

RV FUND YEAR END LETTER

“The friend in my adversity I shall always cherish most. I can better trust those who helped to relieve the gloom of my dark hours than those who are so ready to enjoy with me the sunshine of my prosperity.”

Ulysses S. Grant

Gulf Coast communities such as ours view the approach of summer with a perennial apprehension. The vacation season always arrives with the risk of devastation from hurricanes. Betsy (1965) and Katrina (2005) are the worst experienced by me and anyone else living here during their ravages.

As early as last December the National Weather Service warned of an unusually active hurricane season for 2020 and their meteorologists were correct. When this year’s season concluded on November 30, its six months produced thirty tropical storms including thirteen hurricanes. Five named storms struck the Louisiana coast including a Cat 2 (Delta) and a Cat 4 (Laura).

Hurricane Laura displaced 18,000 residents, 13,000 of which were evacuated to hotels in New Orleans. Many families had just returned home and were still scrambling to get their power and water restored when Hurricane Delta arrived. Numerous others had no home to which they could return.

The superimposition of that climatic assault on the COVID-19 pandemic generated a food and shelter insecurity evocative of the 1930’s. And despite the noble efforts of weighty charitable and government entities, the suffering persists. We have concentrated our recent giving on charities and individuals affected by these events.

Since our mid-year letter, we have given to the following organizations confronting the food insecurity challenge:

Northshore Food Bank (\$6000), Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank (\$1000), Second Harvest Food Bank (\$1500), Sticks BBQ (\$2000), Covington Rotary Club (\$1000), Pennies for Bread (\$5000).

We have given to the following organizations dealing with shelter issues:

Lowernine.org (\$1000), Ozanam Inn (\$3000), Boys and Girls Club (\$2500), Harry Thompson Center (\$500), Unity of Greater New Orleans (\$1500), Habitat for Humanity (\$600).

Animal welfare has also been a casualty during this time. Shelters in the affected areas had to be evacuated and many pets were separated from their owners. All of the following performed extensive rescue missions related to the storms.

Humane Society of Louisiana (\$2000), Foundation for Horses (\$1000), Northshore Humane Society (\$1000), Big Sky Ranch (\$1000).

The LSU AgCenter's Grant Walker 4-H Education Center in Pollock, Louisiana, sustained major damage from Hurricane Laura. The fund contributed \$500 to a fundraiser to restore this longtime camp for 4-H kids.

We also found opportunities to reduce individual plight during this time.

Among the Lake Charles evacuees housed in New Orleans hotels was Cathy Durio, a hair stylist for over forty years, a single grandmother, and sole provider for her two grandkids. With donations of grooming tools from local salons, Cathy assembled a makeshift salon at her hotel and provided complimentary cuts and colorings to her fellow victimized residents. The fund sent \$2000 to Cathy to help in restoring her home.

Skyla Thomas and her partner Quinton Pitre were getting by on his job as a casino security guard when Laura destroyed their rental home and closed his employer's casino. One of their two small children has Down's Syndrome and requires special care. They were quartered in a low-end motel in Baton Rouge and were facing eviction when the fund sent \$2000 as a stop gap. They are now in an apartment and the fund purchased a portable washer and dryer as well as some Christmas items for the family.

The Loup Family lost their home to Hurricane Ike in 2008. By 2012 they were able to purchase a mobile home in the Lake Charles area. Ken works in Sulphur Parks maintenance and Renee works in the Sulphur Hospital emergency room. Their son, Ian, has cerebral palsy and a number of other congenital medical issues. Laura hit the Loups especially hard. The storm destroyed their home which because of its age (1973) could only be insured for contents. To help the Loups rebuild the fund sent them \$5000.



RENEE, IAN, AND KENNETH LOUP

The Innocence Project of New Orleans (IPNO) is a longtime fund favorite to which we regularly give. A recent client of IPNO, Don Degruy, was convicted at age twenty-two of armed robbery in a case of mistaken identity. Don served fifteen years before the guilty party confessed to the crime. Free since 2017, Don and his family were successfully rebuilding their lives when Hurricane Delta tore the roof off of their home and destroyed most of their belongings. The fund sent \$2000 to the Degruy Family.



DON DEGRUY HOLDING HIS DAUGHTER

We also made a non-hurricane related gift that is worthy of mention:

Firm partner Dalton Lambert (masked white guy on the left) and his wife Rachel have been fund assets since its 2005 inception. They reside in Abita Springs, a Northshore community near Covington. Just outside of the city limits Dalton identified a rundown park in a low-income neighborhood ineligible for city tax support. The Lamberts and other volunteers worked hard to clean up the park and they continue to maintain it. The fund purchased a top quality, vandal-resistant basketball goal (\$2000) for the park.



THE NEW CARNATION STREET PARK BASKETBALL GOAL AND PLAYERS

The Victorian Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once said that “there is no education like adversity.” If Dizzy (his nickname) was correct, Louisianans hold post-graduate degrees. Your generosity to our diplomates over the last fifteen years has provided transformative benefit for which we once again express our most sincere gratitude.

For 2020, contributions to the fund totaled \$70,292 of which a major portion was attributable to Marc Cohodes and his faithful Twitter followers. Fund grants totaled \$82,260.00. The fund’s bank credit balance totals \$37,212.00.

With every good wish for the New Year,

Tim