

A Community Response to Hurricane Charley
A meeting sponsored by
Rollins College Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership Center
First United Methodist Church
Orlando, Florida
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by David A. Odahowski, President
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Good Morning!

Before I speak about the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation's response to Hurricane Charley, I would like to ask for a professional privilege to offer a few thank you's.

On behalf of the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation Board and Staff, I want to say thank you to Chairman Crotty, Orange County, our federal government, state government, Mayor Dyer, and the City of Orlando, and all of our municipal governments and first responders for their outstanding response to this disaster.

Government can only respond to the needs of our residents if they have the necessary input from the residents and from nonprofit organizations. Now is the time to put the needs of your nonprofit organization into writing for our elected public officials and administrators to see. Please invite them to observe your work firsthand. And most of all, please vote in Tuesday's primary election.

Thank you to our private sector corporations for leadership, financial, and in-kind contributions.

I also want to say Amen and Hallelujah to our faith-based organizations for providing physical and spiritual comforts.

Let me thank all of you, our nonprofits. During a time when the nonprofit sector is under scrutiny for efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability, you proved that we are a better place because of our nonprofit sector! And just a side bar comment, our cultural organizations, the Orange County Regional History Center, the Orlando Science Center and others, provided disaster relief. The Sak Comedy Theatre will be conducting a benefit to help with disaster relief.

Finally, let me break the first rule of fundraising – if you can't name all the donors, don't single out any one donor – but let me thank Rich DeVos, the DeVos family, and the Orlando Magic for their magnificent gift to our Red Cross. Rich DeVos has lived the American Dream and is a modern day Horatio Alger. More than that, he is a "Faithful Servant" and "Steward" of the benefits bestowed upon him, his family, and his company.

In regards to the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation – upon our return to the office after being closed for only two and one-half days and after determining that our Board and staff were all safe, we examined our five year giving history, noting all the human service organizations we have funded. We surveyed these human service organizations to learn directly from them about how they and their clients fared, as well relying upon several personal reports, and one drive-by report.

The responses we received from you were straightforward and direct. If you needed help you said so. If you were OK, you told us that, too. You also referred us to the needs of other nonprofits.

The Foundation will provide \$75,000 of grants in the next few days, to almost a dozen and a half organizations. These grants will not completely solve the challenges facing our community, but we hope it will be an endorsement, appreciation, and encouragement to these nonprofits and the community. We are examining an additional \$75,000 worth of grants, if necessary.

We also got on the phone to direct a tractor trailer load of new clothes to our area for our kids from Kids in Distressed Situation (K.I.D.S.), a national charity of leading retailers and manufacturers of children's products committed to helping children in need. This shipment is a collaborative effort between the Second Harvest Food Bank, the Dr. P. Phillips Inc., and the Dr. Phillips Charities.

I am also pleased to announce a collaboration between the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation, Orange County Government, the City of Orlando, and the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce, to promote the awareness and the filing of the Earned Income Tax Credit to the hardworking families of Orange County. Our community has an estimated 12 to 16 million dollars worth of unclaimed earn income tax credit dollars. This is an entitlement for the hard working families of Orange County.

Like other funders we expect to address the long term needs of this disaster through our regular grant process for the next year or two. For more information about the efforts of the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation in addressing the disaster relief efforts after hurricane Charley, please go to www.edythbush.org.

And finally, **THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU!**