



Goodness of America

Harvey Heroes

In the face of calamity, there are no people more generous or resilient than the American people, and there is no better proof of this than in Houston and its surrounding areas, which were pummeled by Hurricane Harvey at the end of August.

Hurricane Harvey dropped 40-52 inches of rain in southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana, according to weather.com. It forced more than 35,000 people into shelters as thousands upon thousands of homes became submerged under floodwaters. And worst of all, Harvey claimed the lives of at least 82 people, according to Texas officials. It is easy to look at the utter devastation and loss caused by Hurricane Harvey and feel sadness and hopelessness, but Hurricane Harvey has also revealed beautiful moments of goodness and godliness that no storm can ever destroy. People from all across the country have shown their support for the victims of Hurricane Harvey, with some even heroically risking their lives to save others.

Life-saving Heroics

The famous Cajun Navy, a group of boat owners known for their rescue efforts during the flooding in southeast Louisiana in August 2016, came all the way from Louisiana to help rescue residents trapped in their homes as a result of Harvey's flooding.

Loads of photos emerged of random strangers with boats rescuing people trapped in their vehicles or in their houses. The boat owners would fill their craft with people they rescued before dropping them off to safety and heading back out to flooded areas to do more. Two such people are Crystal Jaramillo and Trey Jones of Texas City, who managed to rescue more than 20 people with just a kayak, according to Galveston County reporter Marissa Barnett.

An unnamed local pastor was captured on camera walking through floodwaters and checking each submerged vehicle to be sure that there was no one trapped inside.

Four teens — Thomas Edwards, Richard Dickason, Liam Connor, and Declan Connor — were among those who used a personal boat to rescue stranded Texans. They saved more than 50 people, as well as numerous pets, the Daily Wire reported.

When a boater was stopped by CNN's Ed Lavandera to get his take on the storm, he told the reporter that he was going to use his boat to "try to save some lives."

Video footage of some of the rescues is truly incredible. One man, who did not appear to be a first responder, was seen using a rope to pull people to safety from violent floodwaters. And many volunteers like him, who were captured on camera performing life-threatening rescues, remain unidentified.

Shelter

A furniture store in Houston called Gallery Furniture kept its doors open during the hurricane and via Twitter invited displaced Houstonians to come to the stores for "shelter and food." At the entrance to the store, towels, shoes, clothing, and toys donated by locals awaited those seeking refuge from the storm. They were told that they could rest and lounge on any of the store's mattresses and couches.



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According to CNN, store owner Jim “Mattress Mack” McIngvale and his team also used the store’s delivery trucks to make rescues. “All day on Sunday we went around rescuing people out of high water stranded on overpasses. We brought about 200 people into the store that way,” McIngvale says.

McIngvale’s kindness knew no bounds. He also paid for portable showers so that evacuees were able to have a hot shower.

Fundraising Efforts

The American people have also shown their goodness through donations. In just one day, Houston Texans player JJ Watt raised more than \$500,000, Townhall reported. As fundraising efforts continued, that figure quickly surpassed \$1 million. The show of support was so enormous that Watt continually had to raise the goal. Each time, it was reached and surpassed, eventually hitting the \$30 million mark. Among those who donated to Watt’s YouCaring campaign were talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres and Tennessee Titans owner Amy Adams Strunk, both of whom donated \$1 million, and NBA star Chris Paul, who donated \$50,000. Walmart also donated \$1 million to the campaign.

Other celebrities and pop icons showed their support, as well, through significant donations, including singers Drake and Beyonce, actor Leonardo DiCaprio, actress Sandra Bullock, and comedian Kevin Hart. And President Trump pledged a million dollars of his own money.

Good Morning America hosted a telethon to raise money for Hurricane Harvey victims. Celebrities including Alex Rodriguez, Ashanti, Andrew Shue, and Rascal Flatts all volunteered to answer phone calls from viewers who called to pledge money. According to the celebrity volunteers, calls poured in all morning from people across the country, from California to New York to Florida. In all, the telethon raised more than \$8 million.

CNN Money reported that businesses donated more than \$113 million to Harvey relief efforts.

Floods of Donations

In states all across the country, locals collected and donated supplies to send to Hurricane Harvey victims.

Venus Rice, owner of GG’s House of Beauty and Nail Salon in Dalton, Georgia, rented a U-Haul to collect and haul supplies to Houston. She used her salon as a drop-off location.

Rice explained the motivation behind her endeavor. “Imagine if that was us,” she told the *Dalton Daily Citizen*. “Those people will be so appreciative of what we give.”

In Pen Argyl, Pennsylvania, 22-year-old Nick Russo and his friends and family collected two truckloads of supplies and took a trip to Houston to distribute the items to Harvey’s victims. Items ranged from household items to hygienic supplies to pet products. They also collected gas cards, gas cans, and money.

“People of all sorts are making contributions, from businesses, to old people to young people,” Russo said before making the journey to Houston. “Everyone has come together as a community.”

— Raven Clabough



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