



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Sept. 26, 2008

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NEA FAMILY DONATES TO TSTA'S HURRICANE IKE RELIEF FUND

The National Education Association's Health Information Network (NEA HIN) Disaster Relief Fund on Friday morning presented the Texas State Teachers Association with a \$50,000 donation to TSTA's Hurricane Ike Relief Fund.

TSTA created the fund to assist members affected by the massive storm that hit the upper Texas coast and then continued deep into East Texas. Application forms for aid and information about donating to the fund are online at www.tsta.org/IKE/current/relief.shtml or can be obtained by calling 877-ASK-TSTA.

TSTA President Rita C. Haecker, along with NEA President Dennis Van Roekel and NEA Executive Director John Wilson, accepted the donation from NEA HIN Executive Director Jerald Newberry at a ceremony Friday morning held at the NEA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The California Teachers Association, another of NEA's 51 state affiliates, donated \$10,000 to TSTA's relief fund.

"TSTA members deeply appreciate the NEA family's generous response to Hurricane Ike. This money will go to help members rebuild their lives professionally and personally. It's nice to be part of a family that has 3.2 million members helping each other through difficult times," Haecker said.

"When a natural disaster like Hurricane Ike strikes, the destruction is much more than structural. One of the greatest tolls is on the children who endure severe emotional and traumatic distress long after the flood waters have receded," Van Roekel said.

"For many students, school is the one place where they can find a sense of calm and normalcy. The National Education Association fully understands this need and makes every effort to reach out to communities with resources so that public schools can continue to serve as safe havens where children can excel," the NEA president continued.

"In the wake of a disaster like this, it's imperative to rely on those closest to you. The NEA family is there to

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support our TSTA colleagues and provide them with the support and resources they need to begin the recovery process and return to a sense of normalcy. We want all of our members, their families, and their communities to pull through these tough times,” Newberry said.

“Often when dealing with a traumatic stressful event like the aftermath of a hurricane, people feel alone and isolated. We want to make it clear to our TSTA brothers and sisters that help is there,” the NEA HIN executive director added.

The Texas State Teachers Association’s membership is 65,000. Founded in 1880, TSTA (www.tsta.org) is the oldest education organization in Texas.

Founded in 1857, the National Education Association (www.nea.org) is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers. NEA has state affiliates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

NEA has a long-standing commitment to assisting educators, teachers and parents working to help students gain a sense of normality after natural disasters. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, NEA provided cash grants to help purchase school supplies, textbooks and other materials needed to accommodate increased enrollment. When Hurricanes Rita and Wilma hit later that year, NEA provided much-needed financial backing and book donations to public schools and their libraries that had been devastated by the storms.

NEA HIN is NEA’s health and safety arm, offering numerous resources for those dealing with traumatic experiences ranging from hurricanes to school shootings. For more information, go to the “NEA HIN School Crisis Guide,” at www.neahin.org/crisisguide. The network provides health and safety information to members and the students they serve. NEA HIN serves as a link between public school employees; local, state, and national health organizations; and government agencies. The network has addressed numerous health and safety issues, including HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, cancer, teen pregnancy, mental wellness, nutrition, school safety, asthma and environmental hazards in schools.

Hurricane Ike’s impact on Texas public schools (data compiled by NEA HIN):

- Over 330 Texas school districts closed due to Ike.
- As of Sept. 26, a handful of districts are closed indefinitely.
- So far, approximately 5,000 school days have been lost as a result of Hurricane Ike.
- At least 12 school districts reported that they have suffered major damage and are still without power.
- Houston’s roughly 300 schools have just begun to re-open, nearly two weeks after the storm.

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A high-resolution photo of the check presentation is in the TSTA Pressroom, at www.tsta.org/Pressroom/current/index.shtml, under High Res Photos and Graphics.

Cutline: The National Education Association’s Health Information Network presents a \$50,000 donation to the Texas State Teachers Association’s Hurricane Ike Relief Fund on Friday, Sept. 26.

Credit: Patrick G. Ryan/Courtesy of the National Education Association.