



Media Advisory

Contact:

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United Way HELPLINK connects Katrina Evacuees to Bay Area Shelters and Human Services

**HELPLINK's Toll Free Number: 800-273-6222
(Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm)**

WHAT:

Katrina survivors seeking shelter, food or other assistance in the Bay Area can call United Way HELPLINK for information and referrals at 800-273-6222. The call center is open Monday – Friday from 8am to 5:30 pm, with a live answering service after-hours and on weekends.

United Way HELPLINK, which has provided Information & Referral (I&R) service in the Bay Area for more than 30 years, can provide Katrina survivors with information on:

- **Basic Human Needs** -- food, clothing, shelter, rent assistance, utility assistance.
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** -- medical information lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, community clinics, Medi-Cal and Medicare, maternal health, children's health insurance programs.
- **Employment Services** -- job search assistance, unemployment benefits, financial assistance, job training and placement, education programs.

WHY:

There are currently about 3,300 Katrina survivors in the Bay Area. On Monday, a federal judge said the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) could stop paying for Katrina evacuees' stays at federally-funded hotels. Although most Katrina survivors in the Bay Area are in permanent housing, they are still relying on numerous local health and human services as they work to get their lives back to normal.

ABOUT UNITED WAY HELPLINK:

HELPLINK, United Way of the Bay Area's Community Information Center, provides free and confidential information and referral services to more than 40,000 callers each year through its toll-free number, 800-273-6222. It is a comprehensive source of assistance to thousands of individuals in the Bay Area who do not know where or how to access the help they need. Currently, the service is available in English, Spanish, Chinese and for the hearing impaired, Monday – Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm, with a live answering service after-hours and on weekends. United Way HELPLINK also works with a tele-interpretation service to serve callers who speak more than 150 other languages.

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