

Katrina Mobilizes 4-H Community

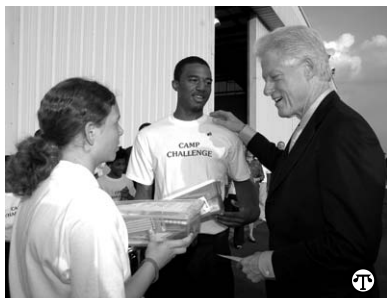
(NAPSA)—The 4-H community of young people across America mobilized immediately after Hurricane Katrina, opening their hearts and using their heads and hands to raise money, house evacuees, prepare packages and develop learning activities to shelter, comfort and build the confidence and spirit of Katrina's victims.

For example, with the help of 4-H youth, staff and adult volunteers, Georgia's Rock Eagle 4-H Camp provided warm meals, hot showers, and a place to stay for more than 600 New Orleans evacuees within days of the destruction. "It felt really good to help so many people," said Putnam County, Ga. 4-Her Katy Crandall, 17. "One little girl was excited to just get a pair of flip-flops."

North Carolina 4-H members, themselves recipients of hurricane donations after Floyd, Fran and Isabel devastated their communities, jumped at the chance to help. They raised money and collected donations that filled four 18-wheel trucks with supplies.

"They were the first clean shirts the evacuees had seen in more than a week," reported Mississippi State 4-H Leader Susan Holder of 2,000 donated 4-H t-shirts. Through the Mississippi Operation 4-H Relief campaign, 4-H youth reached out to young people affected by the storm with activity kits, stuffed 4-H bears and more than 800 letters. Cass County, Mo., 4-Hers filled a school bus with more than 60 bags of clothes, toys, food and other necessities.

A shelter was set up in the Grant Walker 4-H Educational



North Carolina 4-H members Venson Greene and Ashley Kirby present President Bill Clinton with packages for the Gulf Coast region.

Center in Louisiana even before the hurricane hit. Hundreds of youth from Louisiana and surrounding states sorted and distributed necessities and prepared learning activities for younger children. "At least we can help make this difficult time somewhat more bearable," said Debbie Bairnsfather, Louisiana State University AgCenter regional 4-H coordinator.

4-Her Lauren Mojica of Sonoma, Calif. set up her own relief project by establishing a donation fund at a bank, working with local businesses to collect items, and publicizing her effort in newspapers and radio spots. "Each one of us can make a difference," Lauren challenged other 4-H members. "Let's show them what we are made of."

You can join the 4-H community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. Visit 4husa.org to learn more about 4-H and its Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.