

I have received many calls regarding Hurricane Harvey and what we can do as Eastern Star. If you are watching the reports of unprecedented rain and historic flooding unfolding in Texas after the Hurricane you know there is much to be done. If you live in the Houston area, the sheriff's office is asking for people with boats and vehicles that can handle high water to help with rescue.

For the rest of us, one easy way to pitch in is to give money to one or more of the many charities involved with the response and recovery. Here are some suggestions, however you need to keep in mind a couple of key points.

- Do your own research before giving to any group.
- Groups with strong local ties to their community can sometimes be the best option.
- You have a right to demand accountability of the groups you give to.

Below is a short list with a rating from Charity Navigator, or independent group that evaluates how well organizations perform financially and how efficiently they use the donations they receive.

AMERICAN RED CROSS: They are providing shelters for those displaced by Harvey, and it has thousands of volunteers on the ground in the state. (3/4 stars from Charity Navigator)

ALL HANDS: This nonprofit organization is on the ground in Texas, and is in contact with emergency management officials about assisting in the response and recovery. (4/4 stars from Charity Navigator)

GLOBAL GIVING: A charity crowdfunding site that is attempting to raise \$2 million to be used exclusively for local relief and recovery efforts. (4/4 stars from Charity Navigator)

LOCAL FOOD BANKS: The Houston Press has compiled a list of food banks in the affected area, including Houston Food Bank, Galveston County Food Bank, Corpus Christi Food Bank, Southeast Texas Food Bank and ore. They recommend contacting a food bank directly about their need and what you can do.

HOUSTON HUMANE SOCIETY: This group is helping marshal care and shelter for pets in the area.

BLOOD DONATIONS: The Houston Chronicle noted that Carter BloodCare and the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center are accepting donations.

For other option you can go to www.charitynavigator.org

We could also have several members who will meet the criteria for Benevolent Aid so that is another place that money can be donated by the chapters so that we will be ready to meet our member's needs.

Once the highways in the Houston area open back up and the water recedes, I am sure we will know of more needs that our particular members and chapters have. **I am asking all the secretaries of the chapters to PLEASE notify the Grand Secretary of your members' individual needs.**

I encourage individual chapters to do whatever they can to be of assistance. Just be sure that the Grand Secretary is kept apprised of your efforts so that we can report them to General Grand Chapter. As things change I will attempt to keep you apprised.

Melissa Hudman

Worthy Grand Matron

Rick Skidd

Worthy Grand Patron