



Hong Kong International School

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THE HKIS COMMUNITY HAS FELT AND RESPONDED TO HURRICANE KATRINA'S IMPACT

Hurricane Katrina, the most devastating natural disaster that occurred in the US in recent years, has affected many members of the Hong Kong International School global community. The HKIS Head of School, Richard Mueller, has sent a letter to all the HKIS faculty and staff, as well as alumni all over the world, to encourage everyone to help the countless people who have been impacted by this disaster.

HKIS alumni who escaped the floods

Some past students of HKIS have been residing in the affected areas in the US, and have had to endure the process of evacuation and escape. Alumnus **Michael Thompson (Class of 1989)** and his wife Tara left New Orleans just before the storm, for Tara's home town in Washington to wait for the birth of their child in September. Their home was next to the 17th street levee that broke so they lost everything. Another alumnus, **Robert Mache (Class of 1971)** and his family escaped the hurricane, and have temporarily relocated to Memphis, Tennessee. Mache shares his hope for the aftermath of this disaster, **"I'm looking forward to helping create a better New Orleans. Hopefully the country and the world will work together to capitalize on the rare chance to improve itself in the wake of this disaster."**

HKIS Community lending their help

For many HKIS alumni living in the US, witnessing this tragedy has had a tremendous impact on them. Alumnus **Jim Lenell (Class of 1982)** works for an insurance company and he was re-deployed to help with Hurricane Katrina work. **"I see the damages each and every day, I talk with the individuals who were personally impacted - it is heart-breaking."** Many of the evacuees who have to relocate are children, and they are often the ones with the greatest needs. Alumna **Erin Williamson Benton (Class of 1995)**, a third-grade schoolteacher in Texas, has to take care of 15 evacuees who have just enrolled in her school. They are all starting new schools in new environments, away from everything that they know. Benton remarks that **"many have nothing but the clothes on their backs."**

Help can come in many different forms - from direct assistance and disaster rescue, to resettlement and advocacy. Many HKIS alumni are busy doing their part to help. Going into the most severely-affected areas in New Orleans, alumnus **Eric Mueller (1996)** was a part of a federal search and rescue task force, getting people to safety. Alumna **Alison McKinnell King (1982)** helped formed the legal resource organization, From the Lake to the River Foundation Inc. It consolidates resources from the legal community to facilitate the fair distribution of federal, state, and private disaster relief to New Orleanians, and assist other groups that provide emergency legal services.

For members of the HKIS faculty and student body, they might be protected from the physical harms of the hurricane, but the school feels the need to respond to this devastation on behalf of the friends and family members who are affected. The school has responded through various fundraising efforts, hoping to do their part in helping to rebuild the hopes and livelihoods of those affected.

Hong Kong International School offers an American-style curriculum in an international setting. Public service and giving back to the community has long been part of the HKIS curriculum.