



September 12, 2005

For immediate release

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Free Store on Back Beach Road Now Open

Rescue Mission Operating Shopping Environment for Victims of Hurricane Katrina

Friday evening, a man came through the doors of the "Katrina Free Store" looking for shoes for his children. He said he'd been all over town trying to find a few things his family would need to get back to normal here in Bay County after the storm hit his home in Louisiana a few weeks before.

Panama City Rescue Mission volunteers led him directly to the shoe section of the "Katrina Free Store" where he immediately found shoes to fit his children.

Volunteers and staff of the Rescue Mission had been collecting items being donated to Katrina relief at the warehouse at IBIS Lake Realty on Back Beach Road since Labor Day. Paula Oliver, owner, donated use of the warehouse to help with the relief.

The Mission knew it would be ready to help house people if needed, but when that need did not arise, it was ready to answer the need of collecting, sorting and distributing items people would need.

"Over the summer we got plenty of practice sorting clothes and distributing them to people when we did our first Klothes for Kids project," Amanda Bawn, Development Director, said.

"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 and 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 from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Saturday. Please call volunteer coordinator Jackie Dumas at 769-0783. 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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