

Gramercy Park's Katrina aid mission completes phase 1

By Maciej Wroblewski

The Gramercy Park Block Association with the support of Rev. Dr. Thomas F. Pike, The Rector of Calvary/St. George's Church, has concluded the first phase of the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort this week but the network will remain in tact and on alert, ready to offer additional help if such a need arises.

The first phase of the relief effort resulted in collection of hundreds of boxes of clothing and home products, many of which have already found their way to churches in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

The boxes were shipped to the disaster area thanks to the generosity of Meگو and Moda Express and once there they were handed over to the United Way, which set up a resourceful distribution chain to get the goods to those in need.

Meanwhile, the local collection points at the Calvary Church on Gramercy Park North and St. George's Church on East 16th Street are packed up to their ceilings with hundreds of more boxes that will be picked up and delivered to the affected areas shortly.

"Whenever there's a problem anywhere in the country and our neighbors need help we are there for them," said Arlene Harrison, president of the Gramercy Park Block Association and coordinator of the collection efforts. "The whole country stepped up and offered their help to us on 9/11 and we will always be ready to help back."

Harrison expressed her thanks to hundreds of people from all over the area, including many from Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, who brought in donations or mailed in checks.

She also thanked for the tireless work of volunteers Kathleen Scupp,

Sherry Holmes, Sallie Scripser, Ira Fox, Eunice Coleman and Wendy Gaad.

Having already collected hundreds of boxes of clothing and home products as well as many financial donations, the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Hurricane Relief Effort stands ready to offer further assistance in the future.

The Gramercy Park Block Association is also working with the Edwin Gould Foundation, which has offered to house 200 victims of Hurricane Katrina for up to a year at its 156-acre campus in Rockland County, NY, 20 miles north of Manhattan.

At present they are looking to enlist services of a government agency, a major not-for-profit organization or a private foundation that would agree to take overall management responsibility for the facility.

Monetary donations to the Hurricane Katrina Re-



Photo by Maciej Wroblewski

Hundreds of boxes full of clothing for survivors of Hurricane Katrina were collected during recent clothing drive conducted by the Gramercy Park Block Association and Calvary/St. George's Church.

lief Effort are still gratefully accepted and those who wish to donate money should make checks payable to Neighbors Helping Neighbors

and mail them to: The Gramercy Park Block Association, 23 Gramercy Park South, New York, NY 10003. For more information, call Arlene

Harrison at (212) 260-3875. Send an email to arlenesharrison@yahoo.com to subscribe for email updates on the relief effort.