordable health care and access to free prescriptions must be provided.
 7. The government must immediately clean up air, water and soil to make it safe and healthy for people to return home.
- We demand that the government provide funds for all families to be reunited and that the databases of FEMA, Red Cross and any organizations tracking our people be made public.
 - We demand accountability for and oversight of the over \$50 billion of FEMA funds and the money raised by other organizations, foundations and funds in our name.

- We demand representation on all boards that are making decisions about relief and reconstruction. We also demand that those most affected by Hurricane Katrina be part of every stage of the planning process.
- We demand that no commercial Mardi Gras takes place until the suffering of the people is lifted.

We are calling for survivors and supporters to participate in organizing efforts to make these demands heard!

Principles and Agreement of Unity

Agreement and commitment to work in a united front for justice and community based reconstruction of the gulf south.

This United Front Agreement was developed by members of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Oversight Coalition, a coalition of progressive community organizations and individuals who, together and separately, are working toward the comprehensive reconstruction of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. We are stronger together than we are apart.

We are committed to building and maintaining a coordinated network of community leaders, organizers and community based organizations to meet the needs of people most affected by Hurricane Katrina, to facilitate an organizing process that demands local, grassroots leadership in the relief, return and reconstruction of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. We are living in a historic moment that offers the possibility, despite the devastating circumstances, of igniting a movement as broad and as deep as any that we have seen in this country. We understand that the work done now must be done in a way to bring hope to neglected communities throughout the country and the world.

We stand in solidarity with those around the world experiencing wreckage from natural disasters, often preceded and compounded by poverty and discrimination. We welcome the support of individuals and organizations in the United States and around the world.

Our commitment is to work together with those who share the goal of self-determined relief, recovery and reconstruction. We call on friends, allies, those working for just and representative Gulf Coast to pledge to work together toward common goals in the spirit of mutual respect.

Our most serious work is just beginning. After the headlines of the past months fade, our communities must be reconstructed and built anew. It is a long term struggle for which we must be prepared. Our work must be sustained and our communities must also be sustained. In order to accomplish this long-term effort we must build our work together on the basis of the following broad principles:

We all have a right and responsibility to support leadership that comes from and is selected by the people whose interests are at stake.

We believe that all people regardless of realities of race, gender and sexual identity, class and nationality have the right and responsibility to determine their own destinies through democratic processes of their own design and that such as all displaced people have the right to return to their

homes.

All workers, regardless of nationality are entitled to equitable and just wages, but we also recognize that people from the affected region deserve priority consideration. We are committed to building local, regional, national and world economies that are democratic, just, ecological, and do not exploit labor, culture and natural resources.

We are committed to building an organization of organizations and individuals focused on educating, organizing, and mobilizing the masses within our constituencies and communities from the bottom up. We will collaborate on programs, plans and joint activities whenever possible, but participation in the united front work is not meant to pre-empt or co-opt the work of the individual members. The programs and plans of the united front organization are subject to the collective decision of the general membership.

We agree to work collectively by:

- >Sharing our processes
- >Sharing our plans
- >Sharing our gifts, skills and talents
- >Communicating ideas
- >Finding resolutions to challenges
- >Being accountable for our efforts

The United Front Agreement, after organizations have had a chance to review and sign the documents, will be distributed widely as a symbol of the decision to work together and support one another in the coming years for the empowerment of the communities of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

Organization Name if applicable:

Signature (please print your name next to the signature)

Address (please include city, state and zip) Date

This is a living document. It will be modified as needed with the agreement of signors.

Women's Caucus Terms of Reference

Women's Caucus of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund and Oversight Coalition.

Terms of Reference, agreed to at the first conference call meeting of the Women's Caucus (October 20, 2005) and updated to reflect the decisions of the meeting.

1. Why we are coming together as women.

In this period people are dealing with the traumas of Katrina and the outrageous, demeaning treatment they received at the hands of those in charge of the country, it is our job as women to support these efforts for Reconstruction of communities, relationships, families, homes, education and other services, etc. To do this, we work to make visible the work that women in particular are and will be doing:

- to care for and save the lives of families and communities;
- to rebuild the lives and relationships which have been devastated by a combination of the storm, the lack of resources with which to deal with the storm, and the brutality of the treatment victims received, all shaped by racism, sexism, ageism and class prejudice generally against those of us with least;
- making this work visible helps to prevent the greedily ambitious from building careers, businesses and bank accounts on the backs of the suffering and the unwaged work, and at the expense of the relief of our suffering and of overwork.

If this work is not made visible by women, with the support of men who know how much work women always do in emergencies – including in the daily emergency of lack of cash and resources – then this work will be hidden and the real work of Reconstruction will be attributed to corporations which will be paid handsomely for what women are doing at the cost of their own lives and without payment.

Because of the global coverage of Katrina, the world has witnessed this ecological disaster and the grave deficiencies of the government resulting in great suffering and many deaths of its people. Therefore we will make the hard work visible not only in the US but in the world, which has not been told of the struggle to Reconstruct which the people of the Gulf, beginning with women, are now waging.

2. We are accountable to:

- the women in the community who are doing this work in the Gulf, and to ensure that this creative and life-saving caregiving, done under the most difficult circumstances, is visible in all calculations of what is to be done and who is to receive help, support and a say in the Reconstruction which must happen now;
- the women and families who are now scattered and must make their way back to their communities. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that this mass re-entry takes place, and that the work this entails is counted and supported;
- the organizations the community is building in its own self-defence.
- grassroots women, children and men in the Gulf Region impacted by Hurricane Katrina as well as Hurricane Rita.

3. We demand accountability from:

- professionals who are not to come to the Gulf and dictate what 'should' be done on the basis of what they know, but must listen to what the community knows and wants, and work with and for the community to achieve that;
- those who fundraise in the name of the community but who may not have the habit of upfront financial accountability;
- government departments and officers who are already taking this opportunity to profiteer and claim our soil and our cities, towns and villages for further profit-making;
- employers who intend to pay everyone, especially women, less even than the low wages in the Gulf before Katrina.

Who We Are:

We are a network of women active in or supportive of PHRF. Our focus is grassroots women, beginning with Black, Latina, Native American, Asian, Immigrant and other low-income women, and with those who are already involved in community-based relief and reconstruction efforts. We are politically non-aligned. Our work and policies are part of PHRF and are not dominated or directed in any way by political parties. We aim to involve both older and younger women. Racism, separatism, anti-immigrant views and practice, ageism, homophobia, discrimination based on disability have no place in the Caucus. We will value all the work that all women do, waged and unwaged, including survival and other caregiving work, from single mothers on welfare, to married housewives, to women who have been criminalized, to homeless and other women pushed to the edge, as well as the work of those of us carrying the double day (unwaged and low-waged work).

Process:

- We will work by consensus to the degree possible, if not, by majority vote.
- Decision Sheets will be taken at all our meetings and circulated to all participants as appropriate.
- A time keeper will be delegated for all meetings.

Color of Disaster in New Orleans

Fact Sheet for Challenging Racism Workshop

(Important note: Knowledge brings responsibility. We offer this Fact Sheet to arm you with information to use as you take responsibility for challenging racism in all aspects of your life.)

Population of New Orleans before September 2005:

- 500,000 = total population
- 67.9% of New Orleans population was African American

Pre-Katrina: Evidence of Systematic/Institutional Racism

Poverty in New Orleans is disproportionately Black:

- 18.4% of total population are poor
- 35% of African American population are poor
- New Orleans had the 7th worst poverty rate in the country.
- More than 90,000 people in New Orleans had incomes of less than \$10,000 a year.
- Only 5% of whites had no access to a car, but 27% of African Americans had no access to a car.

- Nearly 50,000 poor people in New Orleans lived in areas where the poverty rate approached 40%. In these segregated neighborhoods, low quality schools and access only to low-paying jobs feed the prison-industrial complex with new recruits. For example, the majority of jobs available to the 20,000 African American residents of the 9th Ward —like the jobs available in many of the world's neo-colonies—were for household cleaners, bellhops, busboys and others who serve tourists

Denial of Right to Quality Education and health Care:

- New Orleans has a 40% illiteracy rate.
- Over 50% of African American 9th Graders won't graduate from high school.
- Louisiana has the 3rd lowest rank in the country for teachers' salaries.
- 83,000 or 19% have no health insurance. Before Katrina, the state decided to close Charity Hospital, the only full-service hospital in the City that treated poor people.

After Katrina: Evidence of Racism

Population of New Orleans:

- 140,000 = total population as of February 2006
- 35-40% of New Orleans population is now African American

Disaster disproportionately impacts African Americans, beyond the problem of poverty:

- While about 35% of African Americans in New Orleans live below the poverty line, 73% of the African American population was displaced by the storm.
- The neighborhoods with the highest proportion of African American people sustained the worst damage. Six months after the storm, the 9th Ward is the only community that remains a ghost community, unoccupied, where nearly all homes on vast swaths of land are still piles of rubble. The contrast with white sections of the city is stark.

Demonization and dehumanization of Black people resulted in preventable death, destruction and misery:

- FEMA called off its rescue operations after three days because of "security concerns". The media reflected and re-enforced anti-Black hysteria by labeling white people as "flood victims looking for food" and Black people as "looters."
- FEMA diverted resources that might have been used for rescue into providing "security" against desperate residents seeking only food and shelter.
- Thousands of people traumatized by the floods had to wait five hours in the rain outside the Superdome—where they expected sanctuary- to be searched.
- Residents had to go through criminal record checks before Red Cross Centers would admit them.
- FEMA, Red Cross and other officials forced evacuees onto buses, forcefully separating families, shipping them to different cities. Evacuees who had lost nearly all their possessions to the flood, were then forced to abandon what they had left and take only one bag with them on the buses.
- Shoot-to-kill "looters" resulted in the death of scores of people. During the first four days after the Storm, white vigilantes had carte blanche to kill Black people. At least 18 are known to be murdered by these vigilantes. Graffiti remains: "looters will be shot".

- Thousands of African American residents who attempted to leave New Orleans, by crossing the Gretna Bridge to higher ground were forced back into the flood by gun toting white vigilantes.
- Curfew was only enforced against Black people. The 9th Ward is still subject to curfew which is arbitrarily enforced.

Denial of the Right of Return and Citizenship: The Governments'/Developers' Strategy for "Ethnic Cleansing" to get African Americans out of New Orleans and stay out.

- Bush's Housing and Urban Development Secretary told the *Houston Chronicle*, "New Orleans is not going to be as Black as it was for a long time, if ever again."
- The President of the region's major real estate firm, Arthur Sterbow of Latter and Blum, told Reuters, "We were one of the 25 most underpriced (housing) markets in the US. We were as far away from what they called a housing bubble as you can get. Now we've had three record-breaking months in a row." Rents have tripled.
- FEMA, in collaboration with the New Orleans city government, is delaying the distribution of 1000's of trailers that would provide housing in New Orleans while people reconstruct their homes.
- Profiteers like Haliburton charged \$3000 per roof to put up tarps while paying undocumented workers sub-standard wages to do the work. Low-income homeowners in the 9th Ward and other African American communities have yet to receive assistance in making their homes habitable.
- The government is taking no responsibility for redesigning the levee to withstand a Level 5 Hurricane. Instead, developers promote "greenspacing" low lying areas to provide – in the guise of sound ecology—a rationale for preventing the residents of the 9th ward and other low-lying areas from returning.
- It is not possible for the hundreds of thousands of African American New Orleanians who are dispersed around the country to vote. A number of organizations have called for postponement of the April 22 election to ensure the right to vote of all New Orleanians.
- The longer people are kept away by deliberate neglect that makes their former homes uninhabitable, the less likely they will ever return.

For more info check:

Michael Eric Dyson. *Come Hell or High Water*. Basic Civitas Books, 2006.

www.katrinaaction.org

www.commongroundrelief.org

Greater New Orleans Community Data Center. www.gnadc.org

www.communitylaborunited.net

Times Picayune Daily Newspaper. www.nola.com

Prepared 2/18/2006 by Arlenesreport@yahoo.com for Catalyst Project www.collectiveliberation.org

For Cleanup and Reconstruction Volunteers

The PHRF local Reconstruction Workgroup is involved in the process of helping residents save their communities from developers, land grabbers, and the various government systems that wish to change the racial makeup of New Orleans. In order to accomplish this mission, residents need to reoccupy their threatened neighborhoods immediately. The reconstruction workgroup determined four areas that must be addressed in order to return. They are: a home to stay in, a school to send their children to, some type of healthcare if they get sick, and a way of generating income to sustain their lives.

The first step in this process is to have a place to stay. In order to immediately return home, we must check and /or repair the foundation, roof, outside house walls, replace windows & doors, make sure electricity, plumbing, and heat are restored to the home. That will allow residents to return, hang sheetrock, and paint the inside while staying in the home instead of a hotel, shelter, or out of town.

To rebuild a home, it must first be gutted out i.e.: remove damaged furniture, appliances, sheetrock, ceilings, light fixtures, damaged wood, etc. It must also have mold remediation performed on it and let the wood have a chance to dry out before rebuilding. This is the first phase of the physical rebuilding of a community. There is not a whole lot of skill needed but is very labor intensive. We need your help in starting this rebuilding project that will demonstrate to the world that we can rebuild our own communities with the genius and skill that already exists within it. Thank you in advance for your dedication and support.

Health and Safety Precautions

Home cleanup, debris removal and gutting can be tedious and potentially dangerous work. It is best to be prepared by following the procedures outlined in cleanup handouts and in work orientation.

Doing sheetrock (drywall) removal and home cleanout can be dusty. Respirator and other personal protective equipment (PPE) are a MUST.

Always wear an N95 respirator (or better) for cleanup or ripout jobs. Using a respirator makes you lungs and heart work harder. ***If you have a lung or heart condition, wearing a respirator may be harmful for you.*** If medical conditions prevent you from wearing a respirator, you cannot protect yourself from breathing harmful contaminants in the air. ***If you have facial hair, you may not be able to wear a respirator.*** The edge of a respirator must form a tight seal against your skin.

You should conduct a “seal check” every time you put on a respirator. This will help you make sure it fits and is properly positioned on his face. If you are wearing a disposable N95 respirator, firmly cover the mask with the palms of your hands. Inhale and exhale more strongly than usual. If you do not detect any air flow in or out around the edges of the respirator, the respirator fits properly. (If the mask has an exhalation port, be sure to cover the port when you breathe out.) You should use a new disposable N95 respirator each day.

Be sure to wear gloves, safety glasses, and other protective gear when doing cleanup work. As an additional safety precaution please make sure you are up to date on a Tetnus shot or get one before arriving.

Work in crews, or at minimum, use the buddy system. If you have an accident while performing cleanup work, please let the crew leader know immediately. For emergencies, call 911.

For those doing Cleanup, please review additional information, such as NYCOSH’s “How to use a respirator”: A fact sheet for Katrina and Rita Cleanup Workers www.nycosh.org/environment/wtc/naturalcatastrophes_index.htm, NYCOSH’s “Katrina & Rita Cleanup Workers Mold Factsheet” also at www.nycosh.org, PHRF’s “We have the Right to Return to Healthy Communities” and Common Ground’s guide for house gutting.

Below are a few concrete tasks supporters of the People's Reconstruction Movement of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast can and should take on when you return back to your communities. It is critical to this movement that solidarity workers go back to your own communities and build concrete support for the self-determination of African American, Native American, and other oppressed peoples impacted by hurricane Katrina, expose the criminal negligence of the US government before, during and after the storm, and educate folks about the historical legacy of colonialism, racism, class exploitation, and imperialism.

1. Fundraise:
The grassroots organizations that have developed to help the survivors organize themselves or to provide them with direct relief, such as the Peoples Hurricane Relief Fund and Oversight Coalition, need money and other resources to build a movement capable of ensuring New Orleanians right of return to their homes.
 2. Support the Peoples demands for Reconstruction and Justice developed by the Katrina Survivors' Councils.
 3. Campaign in your community for people from New Orleans right to vote. Demand satellite voting in every city and state. Currently at least 70% of African American New Orleanians are disenfranchised.
 4. Set up student solidarity committees that access capital and human resources from your school and educate others to support the movement.
 - Work with established solidarity committees to support the demands of survivors councils and grass roots organizations of people of color in New Orleans
 5. Take Political Action
 - Reject all proposed reconstruction plans from government officials that dispossess residents of their land and livelihood. Be on the alert for plans to establish "greenspace" in the Lower 9th Ward and other areas once home to African American people.
 - Pressure Congress to hold the Federal government accountable for their negligence and human rights abuses. Support the International Tribunal.
 - Pressure Congress to build levees to protect the people of New Orleans against Level 5 Hurricanes.
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Daily Schedule/ Notes:

